

## STORMY WEATHER FELLS TREES, CAUSES BLACKOUTS > PAGE 2

# RED ALERT



A Phuket Tourist Police officer stands next to a red 'no swimming' flag posted on Karon Beach. Photo: Phuket Tourist Police

## BEACHES 'RED FLAGGED' AS WAVES, RIP CURRENTS CLAIM LIVES

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Lifeguards this week posted red 'no swimming' flags along the beaches and urged all residents and tourists to heed warnings to not enter the surf as stormy weather pounded the western coast. Red flags posted along any beach in Phuket mark where lifeguards have deemed the water too unsafe to swim.

However, people have continued to ignore them, sometimes at their own peril.

The body of a Belgian man who was swept away by strong waves at

Freedom Beach in Karon last Saturday (June 22) was found washed ashore, on Freedom Beach early Monday morning (June 24).

The victim, identified as Mr Luvovadio Allan Deraut J., 28, was one of several tourists pulled out to sea by strong waves last Saturday.

Two of the tourists, identified as Miss Asilo Junarra Heyzel, a British national, and Mr Faisal Fadel Mohamed Hasan, a Yemeni national, were rescued by lifeguards on jet-skis – but Mr Luvovadio was swept away from shore and disappeared in the waves.

A search for Mr Luvovadio was launched, with rescue workers brought

to assist. However, the search was hampered by the storm conditions along the west coast over the weekend.

Karon Police were informed at 4:30am Monday that the body of a foreign man had been found washed at Freedom Beach.

The body was later confirmed to be that of Mr Luvovadio and was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town while police made the necessary arrangements for releasing it his family.

Mr Luvovadio's death brought Phuket's drowning tally to five since June 9, when the southwest monsoon began its assault on Phuket's west

coast, creating dangerous strong surf and deadly strong rip currents.

### RESCUES

Regardless, people visiting the beaches have continued to ignore the red flags, and lifeguards' warnings, with eight tourists rescued in Karon and Patong on just one day last week.

At Karon Beach, four Indian tourists ignored the warning flags and entered the water near the beach volleyball court sometime shortly before 2:15pm on June 18. Within minutes they were swept away by strong waves.

Lifeguards and jet-ski operators...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

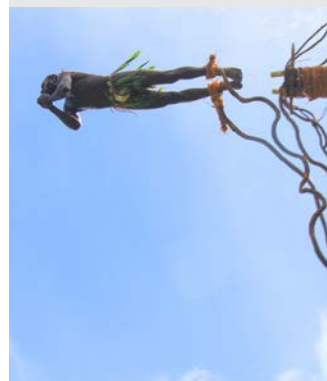
## NEWS PAGE 3

Patong tuk-tuks still marking their territory



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gets a new  
ambulance > p5

# Storm weather wreaks havoc

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Heavy thundershowers and strong winds gusting up to 35km/h wreaked havoc across the island this week as residents suffered widespread power outages, traffic delays and trees falling across roads and onto houses. At time of press, so far there had been no reports of injuries as a result of tree-fall.

The Phuket branch of the Provincial electricity Authority (PEA Phuket) on Monday (June 24) urged people to be patient while workers raced to restore power supply to locations all across the island.

The PEA Thalang branch last Sunday (June 23) confirmed power outages at 26 locations across the northern half of Phuket – from Pa Khlok on the east coast, to Cherng Talay on the west coast, to Mai Khao in the northern part of the island.

PEA Phuket on Monday also apologised for having to cut off power supply to Koh Maphrao while workers cleared branches that had been brought down onto power lines by the storm conditions across Phuket.

Residents in Ratsada were forced to endure a major power outage while workers contend with similar problems there. In Karon, local residents and businesses suffered an all-day outage along both sides of the



Traffic while the Darasamut Underpass was closed. Photo: Wichit Police

Kata-Saiyuan Road, from Soi Laem Mum Nai to the Sea Theatre Hotel.

The outages followed heavy storm conditions that began in earnest last Saturday night (June 22).

As fair warning to all on the island, Phuket Vice Governor Sathya Thongkham on June 19 issued an order for all relevant agencies to follow official safety preparedness and response guidelines and to take immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of residents and tourists in Phuket during expected heavy weather to continue through to at least Tuesday (June 25).

With no respite forecast, the weather warning was reissued, and extended, on Monday (June 24).

However, by that time residents were already very aware of the impact and dangers of heavy rain across the island. Phuket City Municipality disaster officials were already closely

monitoring water levels in Klong Bang Yai, which flows through the heart of Phuket Town, and Patong had already suffered soil slides and fallen trees in certain areas.

One incident involved a landslide in the small street opposite Makro on Nanai Rd. Patong Municipality's disaster prevention and relief team arrived to carry out a cleanup operation at the slide site. Road surfaces in the area were also hosed down to help mitigate any accidents.

Mayor Chalernsak urged all people in the town to be aware of, ready for, potential flooding and other dangers brought on by the weather.

Earlier, on June 17, several regions and roads were inundated by water, causing substantial disruptions to traffic.

One woman was trapped in her car in flood waters on the road to the airport. Rescue workers soon arrived

and rescued the woman, and her car. The flooding later subsided, and normal traffic flow resumed.

## UNDERPASS UNDERWATER

The Darasamut Underpass in front of the Central Floreta shopping mall reopened to traffic last Friday (June 21) after yet another pump failure left the tunnel flooded again.

Wichit Police first reported the underpass closed to traffic just after 9am last Friday, but by that time long traffic tailbacks were already stretching back from the entrances to the tunnel.

Traffic was redirected to travel overground past the underpass while workers from the Phuket Highways Office were called in to fix the problem.

By about 11am workers had a new pump, provided by the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), in the tunnel and were working on extracting the failed pump and replacing it with the functional one.

Wichit Police later confirmed that the pump transplant was successful and that traffic was allowed to pass through the underpass at about 2:20pm.

The pump failure in the underpass followed repeated failures last year, which spurred a huge backlash of negative comments from islanders over officials' inability to keep the

pumps in the tunnel functioning.

Following yet another critical failure in July last year, Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee noted that all three pumps in the underpass had repeatedly failed.

In response to that pump failure, a pump provided by the PPAO was installed on site, but was unable to cope with the volume of water flowing into the underpass with each heavy downpour.

That failure followed yet another critical failure in May, to which Wongsakorn 'Bank' Chanakit – at that time the Bhumjaithai Party candidate canvassing for election for Phuket District 2 – claimed that the essential safety equipment in the underpass, including the pumps, had never had been fully maintained, and never had a full overhaul.

By July last year, Phuket MP Somchart Techathavorncharoen confirmed that a contractor, Grundfos (Thailand) Co Ltd, had been hired through a B1.8 million contract to install a Phuket-worthy pump in the underpass.

Grundfos, a major pump provider, had until Oct 14, 2023 to complete installing the new pump. With no reports of flooding in the underpass since last October, the pump was presumed to be working well and coping with Phuket downpours.

However, eight months later, the pump has now failed again.

# Tourists continue to ignore red flags, warnings of dangerous surf

Continued from page 1

...quickly responded, rescuing two men and two women, who were brought ashore exhausted but safe. First aid was administered by an ambulance crew on-site, with three of the tourists taken to Chalong Hospital for further care.

Shortly after, at 2:45pm that same day, Patong Police were alerted to a similar situation at Patong Beach. Lifeguards and jet-ski operators again sprang into action to rescue four tourists caught in powerful currents. Among those rescued was at least one Russian tourist.

Despite repeated warnings and the presence of red flags indicating dangerous conditions, the tourists had entered the water, lifeguards said.

Somprasong Saengchat, head of the lifeguard team at Patong Beach, emphasised the severity of the current monsoon conditions.

"Strong monsoon waves and winds have made swim-

ming extremely dangerous. Red flags are posted along the beach for this reason," he stated.

## DROWNING SEASON

The rescues carried out by lifeguards on June 18 followed four people drowning at Phuket beaches in little more than a week.

Deadly surf claimed the lives of a 44-year-old American man and a 48-year-old Thai woman at Mai Khao Beach on June 17.

The deaths of the couple followed the drowning of a 63-year-old Russian man at Surin Beach on June 16 after he, too, reportedly ignored a red 'no swimming' flag at the beach.

Phuket's notorious "drowning season" truly began when American expat James Everett du Bois, 49, was dragged out to sea by a strong rip current at Nai Harn Beach, on Phuket's southern west coast, on June 9.

He was swimming with



Photo: Karon Police

his wife, Siriamon Petcharawut, 49, who with the help of lifeguards was able to bring herself and their 3-year-old child back to shore.

Lifeguards immediately launched a search for Mr du Bois, but were unable to find him, and a more intensive search for him was launched as soon as rescue workers could be assembled.

Rescue workers and Rawai Municipality set up a search centre on the beach to coordinate the search effort, yet the search was called off after Mr du Bois's body was found washed ashore at the northern end of Nai Harn Beach late on June 10.

In the hope of saving more lives at the beaches, the Phuket office of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports Office (MoTS Phuket) conducted a workshop over the weekend of June 14-16 aimed at enhancing the safety potential in water tourism within the 'Andaman Tourism Development Zone'. The workshop was held at the Nai Yang Beach Resort & Spa and the beachfront area of Sirinat National Park.

## BLUEBOTTLES

Meanwhile, lifeguards have also confirmed the arrival of Portuguese Man o' War, also commonly called bluebottles, along the west coast.

The Phuket Lifeguard Service confirmed that bluebottles, which technically are not jellyfish, were found at Karon Beach last Saturday (June 22).

Later, Portuguese Man o' War were also discovered at Bang Tao Beach, and by Monday (June 24) were confirmed to be washing ashore at Mai Khao Beach.

The Portuguese Man o' War (Physalia physalis) is classified as a 'marine hydrozoan'. Despite their similar appearance, men-of-war are not jellyfish. They are siphonophores, colonial animals made up of individual specialised organisms, known as zooids, that work together as a unit.

That difference, however, does not mean their stings are less dangerous. Contact with their tentacles can result in severe burning pain and potentially affect the skin, nervous system and heart, and in rare cases posing a risk of fatality.

While typically found in other regions, these jellyfish

can be blown into Thai waters during certain seasons, and along Phuket's west coast each year during the southwest monsoon.

Beachgoers are urged to remain vigilant and follow lifeguard instructions to ensure their safety.

For those who may come into contact with bluebottles, the Phuket Lifeguard Service advises:

- Do not touch the bluebottle directly with your hands.
- Use a hard object to remove any tentacles from the body.
- Avoid massaging or applying any medication to the affected area.
- Rinse the wound with seawater instead of vinegar, as vinegar can exacerbate the spread of toxins (which cause the burning sensation)
- Apply a light compress with ice to reduce pain and swelling.
- Seek medical attention immediately.



# Tuk-tuk tirade spurs backlash

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A local tuk-tuk boss threatening a metered taxi driver in front of Jungceylon in Patong last Saturday (June 22) has sparked yet another public outcry over the behaviour of Phuket's "organised" public transport drivers.

The incident occurred as the metered taxi was dropping off a customer at the mall. Two foreign tourists then approached and got into the taxi.

Suddenly, a man, believed to be the head of the local tuk-tuk queue, approached and loudly declared that the metered taxi could not take passengers from that location because there was a designated queue for tuk-tuks.

Confused and concerned for the situation they were finding themselves in, the foreign tourists exited the taxi.

The tuk-tuk boss continued to threaten the taxi driver, even challenging him to step out of his taxi.

The tuk-tuk boss asserted that the area was restricted to the local tuk-tuks and that metered taxis were not allowed to pick up passengers there.



Photo: Supplied

The entire incident unfolded in front of tourists in front of the mall, and the incident was recorded on video by the taxi driver himself from inside his taxi as well as by people looking on from the street.

The driver of the metered taxi, Mr Dam (not his real name) later told reporters that after he had dropped off a customer in front of Jungceylon, two foreign tourists got into his taxi without him realising there was a restriction.

The local tuk-tuk boss then

approached, stating that the area was reserved for the local tuk-tuks only and ordered the tourists to leave the vehicle. Despite Mr Dam complying, the tuk-tuk boss continued to threaten and challenge him.

Mr Dam expressed his frustration, noting that he had never experienced such an incident before, although he mentioned that his colleagues have faced "similar situations".

Mr Dam urged his fellow taxi drivers, obviously including tuk-tuk drivers, to handle

such matters more peacefully and without intimidation. However, he still filed a formal complaint with Patong Police

## PEACE PLAN

Patong Police later reported that the tuk-tuk boss and Mr Dam were called to Patong Police Station last Sunday (June 23) "to discuss and improve understanding of the matter that occurred on social media".

"Both parties can reach an agreement. and admitted

that they had used disrespectful language towards each other and were angry to the detriment of the image and atmosphere of the tourist city and apologised and adjusted understanding between both sides," Patong Police said in their post published online.

The name of the tuk-tuk boss, or the tuk-tuk cooperative he may represent, and the metered taxi driver ('Mr Dam') were not included in the report.

"Police officers talked and

consulted with Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO), who came to Patong Police Station to talk about the incident that happened and proceed in related areas further," the report by Patong Police.

Comments posted under the Patong Police report criticised the lack of action taken by police over the incident.

One person asked, "Is the queue illegal? Use the footpath and highway areas to earn a living."

Another asserted, "There is a widow's nest basket."

The brief report by Patong Police included photos of officers from the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) being informed of the incident at Patong Police Station. The PLTO is the government office responsible for regulating all public transport vehicles and drivers on the island.

However, at time of press the PLTO had yet to post any notice publicly recognising the incident or confirming any action to be taken.

Also, Patong Police made no mention of any charges against the tuk-tuk boss, who by video clips posted online is the plain aggressor in the incident.

## More child sex crime charges for Phuket's 'Peter Smith'

RICHARD BURROWS, who for decades lived in Phuket under the name 'Peter Smith', will face more than 20 additional charges for sex crimes against children, police in England have confirmed.

Burrows was arrested on landing at Heathrow Airport in March after arriving from Thailand. He had been on the run for nearly three decades, with more than 20 of those years spent living in Phuket.

The 80-year-old had been wanted by Cheshire Police since December 1997 when he failed to attend Chester Crown Court where he was due to stand trial for two counts of buggery and 11 counts of indecent assault, Cheshire Constabulary noted in their initial announcement confirming Burrows's arrest.

Burrows appeared in court on April 2, when he was remanded in custody.

The Crown Prosecution Service has now authorised additional charges against him, the Cheshire Constabulary confirmed in a statement issued on June 20.



Photo: The Phuket News / file

The additional charges are:

- 20 counts of Indecent Assault
- One count of Buggery
- Three counts of Making Indecent Images of Children
- Four counts of Possession of a False Identity Document with Intent

The additional charges

relate to 11 victims and the offences occurred between 1966 and 1996 across Cheshire, the West Midlands and West Mercia areas, the Cheshire Constabulary noted in its statement.

All of the charges are set to be heard at Chester Crown Court on Aug 2.

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 11 m/s

SUN JUNE 30

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Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

MON JULY 1

High: +35°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE JULY 2

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED JULY 3

High: +37°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU JULY 4

High: +36°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s



Screenshot: Bes Sajo

## Patong tourist caught urinating in tuk-tuk

A VIDEO POSTED ONLINE showing a tourist urinating in the back of a tuk-tuk – not from the back of a tuk-tuk – in Patong has spurred an uproar on local social media channels with local residents slamming the behaviour as “disgusting”.

The incident came to light when a Facebook user named ‘Bes Sajo’ (‘Best Sajo’) shared a seven-second video clip with the caption “mobile toilet in Patong #accidentally”.

The video shows two foreign tourists inside a tuk-tuk, with one man in a red shirt urinating in the back of the vehicle while he is sitting down, seemingly indifferent to the public’s view.

The incident was reported as occurring in Patong.

The video, which quickly went viral, has drawn a

flood of criticism from the online community. Comments range from frustration over the variety of unruly behaviours seen each night, to expressions of disgust at what some have dubbed a “mobile restroom” situation.

The video has prompted comments such as “each night brings something new”, “a mobile toilet”, “disgusting” and “unbelievable”.

Many people expressed their dismay over the lack of respect shown by the tourists.

At time of press local authorities had yet to comment on the incident, but the video continued to circulate, sparking debates about tourist behaviour and public decency in popular destinations such as Patong Beach.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Women hunted for roadside choke hold

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Police are trying to track down two foreign women for leaving the scene of an accident after one of the foreign women placed the Thai woman involved in the collision in a choke hold for taking the keys to the foreign women’s car.

Pol Lt Khajonkiat Khamwichairat of the Cherng Talay Police was informed of the incident at 9:20pm last Saturday (June 22).

Officers arrived at the scene, the intersection of Soi Cherng Talay 4 and Soi Cherng Talay 6, to find Wannawisa Bualuang, 27, a local resident in the street, waiting for them.

Ms Wannawisa was standing beside her white Phuket-registered Toyota Yaris car. Also at the scene was a new white MG3, also registered in Phuket, police noted.

Ms Wannawisa told police that the accident occurred at about 8pm. She said she was driving from Cherng Talay Municipality and entering Soi



Screenshot: via Cherng Talay Police

Cherng Talay 4 when a car coming from the direction of Homa Hotel crashed into her.

A foreign woman was driving the car, with another foreigner as the passenger.

The two foreign women exited the car and they began discussing the accident.

Ms Wannawisa said that the foreign women were about to leave without any settlement for damages when she grabbed the car key from one of the foreign women.

In response, and as evidenced by a video recorded by a passenger in Ms Wannawisa’s car, the other foreign woman attempted to snatch the keys back.

Unable to do so, the foreign

woman, the shorter of the two, grabbed Ms Wannawisa by the back of the head and shoved her face to the bonnet of her car.

She then stepped behind Ms Wannawisa and placed an arm around her neck, ready to enforce a choke hold. While holding Ms Wannawisa with the arm across her throat, the other woman tried to get the keys back.

Ms Wannawisa refused to hand the keys back, and the foreign women ceased their assault and left the scene on foot.

At last report police were trying to track down the two women with the intent of pressing charges.

## Early morning hit-and-run leaves two seriously injured

POLICE ARE TRYING TO track down a black car believed to be involved in a hit-and-run on Thepkasattri Rd that left two people seriously injured early last Saturday (June 22).

Thalang Police were notified of the accident, opposite the Esso petrol station next to Wat Srisoonthorn on Thepkasattri Rd southbound, at 3:30am.

Police and rescue workers from Srisoonthorn Municipality arrived to find a Phuket-registered Honda Wave 125i motorbike with heavy damage to its rear.

Nearby on the road were two people, a man and a woman, who had suffered serious injuries.

The woman, Chanidapa Saetan, 38, from Bangkok, was the driver of the motorbike. She had suffered severe injuries and rescue workers had to perform CPR at the scene.

The man, later identified as Somtam Kerdthong, 43, was the

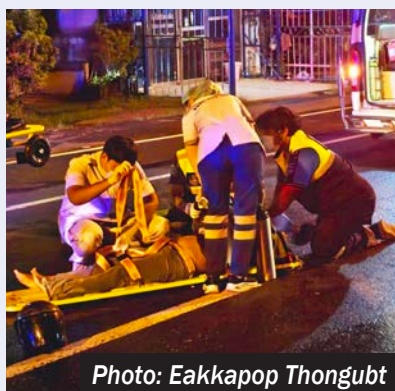


Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

passenger. He was injured but still conscious.

Both Ms Chanidapa and Mr Somtam were urgently rushed to Thalang Hospital. Their medical condition was not reported.

Police found a part from a black car at the scene believed to be involved in the collision.

Officers recovered the part as evidence while they continued their investigation and their hunt for the driver. Eakkapop Thongtub

## Russian woman praised as brave after bag snatch pursuit in town

A RUSSIAN WOMAN IS BEING praised as brave for chasing a thief on a motorbike after her bag was snatched in Phuket Town last Sunday night (June 23).

The incident unfolded around 8:40pm near Supalai Condo Vista Phuket on Takua Pa Rd in the heart of Phuket Town, police reported.

The woman, named by police as Alisa Makarenko, was riding her motorbike when a man, dressed in black and wearing a blue helmet, approached and snatched her blue and black handbag from her.

The thief then sped off on his motorbike. Ms Makarenko gave chase, while recording her pursuit on her phone.

The pursuit involved a series of turns, onto Ratsada Rd, Suriyadet Circle, Bangkok Rd and finally Poonphon Rd.

While giving chase, Ms Makarenko weaved through Phuket Town traffic at speed, at times passing closely between the car she was overtaking and oncoming traffic.



Screenshot: via Phuket City Police

However, Ms Makarenko was unable to catch up.

Her handbag contained several valuable items, including glasses, a Thai motorbike driver’s license, a Kasikornbank debit card, three Russian bank debit cards, a comb, a power bank and B60 in cash.

Ms Makarenko reported the incident to Phuket Tourist Police at 9:29pm. She was taken to Phuket City Police Station to provide a detailed account of the robbery.

At last report Phuket City Police were reviewing CCTV footage along the escape route in an effort to identify and apprehend the suspect and urged anyone with information to come forward. Eakkapop Thongtub



# Medical services get a boost

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Local medical services in Phuket got a shot in the arm last week with a new ambulance donated to Chalong Hospital and a new mobile medical unit provided by the Princess Srinagarindra Volunteer Doctor Foundation (PorSorWor) was launched to serve the residents in the Soi King Kaew area, one of the poorest communities on the island.

Phuket Vice Governor Norasak Suksomboon inaugurated the King Kaew mobile clinic at an event on June 19 attended by the Phuket Governor's wife, Busadee Suwanarat, who serves as the President of the Phuket branch of the Red Cross Society of Thailand and as Chairperson of the Phuket branch of the Ministry of Interior Housewives Association.

Also present for the occasion were Supalak Damrongchuea, Deputy Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO), Mueang Phuket District Chief Worasit Phutchip, Ratsada Mayor Nakin Yorsangrat, local volunteers and members of the community.



The new Chalong Hospital ambulance. Photo: Aroon Solos / Facebook

Mr Norasak highlighted that the mobile medical unit aims to provide comprehensive health services to the community, ensuring better health outcomes and fostering connections between the public and relevant agencies.

He expressed gratitude to the doctors, nurses, public health officials and PorSorWor volunteers for their dedication and commitment to serving the community.

The mobile medical unit is scheduled to conduct nine outreach sessions throughout the fiscal year 2024, Vice Governor Norasak explained.

The project's objectives include treating illnesses, preventing diseases, promoting health and rehabilitating the health of villagers and community members.

Services provided include general medical checkups, dental care, traditional Thai medicine, breast cancer screening, health education, flu vaccinations, haircuts and home visits for bedridden patients and the elderly.

The initiative received strong support from various sectors, including the Phuket Red Cross, which donated eyeglasses, and the Housewives

Association, which provided essential goods to bedridden patients and the elderly.

The launch of the mobile clinic is attributed to the collaboration of government and private organisations, as well as from Ratsada Municipality, which provided the venue, equipment and logistical support, V/Gov Norasak added.

During the event, Mrs Busadee, along with Mr Worasit and their team visited two bedridden male patients in the area. They provided each patient with essential goods and a financial aid of B3,000, and coordinated further assistance

with relevant agencies.

## READY TO ROLL

In a collaborative effort to enhance emergency medical services in the south of the island, Rawai Municipality, the Rotary Club of Andaman and the Phuket Chamber of Commerce have donated a state-of-the-art emergency ambulance to Chalong Hospital.

The donation ceremony, on June 18, was led by Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos, who is a former President of Rotary Club of Andaman, along with Thana Kongkawas, the club's current President.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat attended as the guest of honour, joined by representatives from the Phuket Chamber of Commerce. Dr Chuchat Nijvathana, Director of Chalong Hospital, received the ambulance on behalf of the hospital.

Mayor Aroon explained that Thana Kongkawas and the Rotary Club of Andaman were the main driving forces in seeing the donation through to completion.

The donation of the ambulance was part of a larger fundraising effort that included a mini-marathon and a charity

event held in collaboration with Rawai Municipality.

Both events received significant support and funding from public and private sectors, allowing the Rotary Club of Andaman to successfully implement their project, he said.

The donated ambulance, valued at approximately B2.6 million, is equipped with advanced life-saving equipment meeting the '10G' safety standards, Mayor Aroon explained in a post online.

The ambulance will serve residents, and tourists, in three subdistricts in the south of Phuket, significantly improving emergency response capabilities in the area, he said.

The donation of the ambulance follows a grievous public complaint by a Chinese tourist who was left with a broken shin bone in a parasail fall in February.

The Chinese woman posted a video describing her experience parasailing at Karon Beach, including the fact that the paragliding operator had called for an ambulance, but explained that he had been told it would take two hours for the ambulance to arrive due to traffic.

## Highways Office unveils B39mn Kalim coastal road expansion

THE PHUKET HIGHWAYS Office held a public meeting last week to garner feedback on its plan to spend B38.91 million on a road-improvement project along a 1.25km section of the coastal road through Kalim.

Santad Khummit, Deputy Chief of the Kamala Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor), chaired the meeting, held on June 18 at the Wyndham Grand Phuket Kalim Bay Hotel in Moo 6, Kamala.

The meeting focused on roadworks along Route 4030, specifically the 'Thalang - Rawai Beach road', spanning from kilometer marker 16+950 to kilometer marker 18+200.

This segment stretches about a total of 1.25km, from the entrance of Nakathani Village to the curve next to the entrance of Kalim Elephant Camp.

The project is part of the 'National Highway Network Construction Project' said an official report of the meeting.

The project has a budget allocation of B38,910,000



Photo: PR Phuket

baht and aims to expand the current two-lane road to four lanes, complete with enhanced safety features.

The primary objective of the meeting was to inform the public about the project's scope, its rationale and the necessity for the development, said the report.

The proposed construction is intended to improve convenience and safety for road users, addressing the significantly increased traffic volumes on this route, which passes through community

areas and popular tourist spots including Kamala Beach, leading towards Patong Beach.

The current traffic conditions have led to frequent accidents, affecting both local residents and tourists, the report noted.

By expanding the highway and incorporating additional safety measures, the project aims to alleviate these issues, ensuring safer and more efficient travel for all users, the report added.

The Phuket News



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# PM eyes foreign property rights

Bangkok Post

The government will study the feasibility of raising the level of foreign ownership allowed in condominiums from 49% of a building's usable space to 75%, according to Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai.

The Ministry of Interior has also been asked to look into whether it is appropriate to increase the length of a leasehold on a property for foreigners from 50 years to 99 years, Mr Phumtham told reporters last Friday (June 21).

The proposal was first raised at a Cabinet meeting in April, he said, as the government seeks measures to stimulate the economy and attract foreign investment.

Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul confirmed last Friday that Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin had instructed the Ministry of Interior to study the proposals.

## PRESSURE

Local property industry executives have been pressing for a change in the foreign ownership cap, saying demand from foreign buyers is on the rise.

At the same time, high levels of household debt and tighter lending conditions have been affecting property demand by local buyers.



Photo: PR Phuket

Developers have grown more cautious as a result.

The number of land allocation permits nationwide dropped by 19.7% in the first quarter of this year, the largest decline in nine quarters, as developers adjusted after seeing a consecutive dip in low-rise house transfers, said the Real Estate Information Center (REIC).

The REIC has pointed out that foreign ownership quotas for condos in many popular destinations for foreigners, such as Phuket and Pattaya, are fully occupied in several projects.

"Certain locations do not attract domestic buyers, so the government should increase foreign ownership quotas in those areas to stimulate the economy as the condo market in

such locations depends on foreign demand," Vichai Viratkapan, the acting director-general of the REIC, said recently.

Some projects have addressed the issue by reserving units in each condo project for leasehold contracts, with prices 10-15% lower than for freehold units, as the majority of buyers were foreigners.

According to the REIC, the number of condo transfers by foreigners in 2023 totalled 14,449 units, up 25% from the year before, with the value rising 23.5% to B73.1 billion, higher than pre-pandemic levels.

The Chinese were the largest nationality receiving condo transfers, accounting for 45.8% of the total units and 46.7% of the total value, followed by Russians, Americans and Myanmar nationals.

## ALLAYING FEARS

Mr Srettha last Sunday (June 23) defended the proposal, saying the measures will help stimulate the economy.

To ensure Thai condominium owners can continue to exercise control over the property's management, the proposed changes to foreign ownership quota will not be followed by an increase in voting rights, the PM said.

The proportion of voting rights held by foreign owners to those held by their Thai counterparts will remain unchanged at 49% to 51%, according to the PM.

Foreign owners of a condominium unit who purchased their unit after the 49% quota has been filled will basically be able to own and live in their unit, but they will not have the right to vote in any decision which requires voting among joint owners of the project, he said during a visit to the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) area in Rayong.

Asked about the proposed extension of the land lease terms to a maximum of 99 years for foreigners, the PM said other countries allow up foreign residents to lease land for up to 150 years.

Currently, foreigners can lease land for residential purposes for a maximum of 30 years, with one 30-year extension possible if both the landowner and lessee agree. Leases of 50 years are available for approved

commercial and industrial projects.

## THE OTHERS

Meanwhile, responding to the proposals, Pita Limjaroenrat, list-MP and chief adviser of the main opposition Move Forward Party (MFP), said the government should instead focus their attention on poor Thais without any land, before moving to grant more rights to foreigners to buy and/or lease land and property.

"Three-quarters of Thai citizens don't have land of their own," said Mr Pita.

Landless Thai people live on land allocated to them by the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO), which can only be used for farming purposes only, on plots leased out to them by a private landlord, or other types of state-owned land, he said.

The new proposals, which Mr Pita said reminded him of the controversial proposal to allow foreigners to buy land in Thailand, had been considered by the past regime.

In November 2022, the Cabinet bowed to a chorus of disapproval after its proposed plan to study the possibility of allowing foreigners to buy up to one rai of land for residential purposes.

In just a couple of weeks after the Cabinet approved the proposal, it was withdrawn due to growing criticism, with members of the public accusing then-PM Prayut Chan-o-cha of putting the country up for sale.

## Extended alcohol sales hours awaits scrutiny in parliament

A GOVERNMENT PANEL is adamant that alcohol sales hours will not be extended, citing rising numbers of casualties and road accidents.

Public Health Minister Somsak Thepsutin said the ministry's alcoholic beverage control committee took into consideration statistics about road accidents and related legal aspects as the issue affected many people.

While the committee does not support extended hours, the issue has not come to an end because five draft laws related to alcoholic beverages await scrutiny in parliament, said the minister.

Mr Somsak made the remarks after chairing a meeting of the panel at the ministry on June 18.

Currently, sales of alcoholic beverages are allowed in stores between 11am and 2pm and between 5pm and midnight, or 10 hours a day. Bars, restaurants and nightclubs can sell alcoholic drinks at the hours approved in the jurisdiction where they operate.



PM Srettha Thavisin visits Walking Street in Pattaya last Saturday (June 22). Photo: NNT

Disease Control Department chief Thongchai Keeratihattayakorn said the panel was briefed about a pilot project in which alcohol sales were extended by two hours in five key tourist destinations: Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chon Buri, Phuket and Koh Samui.

The extension, which took effect last Dec 15, was related to the idea of allowing about 1,800 entertainment venues to stay open until 4am. Alcohol sales hours would be extended to 2am on the assumption that it would boost income

for nightspot businesses and promote tourism, said Dr Thongchai.

However, a survey showed a significant rise in road accidents and deaths, especially between 2am and 6am. It has not yet been decided whether to consider extending hours for nightspots in other areas, said Dr Thongchai.

The number of deaths in road accidents in the pilot areas in January increased by 31% compared with the same period last year, said panel member Dr Kumnuan Ungchusak, citing information from the Thai Road Safety Centre operated by Road Accident Victims Protection Co Ltd, a clearing-house for compulsory motor insurance.

The ban on retail sales of alcohol between 2pm and 5pm is not covered in the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act. It was contained in an announcement put in place by the coup regime of Thanom Kittikachorn in 1972, and has never been rescinded. *Bangkok Post*

## Blue Tree to cease 'lagoon' services

POPULAR WATER RECREATION PARK Blue Tree Phuket located in Cherng Talay has announced it will cease its 'Lagoon services', resulting in cutbacks amounting to 70% of its current staff.

The announcement came through a statement published on Blue Tree Phuket's official Facebook page last Saturday (June 22).

The statement reads in full (verbatim) as follows:

Blue Tree Phuket Announces Strategic Realignment and Closure of Blue Tree Lagoon

Blue Tree Phuket today announced a significant realignment of its business operations, including the difficult decision to close the Blue Tree Lagoon, effective 1 August 2024. This step follows a thorough evaluation of our operational model and an unwavering commitment to meet evolving guest preferences.

Despite our deep-rooted commitment to Phuket and the substantial investments made since our opening in 2019, the economic repercussions of the pandemic, coupled with shifting consumer demands, have necessitated this pivotal change in direction. As part of this restructuring, we will be parting ways with over 70% of our current team.

We recognize the profound impact this decision has on our dedicated staff who have contributed their hard work and devotion to help Blue Tree create unforgettable experiences for families and visitors. We are committed to providing all the support that they need during this transition.

In our pursuit to respond to evolving market needs, Blue Tree is pivoting towards a new well-being centric concept. This fresh direction is designed to promote holistic health, relaxation, and social connection, enhancing



Photo: Blue Tree Phuket

the well-being of both residents and visitors. While the Lagoon will close, the rest of the areas of Blue Tree Phuket remain operational. We invite our guests to explore and enjoy other activities at Blue Tree and stay tuned for the enhanced offerings at our Lifestyle Village as part of our restructuring efforts. Blue Tree Phuket's Lifestyle Village offers a variety of shopping, dining and fun activities for the entire family. From restaurants to fashion boutiques, from sports halls that cater to activities like Judo and Muay Thai to an outdoor area for concerts, the Lifestyle Village is a destination of choice for all.

We sincerely appreciate the understanding and continued support of our customers and partners during this transformative period.

We will be sharing updates on the new well-being centric concept as they become available. We are excited about this new chapter and remain dedicated to providing exceptional experiences for all who visit Blue Tree Phuket.

Thank you for your trust and support.

*The Phuket News*



# Same-sex marriage bill gets Senate green light

BANGKOK

AFP

Thailand became the first country in South-east Asia to legalise same-sex marriage on June 18, in a historic parliamentary vote hailed as a “victory” by campaigners.

The upper house Senate gave final approval – 130-4, with 18 abstentions – to changes to the marriage law allowing same-sex couples to tie the knot.

The new legislation will now go to King Maha Vajiralongkorn for royal assent and come into force 120 days after publication in the official Royal Gazette.

Thailand will become only the third place in Asia where same-sex couples can get hitched, after Taiwan and Nepal, and activists are hoping the first weddings could be celebrated as early as October.

“We are very proud of everyone involved in this historic moment. You have helped to bring about a massive change,” Plaifah Kyoka



Members of the LGBTQ community celebrate outside Parliament after the Senate passed the final amendment to the same-sex marriage bill on June 18. Photo: AFP

Shodladd, an LGBTQ activist and member of the committee that scrutinised the law, told senators after the vote.

“Today love wins over prejudice.”

Ahead of the vote, Tunyawaj Kamolwongwat, a lawmaker with the progressive Move Forward Party, said the change in the law was “a victory for the people.”

The new legislation changes references to “men,” “women,” “husbands” and “wives” in marriage laws to gender-neutral terms.

It also gives same-sex couples the same rights as het-

erosexual ones when it comes to adoption and inheritance.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, who has been vocal in his support for the LGBTQ community and the bill, opened his official residence to activists and supporters for a celebration after the vote.

“We have fought a long time because we believe in all equal rights,” Srettha wrote on his X account after the vote.

“Today is our day. We celebrate to ‘diverse’ love, not ‘different.’ Love is beautiful and powerful.”

In central Bangkok, a crowd of activists celebrat-

ed the news by watching a drag show and decorating the grounds of the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre with a giant rainbow flag.

One observer, Miles Enriquez-Morales, a tourist from California, said he hoped more countries would follow Thailand’s example.

“With all the anti-LGBTQ sentiment in the U.S. and Europe, I hope that more countries will follow suit in legalising same-sex marriage in different parts of the world,” he said.

Joe Yang, 32, a tourist from Guangzhou, China, who attended the event with friends, said the outcome of the vote was “great news” for Thailand.

“This would not happen in China,” he said. “You know, given the reputation of Thailand I thought that you guys would have legalised it already. I am happy for Thai people.”

More than 30 countries around the world have legalised marriage for all since the Netherlands became the first to celebrate same-sex unions in 2001.



Officers inspect a desktop computer during the June 21 raid. Photo: Bangkok Post

## Facebook page busted for Euro 2024 betting

BANGKOK

THE OWNER OF A Facebook page with over 2 million followers has been arrested on charges of posting online gambling advertisements related to the 2024 UEFA European Championship (Euro 2024), police have said.

Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) officers, armed with a court search warrant, apprehended the 36-year-old suspect identified only as Chavalvit, the owner of Facebook page the ‘Top Comment’ page, at his home in Nakhon Ratchasima province last Friday (June 21).

Police also seized items believed to be linked to the offences, including an iPad Pro 3 tablet, two desktop computers, an iPhone 12 Pro Max and a Kasikornbank account passbook.

The operation was prompted by heightened online ac-

tivity revolving around Euro 2024 football matches, leading the CIB to monitor platforms advertising football betting.

‘Top Comment’, a publicly accessible Facebook forum with a wide-reaching audience exceeding 2mn followers, was among the sites investigators uncovered. The page was seen posting comments containing advertisements for numerous gambling websites, police said.

Mr Chavalvit initially admitted to owning and operating the Facebook page, which has been active since 2014. Its revenue comes primarily from advertisements, with over 90% derived from football betting platforms, he told investigators. Monthly earnings from the advertisements exceed B150,000. The suspect has been charged with promoting gambling activities in violation of the Gambling Act, officials confirmed. *Bangkok Post*

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# Soaring costs squeeze expats and locals alike

Image: Simon Causton

## STEP BY STEP

Simon Causton

Phuket and Thailand, once an oasis for budget-conscious expats seeking an idyllic escape, now face a harsh reality. The cost of living has skyrocketed since 2022, squeezing not just frugal expats but also Thai households already grappling with stagnant wages and high inflation. This isn't just about cutting back on beachside cocktails; basic necessities like food are becoming increasingly expensive.

Take jasmine rice, a staple in the local diet. In 2022, a 5kg bag cost around B120. Today, it can cost upwards of B180, a staggering 50% increase. Vegetables haven't been spared either, with previously affordable options like morning glory and green beans experiencing price hikes of B20-30 per kilogram.

Imagine a Thai family who used to spend B2,000 on groceries monthly. These price hikes could easily push their bill to B2,500 or more, forcing them to make tough choices elsewhere in their budget.

Whilst this might not affect the average expat directly, it leads to a

domino effect of increased costs of goods and services provided elsewhere.

### BEYOND FOOD

The rising cost of living isn't limited to food. Utility bills are also on the rise. Electricity, previously averaging B4 per kilowatt-hour, has crept up to B5 in some areas. While seemingly small, this increase (essentially a 25% increase) makes a noticeable difference for those on a fixed income. Water bills have also seen slight increases.

Transportation costs haven't been immune either. Public transport like songthaew (shared 'minibuses') remains relatively affordable, with fares around B20-30 per trip. However, their routes might not always be convenient. Taxis, once a more occasional expense, are becoming less viable due to rising fuel costs and some drivers seeking inflated fares.

### A PERFECT STORM: INFLATION, STAGNATION AND EXPLOITATIVE RENTS

Thailand's consumer price index (CPI) rose 1.5% year-on-year in May, exceeding expectations and highlighting inflationary pressures. This, coupled with stagnant wages, creates a difficult situation for many Thais. Moody's analysts predict inflation to rise further in the coming months.

### GLOBAL HEADWINDS AND LOCAL CHALLENGES

The global economic outlook for the next three years is also concerning. Krung-sri Economic forecasts sub-par growth, averaging just 3.1%. While potentially helping to cool inflation later in 2024, this sluggishness creates a challenging environment for Thailand's export-reliant economy. Additionally, the ongoing El Niño phenomenon threatens to disrupt food supply chains through drought, potentially impacting Thailand until mid-2025.

Another major issue for Thailand is overemployment, readily apparent in sectors like retail and construction. With rapid technological advancements, this model is unsustainable and could lead to increased unemployment in the future. Reskilling and retraining initiatives will be crucial to equip the Thai workforce for a changing job market.

For expats, the situation is further complicated by a surge in rental prices. The tourism industry, now heavily reliant on Russian visitors due to geopolitical tensions, has seen a shift. While

this influx may seem positive, it has fueled a new problem: greedy landlords.

Seeing an opportunity, some landlords are exploiting the situation by pushing rents upwards under the assumption that expats can afford anything and prefer short-term high-yield rents over longer-staying stable clients. This not only makes Phuket less attractive as an expat destination but also creates a housing bubble waiting to burst with new properties set to flood the market in the next 12-18 months. An inevitable market crash could leave many expats scrambling for affordable accommodations.

Adding insult to injury, with inflation rising in their home countries, many expats are finding essential goods are now cheaper back home. The allure of a tropical paradise fades when the cost of living becomes comparable, if not higher, than familiar comforts.

### HUMAN IMPACT

Statistics paint a clear picture, but the true impact is felt on a personal level. Cameron (name changed to protect privacy), a British expat who has called Phuket home for 10 years, recently shared his story. "The rent for my one-bedroom apartment has gone up by 60% in the past year," he said. "While I love living here, it's becoming increasingly difficult to make ends meet. I'm seriously considering moving back to the UK if things don't improve."

Cameron's story is not unique. Many expats and Thai residents alike are struggling with the rising cost of living in Phuket. The island risks losing its charm and becoming a destination only for the wealthy if these issues are not addressed.

### SUSTAINABILITY OVER EXPLOITATION

The current situation paints a concerning picture for Phuket's future. While tourism is vital, unchecked exploitation can have long-term consequences. Unrealistic rental prices and rising living costs risk driving away not just budget-conscious expats, but also long-term residents who contribute to the local economy and social fabric.

A sustainable approach is needed. Landlords should adopt a more reasonable pricing strategy, understanding that long-term tenants and a stable community benefit everyone. The government must prioritize measures to combat inflation, address food shortages, and stimulate economic growth.



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Photos: Todd Miller

# Got Tribal Instincts? Try Vanuatu



## GLOBETROTTER

Todd Miller

We need to get off this volcano right now, Patrick declared as he grabbed my hand. Immersed in thick toxic volcanic smog on the narrow rim of Mount Yasur with near zero visibility, we slowly descended out of the plume. Mount Yasur, perhaps the world's most accessible active volcano, is known for its frequent explosions. We ventured to the rim in the hope of witnessing a natural fireworks show of agitated lava, but mother nature dished out a very different experience that evening.

Many visitors trek to Vanuatu's Tanna Island for the volcanic experience, but we had more tribal instincts. This mysterious island of 29,000 is home to five indigenous languages and much indigenous culture. Over several days we visited six distinct kastom villages and cargo cults. Kastom communities adhere to traditional lifestyles and restrict the use of modern conveniences (though we did spot an occasional solar panel). Men wear penis sheaths, women grass skirts and most children do not attend public schools.

Yakek village is the most famous kastom village on the island, thanks to the Oscar-nominated film *Tanna*. Doata, self-taught in English and traditional medicine and a senior member of the tribe, functioned as our guide. After touring the village, we returned to the nakamal (traditional meeting place), where we were delighted by three ceremonial dances. After the performance, the villagers of Yakek did something special: every tribe member present lined up to shake our hands.

Our visit to the Lemak tribe was fashioned around an experiential black magic theme, and we were ambushed to demonstrate how the missionaries were initially received. Each tribe charges 2,000 vatu (about US\$16) per person. These fees provide an important source of income for the villages but also, unfortunately, create a veneer of commercialism and performative culture.

The longevity of Doata's father, who lived to 111, points to a fringe benefit of the kastom life. Islands such as Sardinia and Okinawa are widely celebrated blue zones, or areas with exceptional longevity. Tanna Island also deserves membership in the elite blue zone club. We came across several instances of 100-plus lifespans in the villages we visited. I asked Doata the doctor why. He credited the common diet of taro, sweet potatoes and bananas, the prac-

tice of roasting foods, and active daily lives. To this list I would also add the seeming absence of stress, the emphasis on tradition and the tight social connections of the 186-member Yakek tribe. The lush forest cover of the island, rich in nutrients from the volcanic ash spewed by Mount Yasur, also helps.

This village way of life also explains why Vanuatu consistently vaults near the top of the Happy Planet Index, which factors well-being, longevity, inequality and ecological footprint. This probably also explains why, on an encore visit to Yakek a couple days later, we encountered a Polish nuclear physicist dressed in a penis sheath and croc footwear. The Pole first visited the village in 2010, and every year he spends a month living with the Yakek tribe. "I love it here," he told me. "I get six weeks' vacation every year. Why bother figuring out where else to go?"

Tanna Island is also home to cargo cults, myth-dream movements that flourished during and after World War II and believe in the appearance of an abundance of goods. During the war, islanders observed vast amounts of materiel airdropped to troops. Goods literally fell from the sky. We visited two such ongoing movements on Tanna, and both are mind-blowing in their logic.

The John Frum movement, which believes an American servicemen will deliver wealth to its followers, sports its own flag alongside the American flag which flies prominently in the nakamal. The adults must have been mightily disappointed when this American showed up empty-handed, but the children curiously and enthusiastically welcomed us.

The Prince Philip movement, similarly, worships the late Duke of Edinburgh and believes he will return to his destined home on Tanna and bring with him prosperity to all. When I asked whether the death of Prince Philip complicates matters, our village guide told us that his spirit endures.

These village visits on Tanna were fascinating, but our sojourn to Pentecost Island to observe the land-diving ritual was thrilling. Land diving is bungy jumping without a bungy. Every Saturday in spring during the yam harvest, certain men on Pentecost jump off wooden towers around 20-30 metres high with two banyan tree vines wrapped around their ankles. They believe a good dive ensures a bountiful harvest. On the Saturday of our visit, land dives occurred in three separate locations on the island. The land-diving is also a rite of passage for some young boys. When a boy is ready to become a man, he dives in front of his elders. We did not observe any boys making the

dive during our visit, but many were on hand for the singing and dancing and the spectacle of it all.

The event takes place on a steep muddy hillside. Throughout the ritual, segregated men and women perform ceremonial dance and song on the slope overlooking the tower. On the platform, each diver performs a sort of prayer ritual on the ledge, with toes curled over the edge, for balance. The men don't jump; they dive headfirst. As they approach the ground, the vines become taut before jerking the diver backward into the muddy slope, which cushions the impact. Two men are stationed at the base of the tower to maintain the vines and release the diver's feet from the vines using a machete, and an elder supervises the safety precautions.

We witnessed ten successful dives. This should bode well for a bountiful yam harvest.

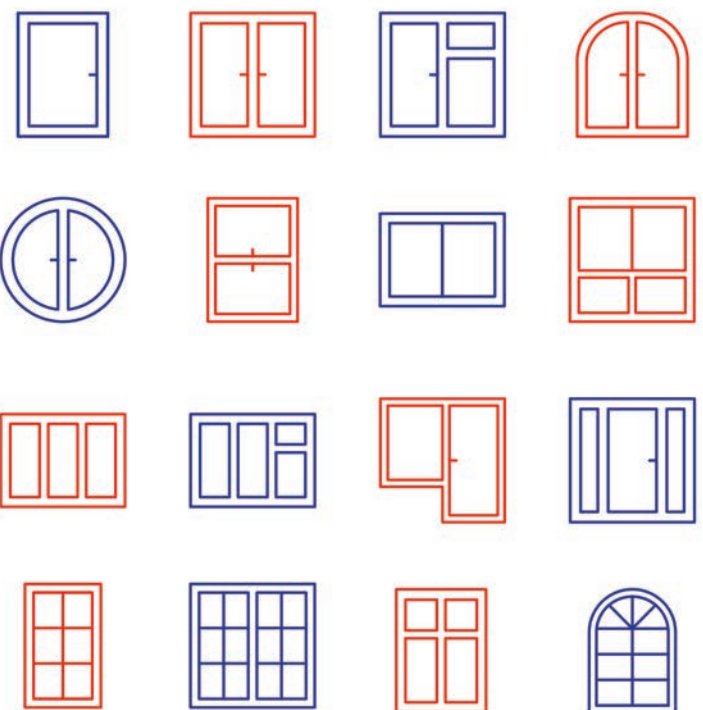


For more details of this trip, visit The Phuket Globetrotter on *The Phuket News'* website.

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



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POP QUIZ

1. What moniker based on a weather phenomenon is used to describe South Africa's multicultural diversity?

2. Do dolphins and whales sleep?

3. Who was the third astronaut on the Apollo 11 moon landing mission with Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin?

4. What in Spain is El Gordo?

5. 'The First Day of Summer' is an annual public holiday celebrated in which European country in April?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. State in NE India

6. Sombrero, e.g.

9. Table part

14. Part of an act

15. Bar stock

16. Pacific island

17. Flowering tropical shrubs

20. Leader born in Georgia

21. Boston suburb

22. Four quarters

23. Taboos

24. Kimono tie

27. First place?

33. Took

34. Scottish cap

35. Hidden

36. Become accustomed (to)

39. Drops on blades

41. Butter up?

42. Harangue

44. Adage

46. Junior, e.g.

47. Bible location

51. Landscaper's need

52. Kind of pedal

53. Ill temper

54. Number following a Henry

Down

1. Egyptian snakes

2. "Beat it!"

3. Word repeated after "Que," in song

4. Kind of recording

5. City north of Mecca

6. Mins. and mins.

7. Sailor's affirmative

8. Non-stick material

9. Before long

10. Instrument

11. French way

12. Hart Trophy winner, 1970-72

13. Fraternity letters

18. Not moving

19. Disinfectant brand

23. Ruin

24. "Potemkin" setting

25. Determined to

26. Aim

27. Oliver's family

28. Boss

29. Became used to

30. Family man

31. Groovy

32. Zeta follower

37. Capitol V.I.P.: abbr.

38. Suffix with pamphlet

40. Took place

43. Stray calf

45. Consider

48. For the most part

49. Least interesting

50. Emissary

54. Emphatic no

55. "Terrible" czar

57. Completed

58. Look like a wolf

59. Sole

60. Glass of public radio

61. A Bobbsey twin

62. Canine command

63. Bit of business attire

64. Chop down

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |    |
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| 33 |    |    |    | 34 |    |    |    | 35 |    |    |    |    |    |
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| 47 |    |    |    |    |    | 48 |    |    | 49 | 50 |    |    |    |
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|    |    |    | 54 | 55 |    |    |    |    | 56 |    | 57 | 58 | 59 |
| 60 | 61 | 62 |    |    |    |    | 63 | 64 |    |    |    |    |    |
| 65 |    |    |    |    |    | 66 |    |    |    | 67 |    |    |    |
| 68 |    |    |    |    |    | 69 |    |    |    | 70 |    |    |    |

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

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

0.1

of a second is how fast a Venus flytrap can close on an insect.

75

percent of the world's food today is generated from only 12 plants and five animal species.

500

shades of grey can be detected by your retina's light-and-dark detecting rod cells.

2,653


firearms were found by TSA airport screeners in 2015 while searching carry-on bags – about 83% of them were loaded.

3.2 billion

is the current total estimated number of video gamers in the world (up from 2.8bn in 2021)

Source: [Uberfacts](#)

ISLAND VIEW



Phuket Town. Photo by Rachael Engel

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

June 28, 1997

Holyfield–Tyson II: Mike Tyson is disqualified in the third round for biting a piece off Evander Holyfield's ear.

June 29, 1613

The Globe Theatre in London burns to the ground.

June 30, 2019


Donald Trump becomes the first sitting US President to visit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea).

July 1, 1997

China resumes sovereignty over the city-state of Hong Kong, ending 156 years of British colonial rule. The handover ceremony is attended by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, King Charles III (then Prince Charles of Wales), and Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

July 2, 1937

Amelia Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan are last heard from over the Pacific Ocean while attempting to make the first equatorial round-



Earhart and Noonan in Darwin, Australia, on June 28, 1937.

the-world flight.

July 3, 987 AD

Hugh Capet is crowned King of France, the first of the Capetian dynasty that would rule France until the French Revolution in 1792.

July 4, 1892

Western Samoa changes the International Date Line, causing Monday (July 4) to occur twice, resulting in a year with 367 days. Source: [Wikipedia](#)

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The **map** of PHUKET English 中文 Русский

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SAT17AUG



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**Date:** August 17, 2024 - Saturday  
**Registration:** 10.30 hr.  
**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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**RESERVATION:**  
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This event is jointly organized by Asia Mice Planner, Malaysian Club Thailand, Only One Tour International & Malaysian Thai Friends Group

SUN30JUN



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WED3JUL



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## SKÅL INTERNATIONAL PHUKET DINNER - JUNE

Over 50 Skål members and guests enjoyed a 'Black & Gold'-themed evening at Club Med Phuket on Thursday, June 20. Throughout the evening the camaraderie of Skål was celebrated and dancing shoes were put to the test with popular tunes through the ages after the enormous buffet dinner, spun by the resident DJ. For more information on Skål International Phuket visit them at [facebook.com/SkalPhuket](https://facebook.com/SkalPhuket)



## THE PHUKET PERANAKAN FESTIVAL

The three-day festival began on Friday (June 21), with a cultural exchange workshop featuring participants from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, alongside the Phuket Peranakan community and representatives from six other Andaman and southern provinces. The grand parade through the heart of Phuket Town was held last Saturday (June 22), with Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Thapanee Kiatpaiboon joining Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat and Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob; Anchalee Vanich Thepbutr, Chairman of the Advisory Council of the Peranakan Association of Thailand; and Dr Kosol Taenguthai, President of the Peranakan Association of Thailand.

Photos: PR Phuket



## Thai MotoGP tickets snapped up in a flash

### MOTO GP

GRAND STAND TICKETS for the PT Grand Prix of Thailand 2024 were all sold out within minutes on the first day of sale on June 18.

A total of 10,000 Grandstand tickets for the October race were all purchased in three minutes and 12.19 seconds as the online sale began at 2pm.

The fifth edition of the Thailand race will be held at Buriram's Chang International Circuit on Oct 25-27.

"MotoGP in Thailand is a mega event and a major economic driver, something that is in line with our sport tourism policy," said Phonpoom Vipattipumprates, vice minister for Tourism and Sports.

"This year Buriram is fully prepared to welcome over 200,000 visitors, including tourists, competitors, teams, media representatives, and event staff, across the three-day event," said Buriram governor Narucha Kosacivilize.

The Thailand leg is



Jorge Martin in action at last year's Thai MotoGP at Buriram. Photo: AFP

one of the 20 races on the premier motorcycle racing calendar which will be broadcast in over 200 countries to more than 800 million spectators worldwide.

Tickets for the race are sold as three-day packages across four categories. The Grand Stand tickets for the three-day event are the most expensive at B5,000, Side Stand tickets cost B2,000, Rider Stand tickets B3,000 and Brand Stand tickets B2,000.

PT Max Card Plus members will get a 25% discount while PT Max Card Prestige, PT Max Card members will receive a 20% discount.

Tickets can be bought at 7-Eleven stores nationwide or online at allticket.com. Physical ticket redemption will be available from Aug 19 to Oct 10. *Bangkok Post*

# Max edges Lando in Spain

### FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato  
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Max Verstappen pinched victory from a faster Lando Norris at the 2024 Spanish Grand Prix last Sunday (June 23), confirming Red Bull Racing has lost its previously dominant competitive advantage over the field this season.

The Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya is widely regarded as a litmus test for general car performance owing to its layout of mixed-speed corners and long front straight.

While Red Bull Racing continued its winning ways, McLaren was the faster car on the day, with only a slow start costing pole-getter Norris a chance to convert.

Verstappen's flawless start ran Norris side by side into the first turn. The McLaren driver attempted to squeeze the reigning world champion against the grass on the inside line, but there was nothing he could do to halt the Red Bull Racing car's momentum, and he ceded the position under brakes.

But George Russell, starting fourth, surprised both with a gutsy around-the-outside move at turn 1 to take the lead, setting himself up as a race-defining obstacle ahead of the two protagonists.

However, Russell's Mercedes car was no match for Verstappen and Norris, who were in a league of their own all weekend.

Verstappen was able to manage his tyre temperatures and control the pace of



Verstappen celebrates his win. Photo: AFP

the race with the benefit of clear air and Norris didn't find it easy to follow him. His McLaren was rapid in the corners but slower down the straight than the Mercedes, making passing difficult on similar tyres.

Instead McLaren rolled the dice on an alternative strategy targeted at victory by keeping Norris out six laps longer than Verstappen before making his first stop, earning himself a crucial six-lap tyre offset that he wielded to set some ferocious times early in the middle stint.

However, Norris was then caught behind both Mercedes, resulting in 12 wasted laps for as he only took two seconds out of Verstappen's lead, which left him nine seconds adrift.

He halved that gap in the following

eight laps before the second pit stops but the lap count was against him. Despite eating easily into Verstappen's lead, the margin was a tantalising but insurmountable 2.3 seconds at the beginning of the final lap – too great for Norris to overcome and Verstappen was home after a race-long defence of his unlikely lead.

Lewis Hamilton overcame Russell in the final stint with better tyre strategy to step onto the podium for the first time this season, with Russell fourth ahead of bickering Ferrari teammates Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz.

Oscar Piastri finished seventh ahead of an underwhelming Sergio Pérez in eighth and a surprise second consecutive double points finish for Alpine, with Pierre Gasly beating Esteban Ocon to 10<sup>th</sup>.

## Nadal opts to skip Wimbledon to focus on Paris Olympics

### TENNIS

RAFAEL NADAL HAS confirmed he will miss this year's Wimbledon Championship in order to focus on the Paris Olympics, which will be played on the clay courts at Roland Garros.

Nadal, 38, lost in the first round at Roland Garros last month and indicated he was likely to skip Wimbledon, played on grasscourts, where he was champion in 2008 and 2010.

The injury-plagued Spaniard, who has slumped to 264 in the world, said after his exit to eventual runner-up Alexander Zverev in Paris that switching surfaces would not be "smart".

The 14-time French Open champion, only returned to competition in April after missing most of the past 16 months through injury.

"I will play at the summer Olympics in Paris, my last Olympics. With this goal, we believe that



Nadal at the 2022 Wimbledon Championships. Photo: AFP

the best for my body is not to change surface and keep playing on clay until then," he said on June 13.

"It's for this reason that I will miss playing at the Championships this year at Wimbledon. I am saddened not to be able to live this year the great atmosphere of that amazing event that will always be in my heart, and

be with all the British fans that always gave me great support," he added.

Spanish tennis chiefs have also announced that 22-time Grand Slam winner Nadal and recently crowned French Open champion Carlos Alcaraz would be part of the country's team at the Games next month.

AFP

## Warning signs for coaches



### THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

WHEN IT GETS TOUGH WHO DRIVES performance? This is a question both Eddie Jones and Warren Gatland are now facing following heavy defeats for their respective teams last Saturday (June 22).

Jones' Japan were hammered 17-52 by England and Gatland's Wales similarly dismantled 41-13 by South Africa.

While England won with ease, they will be concerned with their slow start, something Japan failed to take advantage of. In a week's time the All-Blacks won't be so negligent.

Wales, on the other hand, have become a team of unfamiliar players. Gone are the days when the player's names rolled off one's tongue. South Africa has depth of talent and a "bomb squad" of replacements, especially forwards who cancel out the sun when they run on the field. You wouldn't want their food bill.

So how do losing coaches cope with substantial first game losses?

Many base their study and development of team performance and player analysis on four component parts: Technical, Tactical, Physical and Mental. Video analysis of team performance will highlight the good and the bad. However, when you are watching top players in international teams getting beat by big scores, where do you go? Analysis and reviews will take place, some in private, some with the squad and some with individuals. New combinations will be considered in the hope that tries will flow.

The late great Leicester Tigers coach, Chalkie White, described attacking play as follows: "using



Eddie Jones has questions to ask. Photo: AFP

the ball is a blend of understanding with attitude; of team awareness with individual virtuosity; of practised patterns with spontaneous reaction. The blending is elusive and short-lived."

If you believe in this maxim, you have limited time to reboot, because you are on the road and the next big encounter is imminent.

England will next take their growing confidence and self belief to the ultimate challenge of two tests against the All Blacks, the second at Eden Park where the hosts never lose. Whether the win in Japan will benefit England or demand changes, only time will tell.

Selection will consume Scott Robertson, the new All Black coach. Winning in New Zealand can be an indicator of future World Cup success, as it did with England in 2003.

Wales take their bruised and battered squad to Australia more in hope than expectation. Australia has a new coach in Joe Schmidt but morale is low down under and the future of Super Rugby is being considered. A Wallaby loss may confirm a negative decision.

*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](http://www.rugbycoachingconsultancy.com).*



# Euro 2024 enters knockouts

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Germany survived a scare to finish top of Group A at Euro 2024 as Niclas Fuellkrug's stoppage-time goal rescued a 1-1 draw against Switzerland last Sunday (June 23).

Dan Ndoye's first-half goal in Frankfurt had put Switzerland on course to climb above hosts Germany into top spot.

But Fuellkrug's late header ensured Julian Nagelsmann's side advanced to the last 16 in pole position with 7 points.

The Germans, who last won the Euros in 1996, will take on the Group C runners-up – at time of press Denmark – in the last 16.

Meanwhile in Stuttgart, Scotland were unable to secure the victory that would likely have taken them into the knockout stage of a major tournament for the first time as they were sunk by a goal 10 minutes into stoppage-time from Hungary's Kevin Csoboth.

In 11 previous appearances at major competitions – eight World Cups and three European Championships – Scotland had bowed out at the group stage and once again they fly home early after taking just one point from their three matches.



Germany's Niclas Fuellkrug (No. 9) scores the equaliser against Switzerland last Sunday (June 23). Photo: AFP

## HISTORIC

Spain topped Group B with three wins to advance, with Monday's 1-0 victory over Albania coming after they defeated defending champions Italy by the same scoreline on June 20.

Italy managed to salvage second place and progression to the knockout stage after a dramatic late equaliser from Mattia Zaccagni saw the Azzurri snatch a 1-1 draw with Croatia on Monday, sparking an explosion of joy among the Italian fans and even a sprint up the line from 65-year-old coach Luciano Spalletti.

European champions in 2016, Portugal are among the favourites to win the title in Germany and they lived up to their status with a comprehensive 3-0 victory against Turkey to secure first place in Group F on Saturday (June 22), thanks to goals from Bernardo Silva, Bruno Fernandes and a Samet Akaydin own goal.

Euros debutants Georgia claimed a historic first ever point at a major tournament in a 1-1 draw with the Czech Republic on Saturday thanks to Georges Mikautadze's penalty late

in the first half before Patrik Schick equalised after the break.

Both sides now have a solitary point meaning Turkey, behind Portugal on 3 points at time of press ahead of the final round of games, are most likely to advance.

## TEARS OF JOY

Belgium's 1-0 defeat to Slovakia was the major shock of the opening round, but they made the most of a fast start in Cologne on Saturday to get their tournament back on track.

Youri Tielemans scored after two

minutes to burst Romania's bubble after their impressive 3-0 win over Ukraine in the opening game in Group E.

Captain Kevin De Bruyne rounded off a fine individual display with the second goal to seal victory 10 minutes from time.

Ukraine's players shed tears of joy as the team playing in their first international tournament since Russian forces invaded in February 2022 came from behind to beat Slovakia 2-1.

At time of press, all four sides in Group E were level on 3 points going into their final set of fixtures on Wednesday (June 26), with Belgium playing Ukraine and Slovakia against Romania.

Despite a narrow 1-0 against Serbia in their first game, England laboured to a 1-1 draw against Denmark on June 20 meaning they had to claim a point against Slovenia on Tuesday to progress, with the winner of the Denmark versus Serbia tie likely to join them.

France earned a 0-0 draw against the Netherlands without the injured Kylian Mbappe, leaving both teams on 4 points ahead on their final group games against Poland and Austria respectively on Wednesday. Austria were on 3 points at time of press following their commanding 3-1 win against Poland last Friday, meaning any one of the three teams could advance.

## Ten Hag to stay at Man United

### FOOTBALL

ERIK TEN HAG IS TO remain as manager of Manchester United following a post-season performance review by club chiefs.

A poor second campaign for Ten Hag ended on a high note as he led United to a shock 2-1 victory in the FA Cup final against rivals Manchester City on May 26.

But the build-up to the match at Wembley was dominated by talk over the Dutchman's future after a report said he would be sacked by United's new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe regardless of the result.

United finished eighth in the Premier League – their lowest placing since 1990 – and crashed out of the Champions League at the group stage.

After the FA Cup final, the former Ajax boss, 54, admitted he did not know what the future held for him.

Ten Hag ended a six-year trophy drought for United in his first season by lifting the League Cup in 2023 and finished third in the league,



Ten Hag lifts the FA Cup. Photo: AFP

encouraging fans that they might launch a Premier League title bid in 2023/24.

But they lost 14 games and ended with a negative goal difference, finishing a whopping 31 points behind champions Manchester City.

Meanwhile, Fabian Hurzeler became the youngest full-time manager of an English Premier League club after Brighton announced on June 16 they had appointed the 31-year-old as their new head coach.

Texas-born Hurzeler, who guided St Pauli to German football's Bundesliga second division title last season, will now be in charge of a Seagulls squad where several players, including James Milner, 38, Danny

Welbeck, 33, and Lewis Dunk, 32 are all older than him.

But Brighton chairman Tony Bloom said Hurzeler's work with St Pauli made him a "standout candidate" to succeed Roberto De Zerbi, who left the Amex Stadium at the end of last season.

Elsewhere, newly-promoted Premier League club Leicester City have appointed former Nottingham Forest boss Steve Cooper as their new manager.

Cooper fills the vacuum left by Enzo Maresca, who left for the vacant post at Chelsea earlier this month.

Cooper's reign starts with a home game against Tottenham on Aug 19.

AFP

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# Sport



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# ARC OF TRIUMPH

## Team Dojo continue their global ascent

Team members from the Dojo at Blue Tree Phuket in front of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Photo: Alexis Plantard



### MMA

**Ben Tirebuck**

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The wonder team from Dojo at Blue Tree Phuket have been at it once again, wowing fans and storming opponents at tournaments across the world, from Paris to Phang Nga, and New Zealand to Georgia.

Their latest run of standout performances started with three of the young students from the Cherng Talay-based mixed martial arts gym competing in the under 12 age group of judo at the illustrious "Ile de la France" Championships in Paris on May 26, having won their respective qualifiers several weeks earlier in the French capital.

Team captain Gabin excelled by winning his five contests in the 38-kilogram weight class to secure gold and title of champion, while teammates Tomo won three of his five contests to finish 5<sup>th</sup> overall in the 50kg class and Oscar won four of his six bouts to finish 7<sup>th</sup> in the 34kg class.

Their performances left Dojo

lead instructor Alexis Plantard beaming with pride and he was quick to point out how impressive their respective achievements were.

"That tournament is considered the highest level of judo for that age class in the world and the competition is fierce, with over 40 athletes per weight class," the French national told *The Phuket News*.

"Athletes representing some of the most elite clubs were competing, with all clubs in France sending their students under the age of 12 to compete. Clubs that have decades of experience building world champions where the facilities are first class, likewise the coaching staff – infact, all the opposing coaches were medalists and ex-national team athletes.

"Our modest 170 square meter Dojo has just 25 members and has only been running for a few years. To therefore see three of the team perform at that level and put us on the map is incredible. They gave absolutely everything they had to make their dreams come true."

### JAW-DROPPING

The team then certainly clocked

up the air miles as the following weekend (June 2-3) they competed at the New Zealand international open in Wellington, once again shining to take home seven gold and two silver medals.

As he often does, coach Alexis led by example in getting the ball rolling on day one of competition, sweeping all in front of him to secure a hugely impressive five gold medals in the 90kg class.

No doubt inspired by their coach's feat, the team then stepped up to deliver, with Oscar not only winning gold in his division but finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in the open weight division for 11-14-year-olds.

Oliver won his division to secure gold and also won silver in the open weight class for 8-10-year-olds, while Kiichi won silver in his division and ended a hugely credible 5<sup>th</sup> in the open weight for 8-10-year-olds.

Following a weekend's break it was back on the road again as the team travelled the short distance off Phuket island to take part in the Phang Nga Jiu-Jitsu Cup on June 15.

A total 15 athletes were representing the Dojo in the two distinct classes of traditional fighting and Ne

Waza and they did so in dominating style, winning a jaw-dropping 27 gold, 8 silver and 2 bronze medals.

Captain Gabin won 2 gold, as did teammates Oscar, Tomo, Damir, Sota, Meera, Ray, Tatiana, Paul and Rayan.

Kiichi, David, Nathon, Lea, Jonathan and Leo all won 1 gold and 1 silver medal each, Oliver won 1 gold, Alex 2 silver, while Mayel secured 2 bronze. Best fighter of the tournament awards also went to Oscar and Tomo in their respective classes.

### LONE WOLF

Alexis also competes in competitions on his own, most recently in Pathum Thani last Friday (June 21) at the Grand Prix Thailand Jiu-Jitsu Open, securing a silver medal in the Ne Waza division and a bronze in the traditional fighting division, where he was defeated by 1 point.

There was no time to celebrate, however, as it was straight from the podium to the airport to catch a flight to Istanbul for the European Championships of Kurash wrestling.

Previously, Alexis, 37, took on some of the world's best at the

Georgia Judo Open Championships in Tbilisi on May 11-12. Freely admitting he was out of his comfort zone at what is considered the toughest judo competition in Europe, Alexis excelled to take bronze against renowned Georgian athlete Shengelia Zurab in what he described as "one of the most pleasing and beautiful moments of my career."

This pursuit of excellence on a personal level sets the standard for Alexis' students, who continue to develop at an impressive rate. Having dominated in judo and jiu-jitsu competitions in Thailand and South East Asia so extensively, it also explains his desire to have the team increasingly compete at international tournaments where the levels are so much higher.

The tournament in Paris in late May is just one example of such, where team Dojo shone to put themselves on the world stage. The incredible arc of progress will no doubt continue for the team under Alexis' expert tuition, something he is extremely proud of.

"C'est magnifique," he says with a huge smile.