

**DANGEROUS LAND EXCAVATION UNDER INVESTIGATION > PAGE 5**

## DANGER ZONE



A survey team inspects the Patong Hill landslide site before deeming it 'safe' for people to walk past. Photo: Phuket Info Center

## OFFICIALS SCRAMBLE FOR DETOURS TO RESTORE FLOWING ACCESS TO PATONG

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Officials this past week have scrambled to create alternative ways for people to access Patong following the landslide last week that collapsed the road over Patong Hill, cutting off the main road to Phuket's busiest tourism town.

The road, Phra Barami Rd (Route 4029), was closed to all traffic as soon as officials became aware of the landslide amid heavy rain on Oct 19. The closure forced all traffic to and from Patong to divert through either Kamala to the north of Patong or Chalong-Kata-Karon to the south.

The detours suffered immediate problems, with the Kamala route impeded by recurring landslides affecting roads through the area, and tailbacks at Chalong Circle extended more than a kilometre long.

### SAFETY FIRST

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew last Friday (Oct 21) called for officials to exercise 'safety first' as the top priority when carrying out repairs to roads affected by landslides across the island, including the road over Patong Hill.

Governor Narong inspected the site while a survey team from Kathu Municipality and the Phuket Highways

Office took soil samples to analyse the strength of the soil layer around the remaining section of road affected by the landslide, some 500m downhill from the Patong City sign.

The team gathered samples from four locations on the road by drilling holes about two metres deep. They also took soil samples from the embankment. The inspection was "to assess the safety risks in opening routes for people and tourists to travel back and forth [over the hill]," said an official report of the tests.

However, the soil tests returned unsurprising results: The soil was heavily laden with sand, which when water-logged became prone to move-

ment – a fact already made obvious by the exposed earth at the landslide site that was plain for everyone to see.

Not mentioned in the reports was the single drain pipe exposed by the landslide, showing how little effort had gone into directing water from the hill side of the road to the downhill side. The pipe just ended with water left to oversoak the earth that was holding up the road. Once oversoaked, the earth gave way and slid down the hill, taking a section of the road with it.

"The most important thing from the disaster that is happening now [floods and landslides] is that the safety of the people and tourists who...

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# News



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## Scramble for safe routes to Patong

*Continued from page 1*

...use the route must be taken into account. Therefore, the route must be temporarily closed for everyone's safety," Governor Narong said.

However, just 48 hours later Governor Narong approved for people needing to get over the hill to be allowed to walk past the landslide site in order to reach a free shuttle service being provided from the Patong City sign into Patong Town.

### WALK THE WALK

Officials on Monday (Oct 24) opened a new walking path up Patong Hill so people can choose to not walk past the landslide zone where the road had collapsed.

The path starts on the left side of the Patong Hill road opposite the Patong Shooting Range and leads up the steep hill to the Patong City sign located beyond the landslide danger zone.

Kathu District Chief Siwat Rawangkul was at the site on Monday to select where the path would traverse and coordinate the installation of the walking path, which is less than 300 metres long.

The first 150m was described as "normal walking", while the remaining 150m was a "stairway leading up". Handrails made from hewn branches were installed "for safety" and sandbags were placed over muddy areas to help prevent people using the path from slipping.

A free food and water break point and mobile toilets were made available at the Patong City sign, nearly as a reward for making it up the steep slope.

The path is open 24 hours a day, lighting has been installed and administrative officers, police and navy personnel had been assigned to provide security, Mr Siwat said, adding that the path was a temporary measure only until better long-term



Work is already underway on building a new road over the hills from behind the reservoir in Chalong to 50 Pi Rd in Patong. Photo: PR Phuket

provisions could be made.

From the Kathu side, motorbike riders can park in front of the police checkpoint blocking traffic from continuing up the hill and start the walk from there. Car drivers can park at the defunct floating market in Kathu and take a free shuttle bus service from there to the checkpoint. The shuttle service operates from 7am to 8pm.

From the Patong side, motorbike riders and car drivers can park at Noen Tong Restaurant or take the free shuttle bus from in front of the Patong Municipality Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office, located next to the main Patong Municipality offices on Ratpatannusorn Rd. The free shuttle service operates from 7am to 9pm.

Meanwhile, officials on Monday night issued a notice reminding people that all vehicles – including motorbikes – are prohibited from

passing the landslide zone as a safety precaution.

### REPAIRS

What immediate options were available for repairs to Patong Hill road were tabled at a meeting chaired by Governor Narong last Sunday (Oct 23).

The Phuket Highways Office had already surveyed the damage using a drone and estimated temporary repairs at B4.9 million.

"The model [for the temporary repairs] will use a pile driving system and a retaining wall to act as a barrier," said a report of the meeting.

The money for immediate repairs should be provided by the Phuket office of the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department (DDPM-Phuket), which has a separate budget for disasters.

DDPM-Phuket and the Highways Office were to prepare all the

necessary documents for Governor Narong to sign and approve as soon as possible. Then the authorities would expedite the process of finding contractors to proceed with repairs, the report said.

For the permanent solution, Kathu Municipality had prepared a budget of B17mn.

"The Phuket Highways Office will be responsible for designing, repairing and improving the road according to civil engineering principles for maximum strength and safety," the report added.

Permanent repairs should begin straight after the temporary fixes are done, it said.

The Expressway Authority of Thailand (EXAT) under the Ministry of Transport confirmed on Monday that it was trying to expedite the "Patong Tunnel" project, which has already been approved by Cabinet to the tune of B14.67 billion.

The project, officially called the Kathu-Patong Expressway Project, is on track for construction to begin in December 2023 and open for service in December 2027.

The project is currently in the tender-offer phase, which is strictly regulated by laws.

### SOUTHERN ROUTE

Meanwhile, officials have already begun work to build a road to traverse three kilometres over the hills in the south of the island, connecting the road behind the Klong Kata reservoir in Chalong to 50 Pi Rd in Patong.

Diggers and graders provided by the PPAO were already on site, clearing and levelling the dirt surface on Monday.

If the work is not delayed by rain, the road should be open to traffic within about two weeks, Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob said.

The road had been proposed as an alternative route to access Patong for long over a decade, but until now had been repeatedly denied because the road would have to pass through protected forest.

Opening the road will be only a temporary measure while the road over Patong Hill remains closed to vehicles, explained Governor Narong, who also inspected the site on Monday.

Joining him were Phuket Vice Governors Pichet Panapong and Amnuay Pinsuwan, PPAO President Rewat Areerob, along with Chalong Mayor Thanaporn Ongsantiphap and Patong Mayor Chalernsak Maneesri.

Also on site were officers from the Royal Forest Department under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE).

The dirt road that used to be a track is currently not usable for regular vehicles, said Mr Rewat.

"At some points soil slides down onto the road. Other parts are marked by ditches caused by erosion. Some sections of the road have very steep gradients," he explained.

"But when the soil has been leveled and graded, the PPAO will bring mixed rocks to fill and use a compactor for strength and complete it with a smooth road surface," he said.

"It is a distance of about three kilometers. It will be open for temporary use only until the repairs to the main road to Patong are completed. If there is no rain, we expect to open the road to vehicles in about two weeks," he added.

The forced closure of the road over Patong Hill made opening the Chalong-Patong road a necessity, Mr Rewat noted.

"If the road remains closed for a long time it will damage the economy of Patong. Therefore, it is necessary to have a backup route," he said.

## 'Ghost hotel' at landslide site on bypass road to be demolished

THE ABANDONED hotel on the bypass road at the site of a landslide last week will be demolished, officials have confirmed.

The decision flies in the face of officials repeatedly claiming that since the buildings have stood at the site for more than 30 years, they pose no danger to people passing below.

According to official reports on Monday (Oct 24), the owner of the land has now "agreed" to demolish the buildings.

Of note, the official reports made no mention of any requests by officials to have the buildings demolished, and make no mention that officials now consider the buildings to be a danger to passing motorists.

The northbound lanes past the abandoned hotel were closed after a landslide occurred right in front of the structures twice, first on Oct 19 and again at night on Oct 20, spilling mud, dirt and debris, including a large tree, onto the lanes of the



Photo: PR Phuket

usually very busy road. No people were injured in either incident.

News that the buildings will now be demolished came after a meeting chaired by

Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan last Sunday (Oct 23).

Vice Governor Amnuay described the decision as "a way to prevent future landslides in the area".

Representatives of the landowner joined the meeting, Vice Governor Amnuay confirmed.

"The company is willing to demolish [the buildings] and will send the matter to Ratsada Municipality and the Phuket Provincial Office of Public Works and Town &

Country Planning to request permission to demolish the buildings on October 25, 2022 [Tuesday], then the demolition will be done immediately. It will take about two weeks," Vice Governor Amnuay said.

Meanwhile, the northbound lanes of the bypass road remain closed past the landslide site. Until further notice, all traffic is to continue operating past the site by sharing the southbound lanes.

*The Phuket News*

# Hillside building slides, collapses after rains

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The owner of the 32-room dormitory, built on a hill in Soi Prayoon 2, off Yaowarat Rd, ordered all people to evacuate the building before it collapsed at about 11:30pm on Oct 20.

One tenant said he heard a loud boom the previous night (Oct 19), followed by another loud noise around 3am the next morning.

“It sounded like cement cracking, but I couldn’t be sure and I didn’t pay it any mind,” he added.

When he woke in the morning (Oct 20) he noticed cracks in the ceiling in his room. “Other people noticed cracks in the cement, and started thinking it was unsafe,” the tenant said.

Tenants started clearing their belongings from their rooms at about 8am. By mid-day no people were left staying in the building, he said.

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew along with Vice Governors Amnuay Pinsu-



A disaster official stands beside the remains of the collapsed part of the building on Oct 20. Photo: PR Phuket

wan and Anupap Rodkwan Yodrabam were at the scene of the collapse that night.

The area was ordered sealed off and the power supply to the building was shut off for safety.

Thammarit Rithipakdi, Civil Engineer Specialist at the Phuket Office of Public Works and Town Planning, said the collapse was due to heavy continuous rain for days waterlogging the soil beneath the building and the soil on the slope behind it.

“The initial cause is be-

lieved to be the soil from the hill behind the building moving down [the slope], causing the building to move,” he said.

A main support beam in the building had broken under the strain, causing the front of the building to give way, he added.

“Further inspections are needed, but the building appears to be unable to maintain stability. It might be able to be repaired, or it may have to be demolished completely,” he said.

Mr Thammarit urged all

owners and occupants of buildings on or near slopes to check their buildings for signs of strain.

“People need to beware if their buildings are no longer safe,” he said.

By last Sunday night (Oct 23) it was confirmed that the building will be demolished.

Officials made no mention of any investigation into whether the building complied with legal construction requirements, or whether the building should have been allowed on the steep slope.

## Reservoir levels stabilise as rains begin to ease

THE ISLAND’S THREE main reservoirs are still full to the brim, but the situation is gradually improving due to less rainfall, the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) reported last Saturday (Oct 22).

The water levels in all three reservoirs had decreased compared with just 24 hours earlier, and were predicted to decrease further due to less rainfall in the area.

The Phuket Irrigation Office had begun discharging water from the reservoirs days earlier to stave off overflowing. The PIO was expected to greatly reduce the water release within days, PR Phuket said.

According to the announcement posted on Oct 22, the water levels at the reservoirs was as follows:

Bang Wad Reservoir in Kathu was 102.5% full, with 10.45 million cubic meters of water (down from 10.47mn cubic meters the day before). The amount of rainwater received during the previous 24 hours totaled 8.5mm (down from 39.5mm the previous day).

Bang Neow Dum Reservoir in Srisoonthorn was 102% full, with 7.2mn cubic meters



Photo: PR Phuket

of water (down from 7.23mn cubic meters the day before). The amount of rainwater received during the previous 24 hours totaled 7.4mm (down from 44.7mm).

Klong Kata Reservoir in Chalong was 104% full, with 4.16mn cubic meters of water (up from 4.14mn cubic meters the day before). The amount of rainwater received during the previous 24 hours totaled 40.05mm (down from 40.6mm).

The Southern Meteorological Center, West Coast, based near Phuket International Airport, recorded only light to medium rains last Saturday (Oct 22), with only sporadic passing thundershowers expected during the past week, not the incessant torrential downpours that Phuket suffered last week.

The Phuket News

## Russian tourist missing

AT TIME OF PRESS search teams had yet to locate missing 53-year-old Russian tourist Elena Radchenko, last seen on Nai Thon beach before noon on Oct 20.

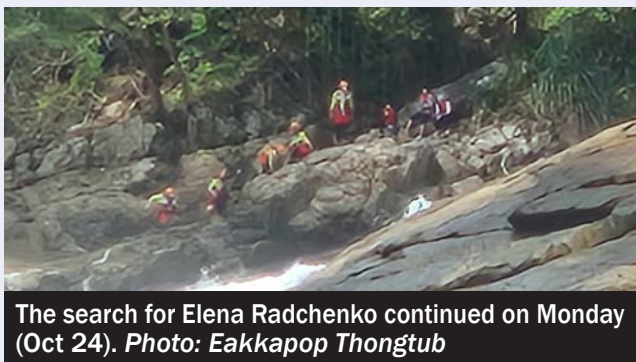
Search teams scoured the north of Phuket on Monday (Oct 24) after day three of the search brought no sign of the missing woman.

Ms Radchenko was last seen at Nai Thon Beach about noon on Oct 20 after swimmers were asked to exit the water as a storm was approaching.

Ms Radchenko was seen making it back to shore with other swimmers, but did not go to pick up her belongings. Instead she “went the other way” looking “absent-minded”, a guard at the beach said.

After two days without success, the search area was expanded last Sunday, said Trin Panyawai, President of the Sakhu Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor).

Private operators provided support with their boats and jet skis on the water, while a navy helicopter was continuing a broad



The search for Elena Radchenko continued on Monday (Oct 24). Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

air search, Mr Trin added.

“We are continuing our search and expanding the search area, but are not ruling out any possibilities. The provincial and district police officers are working together, no issues have been ruled out yet,” said Mr Trin.

Mr Trin later explained to local reporters that before the beginning of the operation he “performed a ritual according to local beliefs” to attract luck in the search. The ritual did not bring immediate results.

Mr Trin mentioned that even a kidnapping is not excluded, as reportedly suggested by Ms Radchenko’s unnamed friend, who according to some reports offered a US\$10,000 reward for information leading to

Ms Radchenko’s safe return.

According to Mr Trin, the Russian woman’s friend said “she was a senior executive of a company, similar to a manager”. Yet, Mr Trin admitted that he did not understand this part in full.

Apichet Yim-on of the Kusoldharm Foundation said rescue workers from the foundation were focussing their efforts on the possibility that Ms Radchenko suffered a sea-related incident, such as possible drowning.

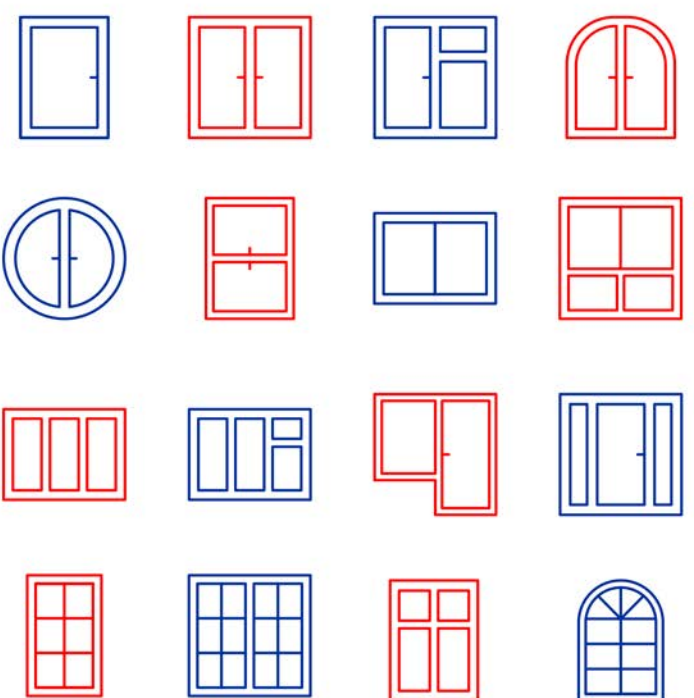
Her body could wash ashore days later and far from where she entered the water, he said.

Kusoldharm workers were scouring the coast and the waters offshore for any sign of her, he added.

The Phuket News



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The Phuket News

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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FRI OCTOBER 28

High: +30°  
Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SAT OCTOBER 29

High: +31°  
Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN OCTOBER 30

High: +31°  
Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON OCTOBER 31

High: +31°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE NOVEMBER 1

High: +32°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED NOVEMBER 2

High: +30°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU NOVEMBER 3

High: +30°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Police face drug tests, gun checks

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A series of drug tests recently carried out on selected police officers in Phuket have so far all returned negative results, officials confirmed last week.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Major Gen Sermphan Sirikong said officers underwent random urine tests without prior warning as part of a national screening initiative to ensure no illegal substances are found in officers.

Maj Gen Sermphan further explained that the most recent mass test took place on Oct 17, when a total of 1,243 police officers were examined.

All test results returned negative, Maj Gen Sermphan said.

He clarified that there are a further 93 officers yet to be screened who have either been on holiday or sick leave or conducting government service. The 93 will be tested in due course, he confirmed.

Separately, Maj Gen Serm-



phan explained how an inventory check had been made on firearms stocks at all police stations across the province to ensure no misuse or abuse was taking place.

The check covered the 11 major police stations across the island, including Chalong, Cherg Talay, Kamala, Kathu, Marine Police Division 5, Munag, Phuket Provincial Police Headquarters, Phuket Traffic

Police Station, Tha Chat Chai, Thalang and Thung Thong.

The inspection, which took place on Oct 12, revealed that all stocks were in order and no missing firearms had been recorded.

Maj Gen Sermphan commented that any officer authorised to carry a firearm reported to have behaved inappropriately or dishonestly by a fellow police officer or



Photos: PR Phuket

member of the public is liable to have their license revoked.

The increased focus on management of firearms and enhanced screening for illegal drugs within the police force comes after the tragic shooting and stabbing massacre that occurred at a nursery in Nong Bua Lam Phu on Oct 6.

Former policeman Panya Khamrab carried out the attack which saw 36 people

lose their lives, 24 of whom were young children. Panya was dismissed from the police force on June 15 after he was caught in possession of methamphetamine pills in January.

The tragic incident prompted interior minister Anupong Paojinda on Oct 12 to confirm authorities would review and toughen up on gun and drug laws across the country.



Rescue workers recover the body of the Myanmar man. Photo: Phuket Info Center

## Man drowns in floodgate canal

KUSOLDHARM FOUNDATION rescue workers last Friday (Oct 21) managed to find and retrieve the body of an unnamed Myanmar man who fell into a canal in Chalong and drowned two days earlier.

The 47-year old man from Myanmar fell into the canal while watching the flooding, the Phuket Info Center, operating under the Governor's Office, reported

The body was found near the floodgate "far enough from where he fell into the water".

Kusoldharm Foundation rescue workers took the body to Vachira Phuket Hospital for post-mortem examination to confirm the cause of death.

Phuket Info Center earlier reported with reference to local Thai media that several people saw the man in the water waving

his hands for help. Yet nobody could reach him as the canal was too wide and the current was too strong.

The man fell into the water some three kilometres from the floodgate where his body was retrieved by Kusoldharm divers.

The floodgate, located in Moo 3, Chalong, was completed in 2019 at a cost B139 million, and included a pumphouse and shoring up two kilometres of the canal's banks with concrete.

The floodgate was designed and built to help prevent flooding in Chalong and Wichit areas during the rainy season. The floodgate is to be closed during high tide to prevent sea water from stopping the outflow of the canal, and water will be pumped from the canal to the seabound side of the floodgate when water levels in the canal are high. *The Phuket News*

## Man robs convenience store at gunpoint near Provincial Hall

POLICE TOOK LESS THAN three hours to arrest a man who robbed a convenience store at gunpoint at the entrance to the Phuket Provincial Hall administration complex on Tha Kraeng Rd in Phuket Town last week.

Officers were called to the store at 10:35am on Oct 19, reported Phuket Provincial Police.

The store's CCTV security cameras showed a man aged 20-25 years old wearing a black hooded jacket, black cap and black trousers parking in front of the shop on a red-white Honda Wave 110 motorbike fitted with a red ("dealership") licence plate.

The man entered the store and pulled out a gun and threatened the staff to hand over money from the cash drawer.

The staff handed over B2,000 in cash. The robber checked the money and handed back B800.

Staff told police that the robber asked them, "Do you know that I am playing?"

The robber then left the shop and sped off on his motorbike towards the Tha Kraeng Intersection, where Chaofa Rd meets Sakdideet Rd.

By about 1:50pm, officers who



Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

definitely were not playing arrested the suspect, identified only as "Mr Idris", or "Asif", 21, at Soi Ton Ao Yon in Moo 8, Wichit.

Seized by police making the arrest was a "Thai Pradit" homemade handgun made to fire .22-calibre bullets used in the robbery and his Phuket-registered motorbike.

Idris was taken to Phuket City Police Station and charged with armed robbery, possession of an illegal firearm and carrying a firearm in a public area without reasonable cause, police confirmed in their report.

Additional reporting by  
Eakkapop Thongtub

# Land excavation probed after monastery near-miss

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Officials are investigating whether excavation of a hillside land plot in Kathu was legal following a landslide at the site nearly falling onto monks' dwellings at the base of the hill in Moo 7, Baan Bang Thong, on Oct 19.

The landslide stopped short of directly damaging the monk's accommodation, called the "Bang Thong Monastery" in Thai, but left the road right in front of the buildings covered in mud and debris. Large trees were among the debris that stopped short on the steep slope just tens of metres from the dwellings.

Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan and Kathu Mayor Chai-anan Suthikul inspected the site on Oct 19. The runoff from the excavated land caused the small creek at the base of the steep slope to rise to dangerous levels with very fast-flowing water.

Officials returned to the site to continue their investigation last Sunday (Oct 23). A



Photo: PR Phuket

layer of mud still covered the car park area at the monastery.

The investigation into the excavated land now launched involves a slew of government offices and agencies.

Officers from the Phuket Provincial Office, the Phuket Provincial Land Office, the Phuket Provincial office of the Office of Natural Resources and Environment, the Kathu District Office, Kathu Municipality, the Royal Forestry Department and even the Phuket branch of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) have joined the inves-

tigation, said an official report announcing the investigation.

Phuket Provincial Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Sompratch Prabsongkram had informed Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew of the investigation, the report added.

According to the report, the investigation followed "people" complaining that the excavation of the land had caused the landslide and runoff.

"If anything is found illegal with the site, officials will take serious action," said the report.

Mr Sompratch said that from the initial investigation, it was found that no permission had been granted for land to be excavated at the site.

"So Kathu Municipality was assigned to investigate the complaint," he said.

The Phuket Land Office is to investigate whether the land ownership document presented by people on behalf of the person claiming to own the land was also to be investigated to determine whether it is genuine.

Forestry Department officials are to check whether or not the land claimed is within any protected forest area, he added.

Mr Sompratch said that flooding and landslides had occurred in many areas across Phuket following the heavy rains on Oct 16-20.

Governor Narong has ordered officials to investigate the sites and take "strict legal action" where any offences had been committed, he said.

"If officials have been neglectful, there will be measures to punish them as well," he said.



Image: Phuket Info Center

## PSU joins flood relief efforts

PRINCE OF SONGKLA University (PSU) Phuket Campus has set up a coordination center to receive donations for victims of natural disasters in Phuket, joining forces with many other government and non-government organisations helping people in need.

The donations are collected every day at building number 10 of PSU Phuket. The entrance to the building is located opposite a SuperCheap store.

The items most needed include survival bags, drinking water, rice, dried food. For more information, people are advised to call 081 0864958 or 086 4702037.

The Phuket Hotels Association (PHA) and Living Waters Foundation also launched a drive to help people across the island to overcome the consequence of heavy rains which left vast areas of Phuket flooded.

The designated drop-

off points for donations were named as JW Marriott Phuket in Mai Khao, SAii Laguna Phuket in Cherno Talay, Intercontinental Phuket Resort in Kamala, Holiday Inn Resort Phuket in Patong, Avista Grande Phuket Karon MGallery in Karon, The Nai Harn in Rawai, Courtyard by Marriott in Phuket Town, 5 Star Marine Phuket in Koh Kaew. For additional information, people are advised to contact Khun Nat from Living Waters at 081 272 3472 or more@livingwatersphuket.com.

Other organisations and agencies involved in food relief efforts include the Scholars of for Sustenance Foundation, Phuket Red Cross, Royal Thai Army, Royal Thai Navy, Royal Thai Police, local municipalities and tambon administrative organisations (OrBorTor), foreign embassies and consulates. *The Phuket News*

## Governor talks tourism, trade

INCREASING DIRECT FLIGHTS between Phuket and Vietnam were among the topics discussed at a meeting between Vietnam Ambassador to Thailand Phan Chi Thanh and Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew Wednesday last week.

Ambassador Thanh paid a courtesy call to Governor Narong at Phuket Provincial Hall on Oct 19 to introduce themselves and build good relationships with each other, reported the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

Among those present for the meeting were Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket office Director Nanthasiri Ronnasiri and former Phuket Tourist Association President Bhumikitti Ruktaengam.

After the meeting Governor Narong explained that the meeting included discussions about trade and investment between Phuket and Vietnam, and exchanging knowledge about tourism in Phuket.

The talks were also part of preparations to promote tourism between Vietnam and Phuket, which was described as "in process".

"We are in the process of proposing which provinces of Vietnam are suitable for building a good relationship between the two countries, and this includes Phuket," Governor Narong said.

"The meeting also discussed the matter of promoting direct flights to Phuket to promote tourism as well," he added.

Governor Narong then welcomed Kazakhstan Ambassador to Thailand Arman Issetov to Phuket the next day (Oct 20) to discuss topics, including tourism and co-



Governor Narong (right) with Vietnam Ambassador to Thailand Phan Chi Thanh. Photo: PR Phuket

operation in caring for Kazakh nationals based on the island.

There are currently approximately 100 Kazakh nationals living and working in Phuket and their welfare was a prominent point of the discussion, as was the welfare of any Kazakh nationals visiting the island as tourists.

Mr Issetov said he expects tourist numbers from his country to increase next month as Astana Airlines (Air Astana) launches direct flights from Almaty to Phuket, which the Ambassador said will create a positive impact on the tourism links between the two countries.

Additionally, the Kazakh capital (Astana) is considered an economic, tourist and transportation hub linking numerous Central Asian countries to Southeast Asia, which will only stand to benefit Phuket.

Phuket's aspirations to host the World Specialised Expo 2028 was another topic discussed, something Mr Issetov responded positively to by pledging to support the drive and promote it back in his home country.

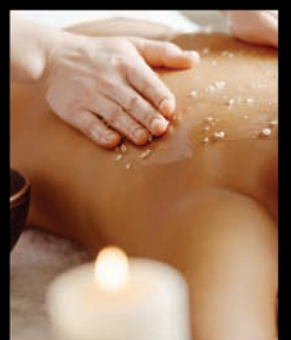
*The Phuket News*

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## First cruise tourists since COVID arrive in Patong

PHUKET GOVERNOR Narong Woonciew led a delegation of high-ranking officials to welcome ashore passengers from the 'Spectrum of the Seas' cruise liner as they made landfall in Patong on Monday (Oct 24).

The 'Spectrum of the Seas' arrived in Patong Bay Monday morning, becoming the first cruise ship to visit Phuket since the COVID-19 tourism shutdown in 2020, Governor Narong noted.

Built in Germany, the "Quantum Ultra" class cruise ship is operated by Royal Caribbean International. The ship was delivered in April 2019 and is currently based out of Singapore.

"This is another good sign for tourism," Governor Narong said. "The ship can accommodate up to 4,900 passengers, but this time around it is carrying around 4,500 people, which creates another way to stimulate the economy of Phuket."

"And after this, there will be more cruise ships continuously arriving," he added.

Nanthasiri Ronnasiri, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Phuket Office, noted that the 4,594



Governor Narong welcomes the tourists on Monday. Photo: PR Phuket

passengers on board comprised 55 nationalities from around the world. "The top five [passengers on board the ship] are from Singapore, Malaysia, India, the Philippines and Indonesia," she said.

"More than 800 people will come ashore on a 'One Day Trip', which will benefit Phuket and stimulate tourism travel greatly," she added.

Ms Nanthasiri said people arriving in Phuket on ships and yachts were considered to be a tourism segment with high spending potential.

In 2019, there were a total of 154 cruise ship visits to Phuket, altogether bringing a total of 485,598 passengers, Ms Nanthasiri noted.

"Phuket is ready to welcome cruise ship tourists, especially businesses in the tourism service sector," she said. *The Phuket News*

## Cabinet to finally hear 4am closing for nightlife

Bangkok Post

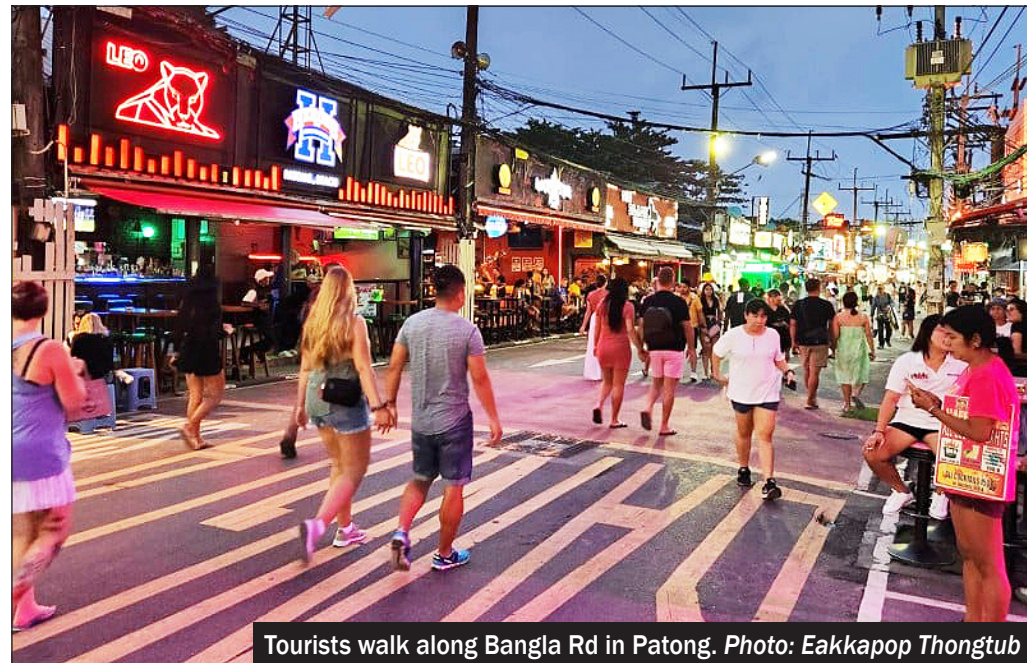
The Tourism and Sports Ministry will ask the Cabinet to consider allowing nightspots in certain tourism spots to stay open until 4am as the COVID-19 pandemic eases along with many virus curbs.

Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said last Saturday (Oct 22) studies found that if nightspots are allowed to operate until 4am, their income would increase by 40%.

"However, a public referendum will have to be held to decide where nightlife outlets will be allowed to operate until that time," he said.

Mr Phiphat said that after the virus was downgraded from a dangerous communicable disease to a communicable disease under surveillance from Oct 1, the ministry is moving ahead with plans to develop tourist destinations in four clusters of provinces, by highlighting unique local cultures, traditions and histories to promote tourism.

For example, a study is



Tourists walk along Bangla Rd in Patong. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

being conducted to promote low-carbon tourism in Phang Nga, part of the Andaman cluster.

As for Phuket, a plan will be devised to develop state land in Mai Khao into a yacht club, a sports complex and a convention hall, which will be linked with a project to promote wellness tourism in the province, Mr Phiphat said, adding the private sector will be urged to invest.

Activities will be held seasonally to attract tourists and boost income for local people, the minister said.

In 2019, more than 39.8 million tourists came to Thailand, generating more than B3 trillion.

During the pandemic, tourism was one of the industries hardest hit and the ministry worked closely with various agencies to ease the impact by launching the Phuket Sandbox

scheme in July last year, Mr Phiphat said.

He added the MotoGP 2022 World Championship was held in Buri Ram between Sept 30 and Oct 2, pulling in foreign visitors and spectators which gave the local economy a boost.

In the longer run, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is devising a campaign to woo international visitors to future MotoGP events, he said.

## TAT eyes domestic travel as stimulus budget stumped

THE NEW PHASE OF THE domestic tourism subsidy programme is being drafted with an additional 3-4 million hotel rooms, double the number in the fourth phase, which is scheduled to end this month, as the government aims to push GDP growth to 3.3% this year.

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said the upcoming fifth phase of 'We Travel Together' will continue to offer a 40% subsidy on hotel rooms to domestic tourists, along with a voucher worth B600 per night for food and shopping.

However, airfare subsidies, included in previous phases, are discontinued in the new phase as there were almost 122,000 privileges for airfares remaining in the current phase.

The package tour subsidy programme named 'Tour Teaw Thai', which received lukewarm feedback from travellers, will be scrapped, he said.

As of Oct 19, the current phase of the tour stimulus had 130,624 packages sold and 69,376 remaining privileges, unlike We Travel Together, which tallied 1.5mn rooms booked since early September.

According to the TAT, the fourth phase of We Travel To-



Travellers queue to check-in at Don Mueang airport in Bangkok. Photo: Apichit Jinakul / Bangkok Post

gether helped generate B15 billion for the local economy, with the biggest portion derived from hotel spending at B12bn, followed by spending with vouchers (B2.76bn) and airfares (B918 million).

The hotel sector is expected to reap the greatest benefit from this programme, with 4,366 hotels receiving room bookings, while overall spending via vouchers in hotel restaurants totalled B1.45bn. Tour Teaw Thai contributed B1.28bn from 426 tour companies that offer packages in this scheme.

Mr Yuthasak said a leftover budget of B2bn from the ongoing programmes was returned to the Budget Bureau, while the budget for the new phase has to be allocated following cabinet approval.

He said the earliest start for the new phase could be November,

potentially spanning to Songkran in April next year, which is a peak period for domestic travel.

The government said last week it prepared a budget of B17bn to stimulate the local economy at the end of this year, aiming for GDP growth at 3.3%.

Mr Yuthasak said the agency has to wait for Cabinet approval around mid-November regarding the budget allocation. The stimulus should help create a multiplier effect of two to three times the budget it received, according to the TAT.

### STUMPED ON BUDGET

However, the TAT is expected to look elsewhere for stimulus funds after the prime minister asked the Cabinet last week to prepare new mechanisms to accelerate year-end spending.

The TAT had been pushing for a tourism stimulus plan totalling B1 billion, proposed in June, financed by a budget from the B500bn loan decree. The deadline for approval ended last month.

TAT Governor Mr Yuthasak said the agency submitted information to the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) about a likely budget to stimulate tourist spending within this year.

He said the average budget to increase tourism expenditure per person could be set at around B3,600, based on the maximum subsidy each traveller received per day from previous phases of "We Travel Together".

It depends on the NESDC or a related authority to consider how much they want to use to stimulate tourism, said Mr Yuthasak.

As the TAT is drafting a proposal at the moment, the We Travel Together scheme might be prolonged, while the so-called 'Booster Shot' scheme for tourism operators requiring B1bn must be reconsidered.

He said it is likely the whole proposal will need to be overhauled, with only a few proposals attached to the new projects it is preparing at the moment.

"The tourism minister assigned the TAT to follow the instructions of the prime minister by propos-

ing new schemes to help boost the economy," said Mr Yuthasak.

"As the Booster Shot was drafted in the low season in June and awaited approval for months, many circumstances have changed, which means some proposals might be dismissed."

The final proposal will be submitted to the tourism and sports minister before being sent to the involved parties for consideration, he said.

The priority for the new proposals is to help reduce travel costs for local tourists and extend the length of stay to boost expenditure, said Mr Yuthasak.

"Some projects in Booster Shot could not wait, so we spent our internal budget to help operators struggling during that time," he said.

"For some businesses that recover during the high season, they may no longer need large-scale support similar to a few months ago."

Last week the NESDC held a meeting with the TAT and the tourism sector about the Booster Shot scheme.

A source who requested anonymity said tourism operators didn't receive a commitment that the government will reconsider the B1bn stimulus plan.

Related state parties said they could not offer aid measures as requested. *Bangkok Post*

# Families of pub inferno victims seeking action

CHON BURI

Bangkok Post

Families of victims of the horrendous Mountain B pub fire in Chon Buri's Sattahip district have demanded legal action be taken against state officials for dereliction of duty, as the death toll in the Aug 5 blaze climbed to 25.

On Oct 18 Lawyer Ronnarong Kaewphet led representatives of 31 families of victims of the inferno to the Central Investigation Bureau's complaint centre.

They submitted a letter to Pol Maj Gen Charoonkiat Pankaew, commander of the Anti-Corruption Division (ACD), demanding action against state officials for dereliction of duty and related offences.

Mr Ronnarong said the Mountain B inferno claimed many lives and left many others severely injured. Legal action was being taken against the pub owner for recklessness causing deaths and injuries, and opening and operating an entertainment venue without the required permits. The case was being handled by public prosecutors.

However, there had been no investigation into the actions of certain state officials also responsible for the tragedy, he said. State officials had been negligent in failing to inspect the building and fire prevention and mitigation equipment to



Families of Mountain B pub inferno victims submit their letter of complaint. Photo: Wassayos Ngamkham

ensure it was in compliance with the law.

The pub inferno had horrified the public, Mr Ronnarong said. The damaged parties wanted the ACD to take action against those negligent officials to ensure that the justice prevailed in society.

ACD police investigators said they would forward the case to their commander.

On Oct 15 Parichart Kwanyuenyong, 26, from Rayong province, was pronounced dead at King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital in Bangkok after 72 days of treatment for severe burns suffered in the Aug 5 fire. She was the 25<sup>th</sup> fatality.

Workers demolished the fire gutted pub building last Saturday (Oct 22).

The fire started at the pub in the early hours of Aug 5, killing 13 people trapped inside as the blaze tore through

the building. Twelve burn victims have since succumbed to their injuries. More are still being treated, some with debilitating injuries.

The pub was operating without a proper permit, had a blocked exit and had undergone extensive modification, including installation of highly inflammable soundproofing material.

Somyos Panprasong, 55, the owner of the pub, has been charged with recklessness causing deaths and injuries, and opening and operating an entertainment venue without permission.

The blaze brought back memories of the Santika pub inferno in Bangkok during the New Year's Eve countdown to Jan 1, 2009. Sixty-seven people were killed and 103 injured, 32 of them left with serious disabilities. That blaze was started by fireworks let off inside the building.



Photo: Bangkok Post

## People warned about fake Thai banknotes

UDON THANI

POLICE ARE WARNING the public against counterfeit B1,000 banknotes that have been found circulating in northeastern Thailand.

Maj Gen Archayon Kraithong, a spokesman for the Royal Thai Police, said there had been several reports of people using counterfeit bills in Udon Thani province.

Two cases were posted to social media, the first involving a barbecue restaurant and another at a grocery store, he said.

People are advised to look for the golden security strip embedded in all 1,000-baht notes to ensure their legitimacy. The strips are

seen as segmented when viewed normally. The words '1,000 BAHT' can be seen when the strips are held up to the light, and the colour will change to green when rotated.

Counterfeiting money is a violation of Section 240 of the Criminal Code and comes with the penalty of 10 to 20 years in prison and/or a fine of B20,000 to B40,000, Maj Gen Archayon said.

Unknowing usage of a fake bill can result in up to 10 years' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to B20,000 under Section 245 of the Criminal Code. Intentional usage can incur a maximum of 115 years in jail and/or a fine of up to B30,000 under Section 244. *Bangkok Post*

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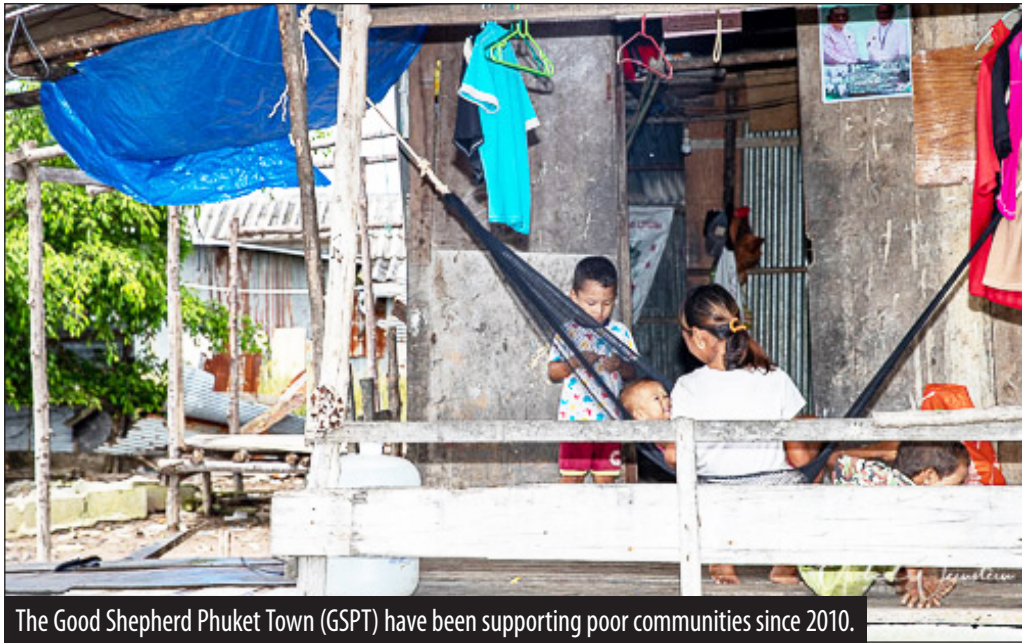
THE BIOCLIMATIC PERGOLA IS AN INNOVATIVE STRUCTURE, MADE UP OF MOTORIZED BLADES, WHICH ADAPTS TO ANY TYPE OF HOME OR BUSINESS.

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The Good Shepherd Phuket Town (GSPT) have been supporting poor communities since 2010.



Donation to Vachira Hospital: Sansan Myat Shwe (GSPT) (3<sup>rd</sup> from left); Pam Ong, GM of Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town (5<sup>th</sup> from left); Chantal Fernandes (6<sup>th</sup> from left); Dr Supalak Laongpetch, Vachira Hospital Deputy Medical Director (7<sup>th</sup> from left); joined by Dr Suthee Kittithornkul, Nephrologist; Ratchanee Thipsungnoen, Head Nurse of Hemodialysis; Nittaya Chamnitna, Hemodialysis Nurse.

# Poor face challenges as living costs rise

Lauren Baxter

**T**he rise of food and energy bills has had a profound impact on families from our poorest communities in Phuket, who live hand to mouth. Rising fuel costs mean many of the fishing boats cannot afford to leave the pier, and therefore the crew, often migrant workers, do not get paid and their families do not eat. Growing children, pregnant women and the elderly have been the most affected.

Since 2010, the Good Shepherd Phuket Town (GSPT) have been supporting these poor communities. Unable to access healthcare and mainstream

education, migrant children fall prey to human traffickers and are vulnerable to labour and sexual exploitation. The Good Shepherd have always believed that giving these young people an opportunity to access an education can break this cycle of abject poverty.

The charity-run GSPT school has been open for 12 years and this year saw a sharp increase in the number of children enrolling. Student numbers have grown from 240 to 320, ranging in age from 5 to 18. Until recently, younger students were being taught in the playground as there was insufficient classroom space.

The school relies solely on donations from the Phuket community to sustain its commitment to provide for these vul-

nerable children. A simple school lunch might only cost a mere B30 per student but with rising food costs, this has increased to B40 which now amounts to a staggering B230,000 per month for lunch alone. This meal is often the only food a child eats that day.

## Fundraising that brings Phuket together

During the COVID pandemic, GSPT lost many of its donors and therefore fundraising is at the core of the survival of the school.

In celebration of Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee last June, a Gala Ball was held in the beautiful ballroom at the prestigious Courtyard by Marriott in Phuket Town. Together with General Manager Pam Ong and her team, the event raised over B1 million. Proceeds were used to buy a haemodialysis machine for the public Vachira Phuket Hospital as well as going towards the running of the GSPT school.

Additionally, the school was grateful to receive a kind donation from Cecilia Warren and Wayne Scanlan through Steve Pearce at the Phuket Veterans Association. Not only are such events invaluable to bring Phuketians together and make connections, they are contributing to a cause which actually changes the lives of children in our wider island community.

## Re-use, re-purpose, recycle!

GSPT run two Thrift Charity Stores on Phuket. The first "Pre-Loved Charity Store" opened in Chermg Talay at the Lifestyle Village and is kindly sponsored by Blue Tree Phuket. In the South, "Pre Loved Too" located in Rawai Art Village is sponsored by the beautiful Pettit family; Patrizia, Robert and Jordan.

The stores are an excellent opportunity to donate your pre-loved clothes, toys and household items. Even torn or damaged clothes can be re-used by the amazing Sam McCue and her team Seeds of Change to be transformed into beautiful elephants or bags. Pop in to have a forage around the stores, you are guaranteed to find something – or a few things! Each store is run by a dedicated team of supporters, who ensure that every baht goes directly to the GSPT school. If you have a few hours spare a week, they are always looking for additional help.

## Get into the festive spirit

For the third Christmas in a row, Joel Adam's 'Theatrix' theatre company



Kind Donor Wayne Scanlan (left) with the Phuket Veterans Association.

and the Underwood Family's 'Junkyard Theatre' are excited to host a Charity Pantomime! The show will be held on Dec 10 and 11.

Nothing will put you in the festive spirit more than the lively tradition of panto. This year, a traditional tale will be given a modern twist as 'Jack and the Beanstalk meets Star Wars'. There will be plenty of opportunities to support, both on and off the stage, so contact below for more information and no experience is needed. As usual, there will be laughs galore and a fantastic opportunity to watch live theatre at the innovative and exciting venue, the Junkyard Theatre.

No Christmas preparations would be complete without a stroll through a Christmas Market. On Saturday, Dec 10, Blue Tree Phuket will be hosting their annual Wansao Christmas Market. If you are a creative artisan and unique vendor, this is a wonderful opportunity to sell your wares and also for customers to get ahead with their Christmas shopping!

## Give a Helping Hand

GSPT School Support Program is always looking for people to donate their time to support these underprivileged students. Now in its third year, its holistic and well-rounded approach focuses on learning and speaking English, living skills, computer literacy, arts and music.

Currently, the school is looking for a yoga instructor or someone to play games with the children once a week. If you are interested in applying for this rewarding opportunity, then please get in touch below. It is an exciting chance to build relationships with those less fortunate in our community and with these special children who have such a lot to give.

For more information on any of these activities please contact [phuketcharity@gmail.com](mailto:phuketcharity@gmail.com) or whatsapp +66898742942.

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# A Meal With... the Inspiration Tina Hall



## A MEAL WITH...

Baz Daniel  
baz\_gunner2000@yahoo.com

‘Inspiration’ is a quality many in the Andaman region are seeking in these challenging times. Recently returning from the UK, my first impression of Phuket was of a rather gloomy resignation to the current difficulties. While the pandemic seemed under control and had been officially ‘re-branded’ as a communicable disease, the touristic life-blood of the island seemed still a hoped-for dream.

In need of emotional sustenance, I decided to contact Tina Hall, the Director of Operations for the wonderful ‘Phuket Has Been Good To Us’ Foundation, as I’d heard so much about their inspirational work helping and nurturing hundreds of underprivileged kids in Phuket and of Tina’s dedication.

Days later, as we tucked into fresh healthy salads at We Café, Tina explained that the Foundation was the brainchild of Phuket restaurateur, and owner of the Baan Rim Pa Group of iconic eateries, Tom McNamara.

After the devastation of the 2004 tsunami, Tom went to the local community and asked how he could help them recover. The Thai respondents were united in their desire for their children to learn English as the key to



Tina with Jessican.

their offspring’s chances of a better life. Tom knew that the schools needing help could not afford fluent English-speaking teachers, so he decided to create an organisation that would make education available to the children for free.

In 2006, Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation was launched and has since worked relentlessly improving the economic opportunities and life chances of local youngsters by funding and implementing high quality English language education in government schools in Phuket.

The Foundation’s teachers also run an extracurricular programme called Coconut Club for the 200-plus children who actually live at the Rajapranugroh School in Kamala because they are orphans, or their families are unable to look after them. The kiddies enjoy activities such as swimming, cooking

classes, sports, and arts and crafts, and each enjoy a birthday party, complete with cake and present.

This inspirational story transcends the tough times we’ve all been through these past two years and I wanted to see the positive energy of the Coconut Club, so I headed over to meet Tina at Rajapranugroh School. It was 4pm, when classes had finished for the day and the kiddies unleashed their boundless enthusiasm into the supervised ‘play’ of the Coconut Club. That day’s activity was skateboarding and great energy, skill and laughter abounded as the youngsters rode their boards. Many kiddies spontaneously came over to say ‘hello’, strong testament to the confidence-building and sociability which this play-learning engenders.

After growing up in rural England, Tina completed a Business Degree at

East London University, including a year’s work experience in Brussels, but it was her passion for scuba diving instruction and oceanography which took her to such exotic locales as Honduras, the Andaman Islands, the Great Barrier Reef and finally to Phuket.

She explained, “My husband and I had visited Phuket on holidays and in 2010 we decided to take an extended break on the island. I’d heard about Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation and I guess I’m the sort of person who can’t say ‘No’ when I see that others less-fortunate than myself are in need. I got involved and ended up with the job of Director of Operations”... a calling which Tina has been executing with exemplary skill and dedication ever since.

I asked how readers can help the many deserving kiddies being taught and cared for by the Foundation.

“The pandemic was incredibly tough and funding is the major issue at present, but I’m delighted to say that our Melbourne Cup fund-raising event is back on Tuesday, November 1 this year at the stunning poolside Firefly Restaurant at the Pavilions Resort, with sumptuous cuisine, fashion events, free-flow tipples, live-screening of the race.”

It’s inspirational indeed that this great island event is back this year and truly a sign that the Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation and Tina Hall are leading us all back to happier and helping times.

Please book your tickets at kitchen.phuket@pavilionshotels.com



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# POP QUIZ

1. On which side of the road do people drive in mainland China?
2. Are there more wild or captive elephants in Thailand?
3. Who was the only American-born member of Monty Python?
4. Ralph, Jack and Piggy are characters from which dystopian novel?
5. Which artist designed the logo for Chupa Chups?

Answers below, centre

## SUDOKU

Medium

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Shed
5. Tees
9. Confusion
14. "Alfred" composer
15. Grunt
16. Beguile
17. Collections
18. Hint
19. "Family Affair" role
20. Replaces Samantha with Aunt Clara?
23. Get into a stew?
24. Sweep
25. Atoll protector
26. Trial
28. Get with strain
30. Put away
33. Secrets
35. Truth \_\_\_\_
37. Breaks the hearts of milliners?
41. "Bellefleur" author
42. Treeless region
43. Turk. airlines
44. Bring to bear
45. Ground ball
49. Hinged catch
52. + or - item

53. Gametes

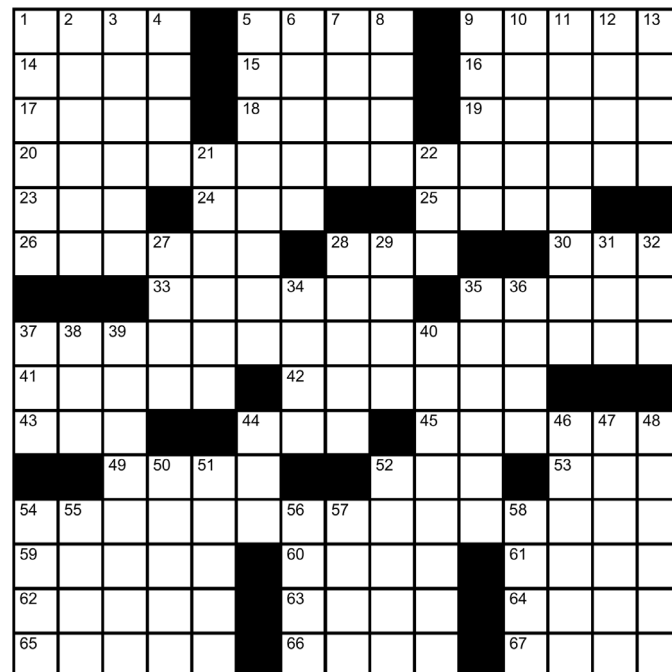
54. Smaller Bic?
59. Butterfly genus
60. Nitwit
61. Michael Collin's country
62. As a whole
63. Affaire d'honneur
64. Model Kate
65. Rumble
66. Lofty nest, var.
67. Arrogant one

Down

1. Dissed, in a way
2. From the 1930s
3. Discrete unit
4. Actor Adam
5. Impossible
6. Gulf ship
7. Wildebeests
8. Warp
9. Butter up?
10. Liturgical vestment
11. Grassland blaze
12. Sum, \_\_\_\_, fui
13. Pewters
21. Seeks

22. Cholera

27. Part of A.P.R.
28. Flow from
29. U.S. architect
31. Blackguard
32. Germany's Dortmund-\_\_\_\_ Canal
34. Bell and Carney
35. Persuasive
36. Roster abbr.
37. Cold porter fan?
38. Derisive laugh
39. Irregular
40. With skill
44. Final: Abbr.
46. Hand \_\_\_\_
47. Extremely
48. Most unusual
50. Twinkle-toed
51. Thrash
52. German river
54. Big loser's nickname?
55. Crescent
56. Icelandic epic
57. Profligate
58. Hesitates



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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

6.3

out of 10 is how the average adult rated their happiness in 2019, according to a study at the time.

95

percent of the time is how often the average person's car is parked.

5,531

is the most patents held by one person (prolific Japanese inventor Shunpei Yamazaki).

251,000

deaths per year in the US are caused by medical errors, the third leading cause of death in the country.

7.9 billion

is the current world population of humans on the planet.

Source: Uberfacts

## ISLAND VIEW



Ladies fishing at Layan Beach. Photo by Cynthia Tomaszewski

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

## This week in history

October 28, 1726

The novel *Gulliver's Travels* by Anglo-Irish author Jonathan Swift is published and is hailed as "a satirical masterpiece".

October 29, 2015

After 35 years, China announces the end of one-child policy, a birth planning programme designed to control the size of its population.

October 30, 1974

The Rumble in the Jungle boxing match between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman takes place in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo). Ali wins by knockout.

October 31, 2011

The global population of humans reaches 7 billion. This day is now recognised by the United Nations as the Day of Seven Billion.



A section of the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

November 1, 1512

The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, painted by Michelangelo, is exhibited to the public for the first time.

November 2, 1936

The BBC Television Service is initiated, the world's first regular, "high-definition" service. The channel, now BBC1, runs to this day.

November 3, 1986

Lebanese magazine *Ash Shiraa* reports that the US had been secretly selling weapons to Iran to secure the release of seven American hostages held by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon. Source: Wikipedia

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Bagnaia on his way to victory. Photo: AFP

## Bagnaia on verge of MotoGP title

### MOTO GP

FRANCESCO BAGNAIA won a dramatic Malaysian Grand Prix last Sunday (Oct 23), but the champagne for the Italian's maiden MotoGP world championship remains on ice after rival Fabio Quartararo finished third.

Bagnaia would have clinched the title had Quartararo finished outside the podium places at Sepang, but the Ducati rider instead extended his lead to 23 points ahead of the season's final race at Spain's Valencia next weekend (Nov 5-6).

Bagnaia took the chequered flag in 40min 14:332sec, 0.270s ahead of fellow Ducati rider Enea Bastianini. Quartararo completed the podium 2.7s adrift.

Bagnaia started 12<sup>th</sup> on

the grid, but a blistering start saw him up to second on the first lap behind pole sitter Jorge Martin.

The dynamics of the race changed on the seventh lap when Martin crashed out, allowing the Ducati rider to charge into first with Bastianini hot on his tail.

Quartararo was meanwhile being drawn in a battle against Marco Bezzecchi for third, but held his ground to stave off the Gresini Racing rider.

At the front, Bastianini continued to pressure Bagnaia, but the Italian kept his cool to cross the finish line for his seventh win of the season.

With a maximum 25 points available in Valencia, Quartararo must win the final grand prix of 2022 to have any hope of retaining this world championship. *AFP*

# Emotional victory for Max secures Red Bull the title

### FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato  
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Max Verstappen dedicated his record-equalling 13<sup>th</sup> victory at the United States Grand Prix last Sunday (Oct 23) to late Red Bull co-founder Dietrich Mateschitz.

The win also won Red Bull Racing its fifth constructors championship and first since 2013.

Verstappen snatched the lead from pole-sitter Carlos Sainz off the line – Sainz was spun out of the race moments later by an errant George Russell – and was on track for a controlled victory until a slow stop late in the race dropped him to third behind Hamilton and Charles Leclerc.

The Dutchman had been struggling with a driveability problem after the race's second safety car, which was Mercedes's cue to strike in pit lane with an undercut attempt.

The gamble worked unexpectedly well when Verstappen's pit stop almost 10 seconds slower owing to a faulty wheel gun, catapulting Hamilton into the lead and generating the conditions for a grandstand finish.

Verstappen had around 20 seconds to recover seven seconds, but he had to get past Leclerc first, and the Ferrari driver and vanquished title contender wasn't conceding position without a battle.



Verstappen (centre) celebrates with teammates. Photo: AFP

Verstappen was rebuffed once at the first turn, but he wasn't to be denied a second time, making an incisive move into turn 11 with 16 laps remaining.

Hamilton was attempting to manage the gap, but his hard tyres couldn't match the mediums on the rampaging Verstappen's car, and with seven laps remaining the margin shrunk to a second.

Verstappen made the move on the following tour with a dive down the inside of turn 11. Hamilton attempted to take the wide line, and the former title foes emerged from the corner side by side, but Verstappen's grippier tyres gave him better traction through the final sector to give the lead which he maintained to secure victory.

Verstappen dedicated the victory to team founder Mateschitz, who adapted

Thai energy drink Krating Daeng into global energy drink leader Red Bull. He passed away on Saturday after a battle with illness. He was 78 years old.

Mateschitz used his fortune to buy the former Jaguar team and turned it into Red Bull Racing in 2004. The following year he bought the Italian Minardi team and converted it to Toro Rosso, now AlphaTauri, where the likes of Verstappen, Sebastian Vettel, Daniel Ricciardo and Sainz all made their debuts as part of the Red Bull driver academy.

"It's a very difficult weekend for us," Verstappen said. "This one is definitely dedicated to Dietrich himself, for what he has done for everyone."

"It definitely means a lot to me, to the team, because he was so important for the whole team, he was so instrumental."

## Semi-final heartbreak for Thai shuttlers at Denmark Open

### BADMINTON

WOMEN'S DOUBLES pair Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai and mixed doubles duo Supak Jomkoh and Supissara Paewsampran bowed out in the semi-finals of the US\$750,000 (B28.5 million) Denmark Open in Odense last Saturday (Oct 22).

Sixth seeds Jongkolphan and Rawinda crashed out after losing to top seeds Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan of China 21-17, 21-15 at the BWF World Tour Super 750 event at Jyske Bank Arena.

Chen and Jia beat South Korea's Baek Ha-Na and Lee So-Hee 21-12, 21-15 in the final on Sunday.

Unseeded duo Supak and Supissara exited the tournament after they were beaten by another unseeded pair, Feng Yanzhe and Huang Dongping of China, 21-9, 24-22.

Feng and Huang lost to compatriots Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong in the title match 19-21, 22-20, 21-19.



Jongkolphan and Rawinda. Photo: AFP

Women's singles fifth seed Ratchanok Intanon lost in the women's singles semi-final 21-15, 10-21, 15-21 to third seed Chen Yufei of China on Saturday. Chen lost to compatriot BJ He in the final.

China's Shi Yu Qi beat Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia in

the men's final 21-18, 16-21, 21-12.

In the men's doubles final Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Ardianto of Indonesia beat compatriots Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo 21-19 28-26.

*Bangkok Post*

## Rising Thai star Atthaya misses the chance to take world top spot

### GOLF

THAI TEENAGE SENSATION Atthaya Thitikul missed the chance to claim the world No.1 ranking spot with victory at the BMW Ladies Championship in Seoul last Sunday (Oct 23) after a final day saw her finish in sixth-place.

Atthaya, ranked second in the world, had started the final day's play at 14-under but was unable to replicate the form she had demonstrated in the previous three days, stumbling to a final round score of 74.

The 19-year-old from Ratchaburi would have overtaken South Korean Ko Jin-young at the top of the world rankings with at least a fourth-placed finish.

New Zealand's Lydia Ko was the eventual winner, firing a 65 on Sunday to capture her 18<sup>th</sup> LPGA Tour title and her first in South Korea, the country of her birth.

The 25-year-old's seven-under par final round gave her a four-shot victory over American Andrea Lee at Oak Valley Country Club.

Ko carded eight birdies with just one bogey to capture

Atthaya finished on 74 in 6<sup>th</sup> place last Sunday (Oct 23). Photo: AFP

the \$300,000 (B11.4 million) winner's cheque after finishing on 21-under 267. She started the final round one shot behind the 54-hole leader Atthaya.

"I feel so proud to be born in Korea," Ko, whose family moved to New Zealand when she was four, said afterwards.

"I think because of that, I really wanted to win here," she added.

"This week my relatives are here, my direct family is

here. And I wanted to win it for them as well.

"Every time I come back to Korea, even though I play under the New Zealand flag, so many people support me and I think that is such a boost," she said.

World number five Ko became the fifth LPGA player this season to have multiple victories, and it was the first time she had achieved the feat since 2016. *AFP*

# Saints halt Gunners' charge

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Premier League leaders Arsenal dropped points for just the second time this season in a frustrating 1-1 draw at Southampton, while Newcastle climbed to fourth place after punishing Hugo Lloris' mistakes in a 2-1 win at Tottenham last Sunday (Oct 23).

Arsenal looked set to move four points clear at the top of the table when Granit Xhaka continued his fine form by smashing home the opening goal at St Mary's after just 11 minutes.

However, they were punished when Saints' Stuart Armstrong produced a composed finish to level 25 minutes from time.

A draw leaves Arsenal just two points clear of Manchester City at the top of the table.

"We were really good in the first half and created big chances that we didn't put away. In the Premier League, unfortunately, when you don't do that, you can pay the price," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said.

Manchester City beat Brighton 3-1 on Saturday to keep pace with the Gunners, with Erling Haaland scoring twice. The Norwegian now has an incredible 17 goals in 11 league games – and 12 in his past five home games.



Arsenal's Bukayo Saka struggles to evade Southampton's defenders in the 1-1 draw last Sunday (Oct 23). Photo: AFP

The result equalled a 91-year-old top-flight record as City completed their 10<sup>th</sup> straight Premier League home win. They have scored at least three goals in all of them, something no side had done since Aston Villa in the 1930/31 season.

Newcastle's strong start to the season gained further momentum as they inflicted Tottenham's first home defeat since April.

Eddie Howe's side climbed into the Champions League places, two points behind third-placed Spurs,

after extending their unbeaten run to seven matches.

Bolstered by the substantial investment from their Saudi-backed ownership group, Newcastle look to have a bright future under Howe, having lost only once all season.

Callum Wilson put Newcastle ahead in the 31<sup>st</sup> minute and Miguel Almiron doubled the lead just before half time.

Harry Kane reduced the deficit six minutes into the second half when he headed in from Son Heung-

min's cross, but Tottenham couldn't complete the comeback.

"It was a big win. We were determined to come here and be positive. My players deserve all the credit for how we attack the game," Howe said.

Chelsea and Manchester United played out a 1-1 draw on Saturday that sees the teams positioned fifth and sixth in the table respectively.

Elsewhere, Aston Villa responded to the sacking of Steven Gerrard with a 4-0 thumping of Brentford under caretaker manager Aaron Danks.

Former Liverpool captain Gerrard was the fall guy for Villa winning just two of their opening 11 league games with a 3-0 defeat at Fulham on Oct 20 the final straw.

The club confirmed on Monday they had appointed former Arsenal, Sevilla and Villarreal boss Unai Emery as their new manager.

Wolves are not enjoying the same success under their caretaker boss Steve Davis as Leicester moved out of the relegation zone with a 4-0 win at Molineux.

Leeds dropped into the bottom three after a 3-2 home defeat to Fulham, a result that moved the Cottagers up to a respectable seventh-place in the table.

Nottingham Forest remain bottom despite a shock 1-0 win against Liverpool on Saturday.

Taiwo Awoniyi, who spent six years at Anfield without making an appearance, scored the only goal 10 minutes into the second half.

"To score against Liverpool is a day I will never forget," said Awoniyi.

Without the injured Darwin Nunez, Diogo Jota and Luis Diaz and with Thiago Alcantara missing due to illness, Liverpool lacked the guile to break Forest down from open play.

The defeat leaves Liverpool still down in eighth-place, 12 points adrift of leaders Arsenal having played a game more.

## England romp to victory as Rugby World Cup last eight draw decided

### RUGBY

ENGLAND TURNED ON the power to rout South Africa 75-0 in Auckland on Sunday (Oct 23) and set up a quarter-final against Australia as the last eight line-up was decided at the women's Rugby World Cup.

A rampant England showed why they are tournament favourites in muscular display where forwards scored 12 of their 13 tries.

Earlier, Canada beat the United States 29-14 and Italy defeated Japan 21-8 to also book quarter-final berths.

While they scored more tries and points than any other team, England will take a third seeding into the quarter-finals behind hosts New Zealand and Canada as they failed to earn a bonus point in last week's 13-7 defeat of France.

It means they will face the sixth-seeded Wallaroos on Sunday (Oct 30), while the other quarter-finals will be between teams who have already met each other in



England's Tatyana Heard (right) fends off South Africa's Lerato Makua during their emphatic win. Photo: AFP

pool play.

The top-seeded Black Ferns will face Wales, second seeds Canada will repeat last Sunday's match against the USA and France will play Italy.

Wales and the USA advanced as the two best third-placed finishers while Fiji, Japan, Scotland and South Africa were eliminated from the 12-team tournament.

England's formidable run of 28 straight wins continued despite several of their senior stars being rested on Sunday.

One of the players mak-

ing a tournament debut was lock Rosie Galligan, who scored a hat-trick of tries, while there were doubles for hooker Connie Powell and replacement flanker Sadia Kabeya.

Captain Marlie Packer was unapologetic about relying on power to quell the winless South Africans, saying it was the sort of rugby needed to win knockout matches.

"We can take a lot from this and build into the quarter-finals now. I'm super happy," she said. AFP



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# Sport



Max dedicates win to Red Bull founder > p14



## EYES ON THE PRIZE

Celest just one fight away from the big time

Celest (left) has vowed to give it everything in her final fight of the Fairtex Road to ONE Thailand tournament tomorrow (Oct 29). Photo: Fairtex Fight

### MUAY THAI

Ben Tirebuck  
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket-based fighter Celest Muriel Hansen has vowed to give everything she possibly can in her final fight of the Fairtex Fight Road To ONE Thailand tournament tomorrow (Oct 29). The 28-year-old Australian comes up against Thai fighter Lomanee in the 52.2kg weight class at Bangkok's Lumpinee Stadium in a fight that could very much change her life for the better.

Should she emerge victorious after the three-round bout then she will secure a profes-

sional six-fight contract worth US\$100,000 (B3.7 million) with Asia powerhouse sports property ONE Championship.

It will be the culmination of an amazing journey that started at the famous Lumpinee Stadium with her first fight on Aug 13 against Phetsinin Sor Phuangthong, who Celest knocked to the ground twice before delivering a devastating TKO in round 2.

She then faced a sterner test in her semi-final clash against Duangdaonoi Looksaikongdin on Sept 17, once again at Lumpinee. Duangdaonoi controlled things in the first round but Celeste stepped up her game in the second and had the better of proceedings

by the final round, eventually emerging as the winner on a points decision at the end of the three-round contest.

Since then Celest has been training with a razor sharp focus at Phuket Singha Muaythai Gym in Chalong under the tutorship of coaches Kru Pat, Nantaporn Opor Nutcharas and Kru Nart.

"I'm feeling amazing going into the fight," Celest told *The Phuket News* last Sunday (Oct 23). "I've been training so very hard for months now, harder than ever before. This tournament offers such a wonderful and unique opportunity that I want to do everything I possibly can to put myself in the best position to win. I am

giving it everything I have. "The training has been amazing and I am so fortunate to have such a wonderful team supporting me," she added. "My coaching team of Kru Pat, Nantaporn Opor Nutcharas and Kru Nart have been incredible, continuing to push me to my maximum, which is what I need if I am to defeat Lomanee, who is a very tough opponent.

"I feel like I have developed so much on this journey through the tournament. Every fight camp I get stronger, more confident and learn so much about myself.

"The tournament has been so long but it has been an amazing experience that I am

so grateful for. I'm so excited for the last fight to come and feel ready."

### 'KEEP ON PUSHING'

Celest has played an integral role in changing attitudes and opening up opportunities for women in the sport. She made history at Lumpinee in November 2021 when she fought Kullanat Ornok by becoming the first ever female Muay Thai athlete to set foot in its ring after the authorities reversed their policy on women fighters, who were previously banned.

It was a landmark moment that she is especially proud of.

"When I first started it was so hard," she reflects. "Opportunities for women were

limited and I felt like giving up. When I said I wanted to be the first woman to fight at Lumpinee Stadium people laughed at me and said that was never going to happen.

"However, I kept pushing, didn't give up and all the hard work has paid off. And that's the message I want to share with everyone – not to give up, to keep on pushing.

"I want to encourage everyone to find something they love and give it everything they have to achieve their dreams."

*Fairtex Fight Road To ONE Thailand can be viewed on Channel 7 HD (press 35), the ONE Super Mobile App or the via Fairtex Fight's Facebook page.*

## Kickboxing Championship set to make debut

### KICKBOXING

THE THAILAND KICKBOXING Championship 2022 will be held at the Thai-Japanese Stadium this weekend (Oct 29-30).

The inaugural tournament, aimed at promoting the sport and also recruiting athletes for the Thai national team, features three categories of competitors between 13-15, 16-18 and 19-40 years old.

The event will use the rules of the World Association of Kickboxing Organisations.

Mainly supported by the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), the

tournament is the latest move by the Kickboxing Association of Thailand to promote the sport which has enjoyed an increase in popularity since its success at the SEA Games in Vietnam earlier this year.

"As it is similar to Muay Thai, the country's traditional sport, kickboxing has become more and more popular among the Thai people," Gen Kookiat Srinaka, a senior official from the Kickboxing Association of Thailand, told a press conference on Oct 18.

"Interestingly, our athletes performed well, winning two gold medals at the SEA Games in Vi-

etnam in May. With that, we have received more support from the SAT and also the National Sports Development Fund to continue our work in developing our athletes and management to meet international standards."

With 12 gold medals at stake at the SEA Games in Vietnam, Thailand took home two gold, four silver and six bronze medals while the hosts bagged five gold medals.

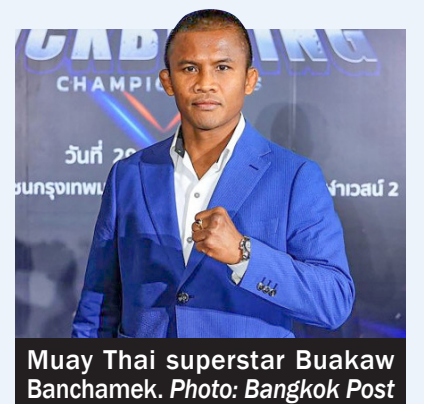
SAT governor Gongsak Yodmani said kickboxing is well recognised and gaining more popularity throughout the world.

"We have given our full support for the association to host the

competition so that they can recruit more fine athletes to represent the country," he said.

Muay Thai superstar Buakaw Banachamek, who managed the Thai team which won two kickboxing gold medals in Vietnam, said that despite being popular among the Thais, kickboxing is quite new to them in terms of rules and judging.

The Thailand Kickboxing Championship 2022 will not only support the sport in general but also give an opportunity for parties involved to learn about its rules and other important issues, said Buakaw, who is also a board member of the Kickboxing As-



Muay Thai superstar Buakaw Banachamek. Photo: Bangkok Post

sociation of Thailand.

Kickboxing is now a discipline at many international sporting events including the SEA Games, World Games and World Combat Games as well as the sixth Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Thailand next year. *Bangkok Post*