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# UNCHAINED

## PHUKET EXPATS DRIVE CRYPTO ANIMAL WELFARE, RESCUE FIRST ELEPHANT

Kanoon at his new sanctuary home in Sukhothai. Photo: Unchained Elephants

**The Phuket News**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket expats Daniel Villota and Vicki Kiely have launched an elephant rescue project that has already resulted in its first successful mission, the rescue of a 55-year-old bull elephant in Chiang Mai, which is being heralded as the world's first-ever tokenized elephant rescue.

Unchained Elephants, founded by Mr Villota and supported by his wife Susan, initially emerged as an initiative to use 'non-fungible tokens' (NFTs) to help fund a response to the challenges faced by elephants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Their mission was to use NFTs

to raise funds for elephants that had become 'unemployed' due to travel restrictions. During this phase, they successfully raised US\$10,000, which was used to provide essential care and food for eight elephants in various camps across Thailand, explained Mr Villota.

However, as COVID-19 restrictions eased and tourism resumed, so too did elephant tourism, Unchained Elephants had to shift their focus to the new problem at hand. Their new objective became the rescue of elephants in dire conditions and the education of travelers about the elephant tourism industry, he added.

"It all started when we were assisting another person who was looking

for an elephant to rescue. Through the help of Thai animal activist Chayan-an Assawadhammanond, we came across 'Kanoon', who was living in dire conditions on a garbage dump in Chiang Mai," Mr Villota told *The Phuket News*.

"However, when we presented the story of this bull elephant to the person we were assisting, he said that the story was 'not good enough' for social media and preferred finding a baby elephant. This is when Unchained Elephants decided to step up to rescue this bull," he explained.

Chained up next to a garbage dump in Mae Tang, Chiang Mai, with scarce food and one functioning eye, 55-year-old bull elephant

'Kanoon' endured four brutal years in captivity in Chiang Mai. Kanoon was malnourished. His plight was nothing short of devastating, Mr Villota said.

Kanoon's heart-wrenching circumstances shed light on a much broader issue: abandoned male elephants in Thailand left to suffer without proper care or resources. With his owner unable to provide the proper care he so desperately needed, Kanoon faced the grim prospect of entering the illegal logging industry or the glimmer of a chance at salvation.

After consulting with elephant experts and learning more about Kanoon's distressing situation, Unchained Elephants, namely Mr Villota and...

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Officials wrangle to resolve tangle of taxi woes



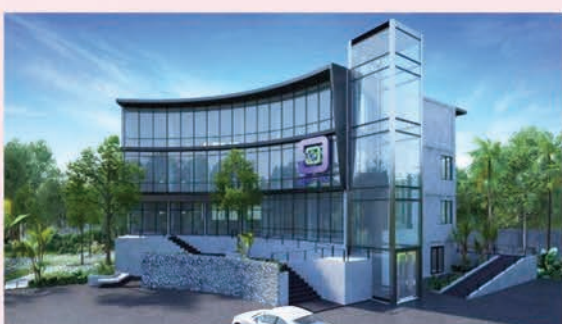
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SOS Thailand readies for World Food Day



**SPORT** PAGE 16

Phuket racer makes go-kart world finals



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## News



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# NFTs leveraged to rescue elephant

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...Ms Kiely, made the decision to embark on a rescue mission.

Starting their fundraising efforts on June 24, the team rallied to raise US\$19,118 (B650,000), a sum that would pave the way for Kanoon's rescue and relocation to an ethical elephant sanctuary in Thailand. There, Kanoon would finally be unchained, receiving the love, care, and sanctuary he so rightfully deserved.

On Aug 15, at 10:55pm, their mission was accomplished. A total of US\$19,495 (B662,852) had been raised, with 60% from crowdfunding and 40% through leveraging NFTs.

## RESCUE MISSION

Kanoon's unique status as a bull elephant presented an unprecedented hurdle, causing many sanctuaries to hesitate in extending refuge due to the distinctive requirements of caring for a male elephant, Mr Villota explained.

Undeterred, a safe haven for Kanoon was found: 'BLES - Boon Lott's Elephant Sanctuary' in Sukhothai. "BLES came forward with open arms,



The team with Kanoon after his arrival in Sukhothai. Photo: Unchained Elephants

generously offering to provide Kanoon with a forever home at their ethical elephant sanctuary in Sukhothai," Mr Villota recalled.

The challenging rescue journey began on Sept 5, lasting a tough 13 hours amidst a storm while moving Kanoon from Chiang Mai to Sukhothai.

"This rescue mission

combines the power of new technology with real-world impact, benefiting not only elephants but also other causes around the world. It leverages digital assets that not only do good but also build a strong and committed community around the cause," said Mr Villota.

"We are really grateful to our partners (Vicki Kiely and

BLES), our sponsors (Hyatt Regency Phuket, Stay Well-being Resort & The Beach Resort Koh Samui), and every individual who contributed to making this rescue a reality. We could not have done this without all of you supporting us. Our commitment to educating travelers and promoting ethical elephant tourism to have a bigger impact remains

unwavering as well as looking forward to our next rescue," he said.

## UNITED EFFORT

"I have been working in animal welfare and as an animal activist for over 10 years now. Daniel approached me in early 2022 to seek my advice, and invite me on board to Unchained Elephants as the spokesperson for the elephants, as an activist, and as an educator," Ms Kiely told *The Phuket News*.

"He knew I had been working with Khao Sok Elephant Sanctuary, and also had been trying to help camps transition to more sanctuary style models here in Phuket, so it made sense for us to work together," she added.

"My goal is still to inspire and work with more camps in Phuket to improve the lives of the elephants and show the camp owners that there is a more ethical and cruelty free way to operate. I am confident that we can achieve this. I am so looking forward to our next rescue and also in educating the tourists coming to Thailand on where to choose their elephant experience, ones

that are ethical and where the animals welfare comes first and foremost," Ms Kiely said.

In the coming weeks and months, Unchained Elephants will focus on raising funds for Kanoon's care at BLES, continue to educate travelers and promote ethical elephant tourism, and scout for captive elephants in need of rescuing.

To follow Kanoon's journey to recovery, see future elephant rescue missions and stay updated on the ongoing efforts to protect and care for elephants, visit Unchained-Elephants.com or visit their social media, Instagram and YouTube channels

Unchained Elephants is also linked with 'Discovering Phuket' (DP), a startup where NFT holders gain access to discounts for tours and activities on the island.

"This is under development. This project will focus on promoting sustainable programs for travelers here in Phuket," Mr Villota noted.

"DP will also serve as a platform to educate travelers about the realities of elephant tourism and promote ethical venues, starting right here on the island," he concluded.

## ONWR targets weirs, hotel wastage in tackling water issues

DR SURASEE KITTIMONTHON, Secretary-General of the Office of National Water Resources (ONWR), was in Phuket last week to discuss and hear opinions from local business operators in the hope of resolving the island's long-standing water-related issues.

The forum, held at the Bhukitta Boutique Hotel in Phuket Town on Sept 19, saw more than 300 people attend, including Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan and Phuket Chamber of Commerce President Kongsak Khuphongsakorn.

Dr Surasee later joined another similar event at the Dara Hotel, in Wichit.

The aim of the meeting was to hear feedback, opinions and suggestions from local people about the "integrated master plan to solve flood-drought problems", said an official report

of the event.

The ONRR was "ready to discuss with tourism business operators to accelerate the drive for water-saving measures in the tourism and service sectors", the report added.

Dr Surasee said that Phuket was one of the first provinces in the country to have prepared water-resource management master plans at the subdistrict (tambon) level.

"Therefore, today the forum will be opened to listen to public opinions on the master plan study project and to listen to suggestions on the results of the study and planning of seven preliminary projects drawn from the plan to drive more than 400 projects which are ready to be deployed," Dr Surasee said.

According to the official report, doing so would empower the government "to solve urgent problems in the



Photo: PR Phuket

area quickly and use it as a model to expand the results of project implementation in each aspect of water resource management that supports the development strategy of Phuket Province under water resource management until 2037".

Singled out as examples of such urgent projects were three projects: to improve the quality of village water supply in Pa Khlok; the Tha Maphrao

Canal Dredging Project; and a project to build a weir to reduce water flow to reduce soil erosion in the upper area of the Kathu Waterfall community.

Oddly not mentioned in the official report was the key issue that Phuket was releasing nearly 55,000 cubic metres of untreated wastewater per day, as confirmed by Dr Surasee himself during his visit to

Phuket just two weeks earlier.

According to the official report, the tourism business operators pointed out the necessity of resolving Phuket's recurring, and ongoing, water-supply and flooding issues for the sake of tourism.

According to current projections, Phuket's demand for water supply will grow to approximately 100 million cubic metres by 2037.

Also highlighted was that the increasing number of tourists coming to Phuket each only adds to the problem, an obvious long known fact that Dr Surasee pointed out during his previous visit that he already understood.

"The appropriate solutions must be consistent with the context in each area experiencing problems. It can help reduce and eliminate problems in water resource management in Phuket Province," Dr Surasee said.

Among the suggestions floated to help reduce water use and reduce wastewater, hotels were asked to look into reusing towels, adding water meters to showers and to maintain pipes on their premises to reduce leakage.

Doing so would help alleviate Phuket's water-related issues, Dr Surasee said.

"Conducting water conservation campaigns for the tourism business sector will also create soft power for the tourism sector in another way, through promotion of sustainable water development and management," he added.

"These water-saving measures are simple and can be carried out immediately. They would truly help create awareness of using water with appreciation and sustainability in the future," he said. *The Phuket News*



# Officials target taxi woes

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Officials met with representatives of taxi groups on the island last week to discuss “issues” as local taxi cooperatives struggle to cope with the rise in popularity of taxi apps and cheaper fares, and a threat to the taxi cooperatives’ long-standing stranglehold on exclusive rights to serve tourists at key tourist locations on the island.

The meeting, held at the Phuket Provincial Ombudsman’s Office (Damrongdharma Center) on Sept 20 and branded as “to solve problems arising from taxi operations in Phuket Province”, was chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkhwan Yodrambam.

The meeting discussed the issue of complaints about the Ratsada VIP Coral Tour group, which serves Ratsada Pier. The taxi drivers were told that taxi services would be organised by the Ratsada Pier authority – a point they were told a year ago after an incident when one of the taxi co-op drivers physically stopped a fully legal taxi app driver and forced four tourists to use a co-op taxi to go to Patong.

The incident was later deemed by police to have been a “misunderstanding”, with the co-op driver of the understanding that a concession with Seatran to serve Seatran



By law, metered taxi drivers have no choice but to be undercut by taxi app drivers. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub / The Phuket News file

passengers at the pier empowered the co-op to have exclusive rights to serve all passengers at the pier.

The taxi driver later blasted people who called the taxi co-op “mafia”.

A year later, apparently that issue still remained unresolved. An official report of the meeting last week did not mention whether the taxi co-op drivers at Ratsada Pier were still operating under the same “misunderstanding”.

The ‘Ratsada VIP’ co-op drivers were told on Sept 20 that Ratsada Pier would regulate parking at the busy terminal, a major jumping off point for tourists heading out to nearby islands.

Signs will be posted to clearly show where general taxis and app

taxis will be allowed to serve passengers. Phuket Provincial Police and officials from the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) are to strictly enforce the arrangement, and where taxis may park and serve passengers at the pier.

Enforcement is to include cracking down on all illegal taxis at the pier, and to prevent taxi drivers from parking to block the entrance in front of the pier and nearby areas.

The Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) is to prepare and provide the materials and equipment for organising taxis and traffic at the pier. The Phuket Provincial Police will formally request the use of such materials and report the results of their operations to the Phuket Provincial Office to

process and present to the Governor of Phuket Province.

## METERED TAXIS

The meeting also heard complaints by metered taxi drivers who are unable to compete with the fares charged by taxi app drivers.

The fares metered taxi drivers are allowed to charge are set by law, as are those now charged by taxi app drivers. The metered taxi drivers, if they are to abide by the law, have no choice but to be undercut by taxi app drivers.

Officials finally discussing the plight faced by metered taxi drivers follows the drivers filing a formal complaint about their situation in June.

## AIRPORT TAXIS

The official report of meeting last week noted that also discussed was the plight of green plate taxi drivers working for the Phuket Business Car Service Cooperative Limited, who for decades had a stranglehold on serving passengers at Phuket International Airport until Grab became the first the taxi app whose drivers were allowed to pick up passengers at the airport from Sept 1.

Less than a week later, the drivers filed a formal complaint of losing income to taxi app drivers. The formal complaint was received by PPAO President Rewat Areerob on Sept 6.

At the launch of the Grab Taxi service at the airport, Phuket Airport General Manager Monchai Tanode confirmed that the concessions for co-op ‘green-plate’ taxi drivers to operate at the airport had expired in June. The co-operatives that continue to serve the airport are currently doing so under temporary four-month extensions that expire at the end of October.

The official report of the meeting last week gave no details of what transpired or was agreed to regarding the green-plate taxi drivers at the airport.

## DATA COLLECTION ON TAXI APP DRIVERS

One development the meeting was clear about was the creation of a database by the PLTO that is to register which taxis are used to provide which taxi app services.

The aim is to collect data that somehow will be used to help develop “public transport routes”, said the official report.

Such information must be requested from the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, the official report noted.

Of note, the database as described by the official report of the meeting said that the taxi app services provided will be associated with the actual taxis used to provide the services, not the driver.

## Police bolster presence at airport

REGION 8 POLICE ON Monday (Sept 25) opened a ‘joint operations centre’ at Phuket International Airport in the name of providing security for tourists.

Present to officiate the opening of the ‘Front Operations Centre’ was Region 8 Police Commander Pol Lt Gen Suraphong Thanomchit, along with an assembly of local police officers and security personnel at the airport.

The opening of the new police centre, marked by a sign emblazoned ‘Airport Security Center’, came as leading tourism figures arrived at the airport to welcome Chinese and Kazakh tourists coming to Thailand under the new visa-free scheme approved especially for tourists from those two countries.

The new centre is the result of the combined effort of Phuket International Airport officials, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Immigration Police at Phuket airport, Tourist Police, affiliated police officers from Sakhu Police Station as well as the Phuket Provincial Police and the Investigation Division at Region 8 Police, said an official report of the opening.

Also joining the effort were



Photo: PR Phuket

public transport operators “to ensure safety and convenience for tourists”, said the report.

“Measures to protect the safety of life and property of tourists have been emphasised, including facilitating various aspects such as traffic, visa inspection and receiving tourists at public transportation points, including public transportation through apps at Phuket International Airport,” the report explained.

Officers at the centre are to collect a history of public car service providers picking up tourists at the airport. Officers are to monitor images from CCTV cameras that feed footage to a command control centre.

Officers are to use facial recognition data and biometrics to maintain security at the airport, while tourists are recommended to use the Tourist Police ‘I Lert U’ app, which has even resulted in

foreign tourists lost in the jungle in Phuket being found and safely recovered.

Issues encountered or resolved by officers each day at the new centre are to be presented to the Joint Operations Center for Tourist Safety (Command and Control Operation Center: C.C.O.C.) for review in order to “develop operations for maximum efficiency”, the report added.

Other than regulating taxis, exactly why such a security centre was needed was not explained. Immigration officers have their own centre at the airport and Sakhu Police are already entrusted with providing police officers at the key tourist facility, and countless tourists have been provided invaluable assistance by officers and personnel at the Tourist Assistance Centre, created years ago by the Ministry of Tourism & Sports.

The Phuket News

## Phra Metta reopens in Patong

THE ROAD PAST THE ONGOING drainworks project on Phra Metta Rd in Patong has reopened to traffic in both directions, Patong Police have announced.

The announcement came late last Sunday (Sept 24), after the town had suffered flooded roads from heavy downpours over last weekend. Ironically, the drainworks project is aimed at alleviating flooding in the tourism town.

The reopening of the road past the drainworks came after Patong Municipality held talks with the contractor, Patong Police explained. Patong Municipality has yet to make its own announcement confirming the reopening of the road to traffic flow in both directions.

The “reopening to traffic” in actuality is the reopening of one lane past the drainworks site, with motorists urged to exercise caution when making their way past the intersection.

The section of road still undergoing works for obvious reasons remains closed, police noted.

The failure of the contractor to complete the project has tested the patience of local residents and shop owners, who have suffered with the road closures effected both north and south of the drainworks site.

The project by Patong Municipality’s Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning to install a “sand trap” at the site began on June 20. By contract, the project was to be completed on Aug 27.

Patong Municipality has been vague with details about the project in its public



Traffic can now pass the drainworks site on Phra Metta Rd in Patong. Photo: Patong Police

announcements. The contractor has yet to be named, and the budget for the project has been given as “about B222 million”.

Patong Municipality has not given any explanation for the delays in completing the project, and has not confirmed any penalties the contractor is to be subjected to under the concession contract.

Patong Municipality’s most recent report on the project was on Sept 15, marking only that Patong Mayor Chalerm Sak Manseesri had inspected the site in person.

The section of area to undergo the installation of a “sand trap” was identified as the main cause of extensive flooding in the area in November last year.

The incident drew the attention of Pongrat Piromrat, Director-General of the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning for the whole country, who travelled from Bangkok to inspect the construction site firsthand. The Phuket News



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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SAT SEPTEMBER 30



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN OCTOBER 1



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON OCTOBER 2



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE OCTOBER 3



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED OCTOBER 4



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU OCTOBER 5



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## 'Fake plates' taxi busted by Highway Police in Chumphon

HIGHWAY POLICE officers apprehended a Thai man who had been operating an illegal Phuket taxi with fake green-and-white license plates since 2019.

The man was arrested during a routine vehicle inspection on Phet Kasem Rd (Highway 4) in the Tambon Sap Anan, Chumphon province.

Mr Veerasak (full name withheld) was apprehended at a "traffic discipline checkpoint", Highway Police reported last Friday (Sept 22).

Returning from Sisaket to Phuket in his grey Toyota Fortuner bearing green and white license plates "ขข 4231 Phuket", he was flagged down due to the absence of a road tax sticker on his windshield. Subsequent checks by officers revealed that the license plates were fake.

According to the national database, Mr Veerasak's car was still registered as a private vehicle under the number "กค 4621 Surat Thani".

With evidence presented to him, Mr Veerasak admitted that he bought the Fortuner outside of Phuket before the COVID-19 pandemic and later relocated to the island in search of employment.

A friend suggested he work as a taxi driver, but Mr Veerasak failed to properly register the vehicle with the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) as he was not a local resident.

Still pursuing a taxi driver's career, Mr Veerasak bought the green-and-white plates via LINE for B20,000 and had been using them since 2019.

He was taken to Tha Sae Police Station in Chumphon to face charges accordingly. Highway Police have not disclosed the penalties he may face. *The Phuket News*



Mr Veerasak said he paid B690,000 for the Fortuner and B20,000 for the fake plates. Photo: Highway Police

## Russian returns home after 14 days at airport

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A Russian man spent 14 days in the International terminal of Phuket International Airport before finally flying home last week, reports the Phuket Tourist Assistance Center (TAC Phuket).

For undisclosed reasons, the story of the tourist's ordeal was made public by officials only after the situation had been resolved.

The story of the stranded tourist, who spent 14 days at Phuket airport after missing his return flight, was revealed by TAC Phuket on Sept 21. The man was identified in the publication only as 'Mr Oleg'. No further details about his identity were provided.

According to the TAC, Mr Oleg arrived on the island as a tourist but missed his return flight. Airport staff found him in the International terminal in distress and heavily intoxicated. The man had no money to either buy a new ticket or to support himself while his relatives were arranging tickets for him.

For the following two weeks, airport personnel, TAC officials and Phuket Tourist Police officers jointly took care of Mr Oleg. At some stage, the Russian man required medical assistance for an eye infection and was taken to Thalang Hospital, where he was prescribed eye drops.



TAC officers and Tourist Police with Mr Oleg before his return home. Photo: TAC Phuket

TAC officials and Tourist Police officers provided the man with assistance for the medication and also bought food at the airport. According to the TAC, Mr Oleg avoided visiting shops himself as he was not sure if he could refrain from buying alcohol.

On Sept 21, Mr Oleg thanked all the parties for the help provided and flew back to Russia on a flight paid for by his mother.

"Thank you all for your great support," the tourist conveyed through the translation app on his phone.

"It was really difficult without you," he added in a separate message.

In turn, the TAC thanked everybody involved in helping

Mr Oleg during his ordeal.

It has yet to be revealed why Phuket officials had not made the story public and requested support from the Russian community before Mr Oleg's departure from Phuket.

Oddly enough, this was not the first time Mr Oleg missed his flight and got stranded at the airport. According to the TAC he was known to officials as he had already been in a similar situation at the end of 2022.

"The Tourist Assistance Center does not have a budget to support tourists financially. Assistance in each case depends on the work conditions, behaviour and consent of the tourists to cooperate," the TAC added.

## Arrested for 1,577 days' overstay

IMMIGRATION OFFICERS have confirmed the arrest of a foreigner who had stayed illegally in the country for more than four years.

The foreigner, a woman, was placed under arrest at the international departures hall at Phuket International Airport at about 6:35pm on Sept 17, reported the 'Phuket Immigration Checkpoint'.

The woman's name and nationality were not disclosed in the report.

The woman was placed under arrest by officers led by Immigration Inspector Pol Lt Col Akkhaphon Kaewkiat, joined by officers from Crime Suppression Investigation Division (ChoPor 1).

The arrest was made under the direction of Phuket Immigration Checkpoint Superintendent Pol Col Naruewat Phutthawiro and Deputy Superintendent Pol Lt Col Sabha



Officers with the woman arrested at Phuket Airport. Photo: Phuket Immigration Checkpoint

Chitlang, noted the report.

The woman was found to have stayed in the country illegally for a total of 1,577 days.

No further details of the woman's arrest, or any reason given for the length of illegal stay in the country, were explained.

The woman was taken to Sakhu Police Station to be charged for illegally entering and staying in the country, the report confirmed.

*The Phuket News*

## Swiss man dies in fatal leap at airport

POLICE OFFICERS IN PHUKET are investigating the death of a Swiss national who fell from the pedestrian bridge at Phuket International Airport last Friday night (Sept 22).

Authorities were alerted to a possible suicide attempt at Phuket International Airport around 7:30pm.

Police, first responders and airport security personnel rushed to the scene, where they found a seriously injured foreign man lying beneath the pedestrian bridge connecting the international terminal to the parking area.

The victim, later identified as a 53-year-old Swiss national, was immediately transported to Thalang Hospital. Despite the best efforts of medical personnel, the foreigner succumbed to his injuries.

The authorities are investigating the incident as a suicide, though no final conclusion has been made so far. Phuket Tourist Police, led by Lt



Photo: Phuket Tourist Police

Col Sakkarin Anusamansakul, have not provided details regarding the potential reasons behind the man's alleged decision to take his own life.

If you or anyone you know is in need of emotional support and counseling, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their 24-hour hotline at 02-113-6789 (English & Thai), or the Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai). *The Phuket News*



# Furore over Chalong dump

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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Chalong Mayor Thanaporn Ongsantiphap has issued an immediate ban on any further dumping of waste at a three-rai site in Baan Khoktanod, Moo 9, Chalong, following an aerial image of the site spreading across social media.

The aerial image was first shared by the 'Monsoon Garbage Thailand' Facebook page, with more photos taken from on the ground posted with the message, "What people want to know is how to manage it..."

Phuket Governor Narong Wongciew assigned Chalong Mayor Thanaporn and Muang District Chief Phairot Srilamul to inspect the area, located in the neighbourhood opposite Wat Ladthi Wanaram (Wat Tai) on Chao Fa East Rd, and to confirm the photos posted, said an official report of the inspection on Sept 18.

On seeing the site, Mayor Thanaporn immediately had 'No Dumping' signs posted to prevent the problem from becoming worse.

Although the land appeared to be privately owned, Chalong Municipality had the authority to prohibit the dumping of garbage in the area because it was considered an offence by causing a public nuisance, which is punishable by law, said the official report.

"As for the garbage that is still



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

in the area, we must discuss with the area owner to manage it so that the existing garbage does not affect and cause distress to the people in the area," District Chief Phairot said.

Chalong Mayor Thanaporn noted, "As for Chalong Municipality, we have contacted the person in charge of the area who has provided information that they will contact the owner of the area as soon as possible.

"The real area owners will be invited to join in planning to find solutions together with Chalong Municipality. This is because the

news in question has an impact on the tourism image of Phuket Province," she added.

"This must be discussed clearly because in the case where the problem is solved by garbage disposal, there will be operating expenses or bringing soil to fill in the garbage landfill also has expenses, which must be discussed," Mayor Thanaporn said.

"We will talk with both sides, both the government and the area owners. However, the basic solution must be to prohibit additional trash from being dumped," Mayor

Thanaporn maintained clearly.

"Chalong Municipality has posted notices. If anyone violates this [ban on dumping], they will be prosecuted according to the law," she warned.

Pracha Srimuang, of the Baan Khoktanod Community Committee, pointed out that much of the trash dumped at the site was scrapped construction materials used as landfill to elevate the land.

"We can confirm that it does not emit a smell that disturbs the people in the area and does not cause polluted water," he said.

"In the past, there was a pond that was part of a pig pen, which caused wastewater and excrement from the pig pen to flow down into the area and onto into the sea, which originally caused great distress to the people because the area was originally a low-sloping area.

"But now that the area is higher, and the pig pens have been moved out of the area," Mr Pracha explained.

Kokchai Sae-Ung, village headman of Moo 9, Chalong, said the land was privately owned and that permission had been granted last year to use scrapped construction materials as landfill to elevate the site.

"Later, villagers came here to separate old plastic bottles and sell them," he said.

However a fire at the site in April this year had caused much concern. Local firefighters arrived to douse

the fire, and no more materials were allowed to be dumped at the site since then, he added.

Mr Kokchai also denied that the photos posted online were not current. "The pictures seen today that are released by the mass media all over the country and in Phuket are old pictures. The mass media has come to see the condition of the area with their own eyes. This area does not have cars or rental houses coming in to fill the road," he said.

"The municipality had already posted a sign banning any more landfill at the site, and assistant village headman, community leaders and municipality officers also drive in once or twice a week to check and make sure no garbage is disposed here so as not to cause distress to the local residents," he added.

"I'm annoyed. As the media can see right now, there is grass and trees growing green here, but what looks like floating garbage might actually be rubble and cement. If you take a picture from above, it might look like plastic garbage, but it's actually not," Mr Kokchai said.

"There's been no smell here since April 2023. There will be no additional dumping and disposal of garbage. After ordering the closure of this pond, there has been no smell, no spoilage, no pollution, no smoke, no fires. It all stopped in April 2023," he concluded.

## Project on track for underwater power line to supply Koh Lon

KOH LON, A SPARSELY INHABITED island in Chalong Bay, is on track to receive a permanent electricity supply through an underwater power line connection from Phuket. The project is already in progress, although officials have not yet disclosed a specific timeline.

Officials from the Phuket branch of the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) conducted a field survey on Koh Lon last Friday (Sept 22). Leading the PEA team was Thawat Kongsap, head of the Chalong PEA office.

As Koh Lon falls administratively under Rawai subdistrict, Mayor Aroon Solos joined the inspection as well. The survey encompassed an examination of the area and the necessary measurements.

In a short report, Rawai Municipality announced that power supply to the small island will be established through an underwater cable. No further details about the project were provided.

The first person to react to the Facebook report and show support for the initiative was Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee from the Move Forward party.

On Sept 10, Mr Chalermpong, also known as 'Coach Sam', visited the island with his fellow party members to lend support to Koh Lon School, the smallest educational institution in Phuket with only two students in total.

Mr Chalermpong subsequently made a post on Facebook, urging local media to



Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos and PEA personnel on Koh Lon last Friday (Sept 22). Photo: Rawai Municipality

help draw attention to the school, which relies on the dedication of its sole teacher, Kru Nok.

"Koh Lon is located approximately 20 kilometers from Phuket Town and only 15 minutes from Chalong Pier. It is a large island but rarely discussed. As for Ban Koh Lon School, it is a special area school and the only school on the island without electricity and tap water," Mr Chalermpong explained.

"Our activities today included cleaning the area around the school, landscaping the school grounds, and providing learning materials and two bicycles for the students," he added.

Rawai Municipality did not elaborate on whether the Sept 22 inspection was in response to Mr Chalermpong effort to draw attention to Ban Koh Lon School.

The Phuket News



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# Visa-free tourists arrive

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Tourists arriving from China and Kazakhstan on Monday (Sept 25), the first day of 'visa-free' travel for people visiting from the two countries, were welcomed at Phuket International Airport with much fanfare, led by a delegation of officials and leading tourism figures.

The delegation at Phuket airport were present to ensure the tourists were made to feel welcome, with Phuket just one of four airports in the country where similar events were held to welcome the visitors, including at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok and Chiang Mai International Airport.

Tourists arriving from the two countries were treated to a welcoming ceremony, garlands and gift bags of souvenirs as well as cultural performances "to welcome and impress and show Thailand's readiness to be an important tourism destination", reported the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

The aim of the events was "to support the government's policy to urgently accelerate

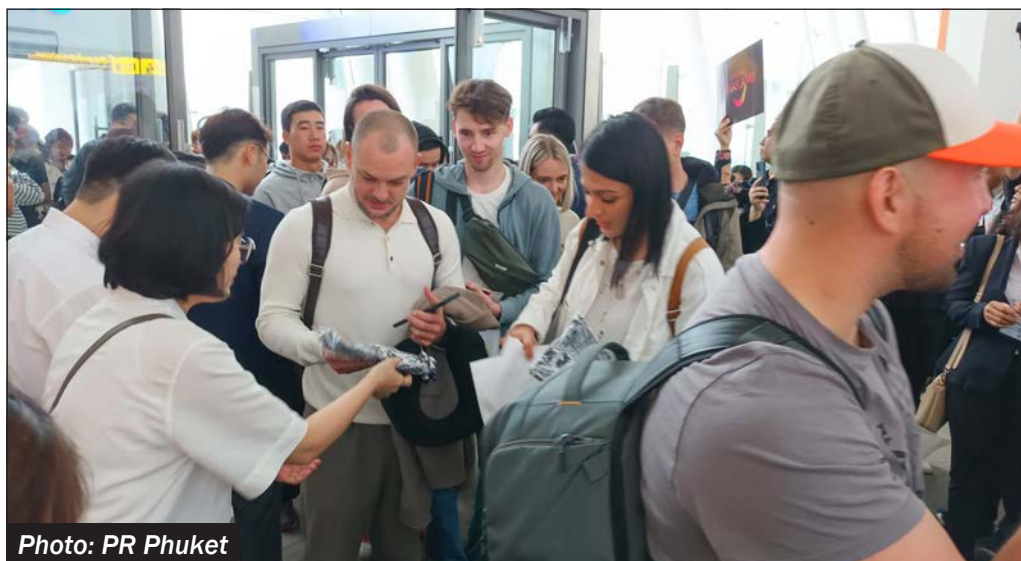


Photo: PR Phuket

the facilitation of travelling to Thailand though the visa exemption measure for tourism [extended] to Chinese and Kazakhstan tourists from 25 September 2023 - 29 February 2024 in order to build faith [sic]," the PR Phuket report said.

Leading the welcome delegation in Phuket were:

- Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Deputy Governor for European, African, Middle Eastern and American Markets

- Emil Kuliiev, Advisor to the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Kazakhstan,

Phuket Province

- Monchai Tanode, General Manager of Phuket International Airport

- Lertchai Wangtrakuldee, Director of the TAT Phuket Office

- Thanet Tantipiriyakit, President of the Phuket Tourist Association

- Wirintra Paphakityotphat, head of the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) Region 11 branch (which represents Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi)

- Urachat Panyawut, Air Astana Airlines Sales and Marketing Manager for Thailand,

The delegation was on hand, joined by a host of support staff, to welcome tourists arriving on Air Astana Flight KC 563 direct from Almaty, Kazakhstan, which landed at Phuket Airport at 9:25am.

PR Phuket noted that the flight's passenger capacity was 166 seats, but omitted clarifying exactly how many tourists were on board.

However, one of the passengers to arrive was Chatchawan Sakornsin, the Thai Ambassador in Astana, traveling along with the group. Including media from Kazakhstan joining the trip.

The Kazakh tourist market is considered a remote market with potential and a large market in Central Asia. The number of visitors from the central Asia country already so far this year has reached 109,865 people (as of Sept 17), compared with 56,529 people throughout all of 2019.

The average stay is 14.03 days, with the average spending at B4,365.25 per person per day. Most from Kazakhstan travel in family groups, most notably during the winter months of December through March, PR Phuket noted in its report.

Air Astana is now operating four flights a week from Almaty, and will increase that to seven flights a week, starting Oct 29 and continuing through April 2024, the report added.

The goal is to attract 150,000 tourists from Kazakhstan this year. The five months of visa exemption is expected to attract 129,485 tourists from Kazakhstan, generating some B7.93 billion for the economy, the report added.

A similar welcome was rolled out for Chinese visitors arriving in Phuket under the

visa-free scheme on Monday.

Arrivals to Phuket on three flights in particular were singled out for the warm welcome: Air China flight CA717 from Hangzhou (capacity 158 passengers), which landed at Phuket airport at 3pm; Spring Airlines Flight 9C8667 from Shanghai (capacity 180 passengers), which landed at 4:15pm; and Air China Flight CA 821 (capacity 237 passengers) from Beijing, which landed at 5:45pm.

A total of 2,341,080 visitors had arrived from China from Jan 1 to Sept 17. On average tourists from China stay 7.8 days and spend B50,766 per person per trip, PR Phuket noted.

Phuket is the second most popular tourist destination in Thailand for Chinese tourists, after Bangkok.

Extending the visa-free scheme to Chinese nationals is expected to boost revenue from Chinese tourists to B257.5bn in 2023.

The visa-free scheme is hoped to help push the number of foreign tourists to Thailand to reach the announced goal of "25-30 million people in 2023", PR Phuket concluded.



Photo: NNT

## Weak baht can help export, tourism: PM

THE PRIME MINISTER has assured that the Bank of Thailand (BOT) is monitoring the weak baht, which he pointed out is not entirely bad for the economy and could help the key export and tourism sectors, as the currency hit multi-month lows.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, speaking during a visit to the United States last week, said the government was not interfering in the central bank's duty, reports state news agency NNT.

He told reporters that the Thai currency's depreciation was driven by capital outflows due to interest rate differentials.

The US Federal Reserve held interest rates steady and its hawkish stance on

monetary policy strengthened the dollar.

The baht traded at 36.16 per dollar after hitting a more than 10-month low of 36.32 on Sept 20. The unit has weakened by 4.4% against the greenback so far this year.

The new government, which took office last month, is planning higher spending to help finance fresh policies to stimulate the economy weighed down by soft demand for exports and low investor confidence.

When asked whether a large public borrowing plan would affect fund-raising by the private sector, Prime Minister Srettha said market liquidity remained ample.

National News  
Bureau of Thailand

## AoT moves ahead with B70bn 'Andaman Airport' plan

AIRPORTS OF THAILAND (AoT) is moving ahead with its plans to spend B70 billion to build an airport in Phang Nga, north of Phuket, to accommodate the rising number of tourists to the Andaman region.

According to a report by Phuket Info Center, which operates under the Phuket office of the Ministry of Interior, the news was attributed to comments by AoT President Kerati Kijmanawat, in response Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin visiting Chiang Mai last week to discuss the construction of a new airport in Lamphun province to alleviate air traffic congestion at Chiang Mai International Airport.

The construction of the two new airports has been branded the 'Andaman-Lamphun' project, with AoT to spend B140 billion on building both airports, with each airport costing B70bn to complete.

The aim is to boost tourism to Chiang Mai, and to the Phuket region, by building two new airports – one in Lamphun, the other in Khok Kloi, Phang Nga – said the Phuket Info Center report, which referred to the construction of the two airports as both the "Andaman-Lamphun" project



Image: Phuket Info Center

and the "Phuket-Chiang Mai" project.

According to the report posted by Phuket Info Center, Mr Kerati said\* that AoT will launch yet another feasibility study, including Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements before the end of the year. The study is expected to take eight months to complete.

After the study has been completed, the project will enter the process of designing investment details, including area boundaries, construction methods, budget and an EIA report

The project will then be presented to the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDB) for approval, before the project is submitted to

Cabinet to consider for approval.

The detailed design process and request for approval is expected to take three years before the project is opened to bidding. Construction of the airport will take approximately four years.

The entire process is expected to take seven years, with the airport in Khok Kloi hoped to open to serve tourists by 2030-2031.

Mr Kerati further said that at present Phuket Airport serves approximately 12 million passengers per year, while Krabi Airport serves 5mn passengers per year, giving a total demand for the two airports to serve 17mn tourists each year. Meanwhile, the demand for travel to Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga provinces is

increasing, he said.

"There is an urgent need to speed up the construction of the 'Andaman Airport'," Mr Kerati was quoted as saying.

"Currently, flight time allocation (slots) at Phuket Airport are full, and there is not enough support," he said.

"Initially, there will be two runways for flexibility in accommodating aircraft [at the new airport], and the airport will be able to accommodate 40mn passengers per year," he said.

Although the airport is expected to cost B70bn, AoT will be the only investor because it already has sufficient cash flow. Construction of the new airport is to be divided into two phases, with the first phase to allow the airport to accommodate 15mn passengers a year, he said.

Mr Kerati also said that AoT had originally studied the construction site for "Phuket Airport No. 2" and that a suitable area was found in Khok Kloi Subdistrict in Phang Nga Province. The site covers about 6,000 rai, "most of which" was already government land.

"This area will be used to construct the 'Andaman Airport'," he said.

The Phuket News



# Big Joke slams house search

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Deputy national police chief Surachate 'Big Joke' Hakparn has slammed the search of his home in Bangkok on Monday morning (Sept 25) and attributed it to political manoeuvring within the Office of the Royal Thai Police.

Pol Gen Surachate said the search of his house, in Soi Vibhavadi 60, was dishonest because in seeking the warrant cyber crime police only gave the court the number of the house to be searched and did not state who owned the place.

Pol Gen Surachate said he initially refused to allow officers inside, but relented after he talked with the Cyber Crime Investigation Bureau (CCIB) commissioner. Nothing illegal was found in his house, it was confirmed.

The embattled deputy police chief said what happened to him was linked to politics within the Office of the Royal Thai Police, explaining he was still in the dark about who ordered the search, which he said was intended to discredit him and ruin his reputation.

He admitted that eight other police officers the CCIB had obtained arrest warrants for were his subordinates, stating their financial transactions must be examined to show whether they were involved in the operations of online gambling websites as alleged, or not.

If in an investigation found they committed the alleged crime they must be



Pol Gen Surachate Hakparn during the search on his house by cyber crime police on Monday (Sept 25). Photo: Bangkok Post

subject to criminal action and he would not protect them, he added.

He admitted having handled many criminal cases in which many police officers were implicated and were served with arrest or search warrants.

Pol Lt Gen Trairong Phiewphan, chief of the Office of Legal Affairs and Litigation of the Royal Thai Police, said the search of 30 houses in six provinces across the country stemmed from the arrests in July of three suspects in connection with 12 gambling websites.

This led to CCIB police seeking court warrants to arrest 23 other suspects, including eight police officers.

From evidence acquired through the investigation, some of the eight police officers appeared to be administrators of gambling websites, while the others

were coordinators. They were found to have been in the illegal business for over two months.

Pol Lt Gen Trairong said the eight police officers included a police major general and a police colonel.

He said cyber crime police who showed up to search the house on Soi Vibhavadi 60 did not know it belonged to Pol Gen Surachate, because the official domicile registration showed the house belonged to a civilian. Therefore, the search was not an act of persecution, he said.

According to Pol Gen Trairong, of the 23 suspects under arrest warrants 17 had been arrested and eight of them were police officers. There was at this stage no evidence implicating Pol Gen Surachate, he said.



Prinn: Slew of sex charges. Photo: Bangkok Post

## Prinn jailed for sexual assault of minor

### BANGKOK

THE BANGKOK SOUTH Criminal Court sentenced former deputy Democrat Party leader Prinn Panitchpakdi to two years in jail for sexually assaulting an underaged girl while throwing out another similar case on Monday (Sept 25).

Prinn's latest conviction – of sexually assaulting a girl under 15 – comes without a suspended jail term and stems from a string of sex-related charges he is facing.

However, the court dismissed a separate case against him in which he was charged with rape, according to Kosolwat Intuchanyong, spokesman of the Office of the Attorney-General (OAG).

After the ruling, Prinn was granted B300,000 bail by the court, pending his appeal against the conviction.

On Aug 10, the Criminal Court sentenced him to two years and eight months in prison without a suspended term for sexually assaulting an 18-year-old student in 2021.

She had filed an official complaint with Lumpini police in April 2022.

Prosecutors told the court that Prinn lured the student into meeting him at a rooftop restaurant on Soi Sukhumvit 11 and later sexually attacked her.

Prinn is the son of Supachai Panitchpakdi, a former deputy prime minister and director-general of the World Trade Organization.

Bangkok Post

## Srettha denies move to approach Thaksin

### BANGKOK

PRIME MINISTER AND Finance Minister Srettha Thavisin says he never spoke of a plan to make former premier Thaksin Shinawatra his adviser once the latter is released from jail, as widely reported.

Speaking to reporters in New York last week, where he was attending the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the prime minister explained he was asked by a reporter whether he might seek advice from Thaksin regarding national affairs. His reply was he would do so if necessary.

Critics have asked, given his remarks, who is really in charge of the government: Mr Srettha, or Thaksin, who is widely seen as having a hand in getting him the job.

Mr Srettha had told Bloomberg TV on Sept 20 that he would seek political advice from Thaksin when he was released from prison. He said he would also seek advice from all former prime ministers.

In fact, the first prede-



Thaksin: 'Most popular PM'. Photo: Bangkok Post

cessor he approached right after assuming office was Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha. He also paid a visit to other former premiers, Anand Panyarachun and Somchai Wongsawat.

Mr Srettha praised Thaksin, saying he was the country's most popular prime minister and that when he is free, it would be "unwise of me not to seek his opinion".

But Mr Srettha said he did not believe Thaksin would entertain the notion of acting as adviser even if he was offered the post. "He wouldn't want to be my adviser. He has other roles and responsibilities in mind," Mr Srettha said.

Meanwhile, serial petitioner Srisuwan Janya said he

would file a petition asking the Department of Corrections to publish a daily record of Thaksin's treatment at the Police General Hospital and who visited the former premier there.

According to Justice Ministry regulations, inpatient prisoners must be accompanied by two corrections officials at all times, and they are required to report what goes on at the hospital.

Mr Srisuwan said such records are not confidential medical documents which are normally banned from disclosure. They are general records which the Department of Corrections is obligated to divulge and clarify, he said. Bangkok Post

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# SOS: Feed the people

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

**T**he Phuket branch of the Scholars of Sustenance Foundation (SOS) Thailand is moving ahead with its goal of handing out 20,000 meals to people in need across the island on Oct 9, as part of its efforts to mark World Food Day on Oct 16.

"In October every year is World Food Day, when the entire world organises events to raise awareness of reducing food waste among all people, and to address hunger problems around the world," explains Sawaeng 'Jack' Kaola, SOS Thailand Regional Business Manager.

Scholars of Sustenance Foundation,

founded in 2016, is the first food rescue organisation in Thailand, he notes.

"Our goal is to assist the nation's food-expansion system in reducing waste and creating a decent balance for those who are lacking by daily distributing high-quality food waste from industries including hotels, restaurants, convenience stores and others to the underprivileged in Bangkok, Phuket, Hua Hin, Chiang Mai, and other areas in Thailand.

"This year, the Scholars of Sustenance Foundation Thailand, Phuket branch, and allies aim to organise World Food Day on Monday, October 9, 2023, by donating food boxes (halal) including 20,000 meals, including water, milk, snacks, and more, to all of Phuket's districts," Jack explains.

The massive effort to help provide food relief to impoverished areas across Phuket is being conducted in association with district offices, local municipalities and subdistrict administrative organisations, as well as local volunteers, social development and human security volunteers (SDHSV), village health centre volunteers and the Phuket Provincial Social Development and Human Society Office.

Also joining the efforts since last month are hundreds of hotels across the island, all in the name of helping the poor and to take steps towards the United Nations' sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of 'zero food waste' across Phuket.

"Over the past four years, the SOS Foundation and associations have been distributing food in this way each year to help the vulnerable and those who are still struggling at the least with the rising cost of living," explains Jack.

"As you are all aware, Phuket is solely dependent on tourism, hence we require more visitors. If there are no tourists, we will struggle and there will be more unemployed people, and the cost of living will rise.

"The World Food Day event demonstrates our ability to assist people of all religions, colours, nationalities, ages and genders. Every sector helps everyone. We think that the World Food Day event will demonstrate to the world that we care about everyone, leave no one behind, and are committed to Phuket's sustainability," he adds

## HOTELS JOIN IN

At a meeting chaired by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw last month, Bhumikitti Ruktaengam, Advisor to Phuket Chamber of Commerce, announced that a digital platform for collecting data on food waste and excess food in Phuket will be developed.

Mr Bhumikitti, described as President of the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation (มูลนิธิพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวที่ยั่งยืน), pointed out that the 'Participatory Food Waste Management Model' pilot project was already underway.

The project focuses on reducing the volume of food waste and individual and organisational planning for purchasing food and produce, but still aiming to provide the right amount of food and to see people consuming the right amount of food, while changing consumers' behaviour as well.

'Food management centres' will be set up in each of Phuket's three districts: Mueang District (Phuket Town, Wichit, Chalong, Rawai, Kata, Karon); Thalang District (covering the centre

and north of the island); and Kathu (including Patong and Kamala), Mr Bummikitti explained.

## THREE TYPES

SOS Thailand recognises three distinctly different types of food donations: fresh food, food surplus and food waste.

'Fresh food' is food that is freshly prepared, ready to eat, of quality that can be sold, and both safe and in quality that consumers need. It can also be stored for a while too, the food rescue organisation explains.

'Food Surplus' is food that is still safe for consumption but it may have changed in quality, and does not meet the needs of consumers or cannot be sold. Food surplus can therefore be donated to people in need to maximise its benefits.

'Food waste' occurs when we cannot manage food surplus. "It's food that is not safe for consumption and can't be donated if left unattended, which could become a pollutant to the environment. Therefore, it should be managed by making fertiliser for maximum benefit, SOS Thailand explains

These are the differences between the 3 types of food, which we can choose to manage them for maximum benefit. On the other hand, SOS has allocated a large amount of surplus food to benefit people. Whether it is directly delivering food to communities in need, or re-cooking some surplus food to revive the food and improve its taste and pass on to the community.

## LEND A HAND

"Food waste will be brought from hotels participating in the project to be provided to people in need at reasonable prices but with quality," he said.

The move followed the Phuket Tourist Association, with its 281 members, joining the food rescue efforts in July, and the Phuket Hotels Association, with more than 91 members comprising small boutique hotels to large international chains, in June signing a Memorandum of Understanding with SOS Thailand to collaborate on a variety of projects including the distribution of food donated by hotels to those in need in the community.

For participation, support or to organise a donation for SOS Thailand's food relief project for World Food Day, contact 081-9508711 (Jack), 095-4161955 (James) or 087-5657259 (Pang). For more information about SOS Thailand visit [www.scholarsofsustenance.org](http://www.scholarsofsustenance.org), Facebook: [SOSFoundationThai](https://www.facebook.com/SOSFoundationThai) or email [info@scholarsofsustenance.org](mailto:info@scholarsofsustenance.org)

## Scholars of Sustenance Foundation (SOS) Phuket

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# Veteran or not: calling for volunteers

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

**H**ave you ever wondered what your contribution would be if Phuket was hit by another disaster? During and in the aftermath of the tsunami disaster in 2004, many expats joined with locals to offer whatever assistance they could. The hundreds of stories of selfless actions by so many kind-hearted and determined volunteers was enough to regain faith in humanity.

Stepping up to help doesn't come without its difficulties and dangers, of course. Who do you report to when you want to help? How can you show the people in charge that you are capable, competent and willing? Whomever is running the operation really has too much on their hands to start looking at resumes and course reports from back in the day. Well, there may now be a solution.

Working with the blessing of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), Phuket Veterans – formally the International Veterans Association, a social group made up of former military and emergency service personnel from around the world who are now living in Phuket – have a 'Crisis Response Team' that are readying themselves and are willing to help if needed.

Over the past six months, with the help of First Aid Training Phuket Co Ltd, the volunteers have trained in and



Veteran volunteers take part in the training held last weekend. Photo: The Phuket News

refreshed their first-aid skills. "It was clear from the beginning that there was some evidence of skill fade, but as a military veteran myself, I know that it is just a case of 'remind, revise and repeat' to get the team on the ball again," said Jon Walsh, owner and director of First Aid Training Phuket.

Last weekend, some of the volunteers met up with a training team in Chalong to take part in a search-and-rescue training day. The training was focused upon self reliance and safety, as well as refreshing some skills that may have been forgotten and needed some practice.

"The volunteers were instructed and practised basic self reliance in the field, emergency ground-to-air signalling, selecting an emergency helicopter

landing site, ropework and hill safety, moving casualties and how to use a spinal board, the aims types and basic techniques of SAR, dealing with a suspected scene of a crime, and a personal and team equipment presentation.

"Also in good support of the training, Bangkok Hospital Siriroj provided a senior nurse and ambulance crew. They instructed the volunteers on the best ways to support the emergency medical services when they arrive," said Jon.

Steve Pearce, founder of the Phuket Veterans said, "This training is fundamental to what we are trying to achieve in support of our Phuket community. The last thing the authorities need during a crisis is volunteers getting in their way and giving them something else to

worry about.

"Expats living on Phuket have lots of skills that may be dated, but their experiences are invaluable to us. To that end, in January we will be opening up training for non-veteran volunteers from across the island to attend a one-day training session with us.

"They would then be assigned to teams that could be called upon in the event of a disaster on Phuket. We are so lucky to have Jon from FAT-P and Kevin Mansfield on the training team. Kevin has just returned from running special leadership training in Australia and PNG [Papua New Guinea] for the Gurkhas," Steve explained.

Andrew Purchase, who took part in the training last weekend, said of his experience: "The training was pretty laid back and not at all stressful like I had expected. I come from an Aussie volunteer emergency service background and had never done anything like this before. I would recommend to anyone to come along to one of the training days."

*Phuket Veterans will take part in a four-hour qualifying exercise in December.*

*If you would like to volunteer for the training in January, or you would like to know more about Phuket Veterans, visit [www.phuketveterans.com](http://www.phuketveterans.com) or leave a SMS message on 089-5870819. Participants do not need to be a veteran or a former member of the emergency services to volunteer for the CRT/SAR induction training.*

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POP QUIZ

1. Pranjaya Manoban, better known as 'Lisa' of K-Pop band 'Blackpink', is from which Thai province?
2. 'Skull & Bones' is the secret society of which renowned university?
3. Which is the seventh planet from the sun?
4. "The lady's not for turning," was said by which British Prime Minister?
5. What is the capital of the Falkland Islands?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

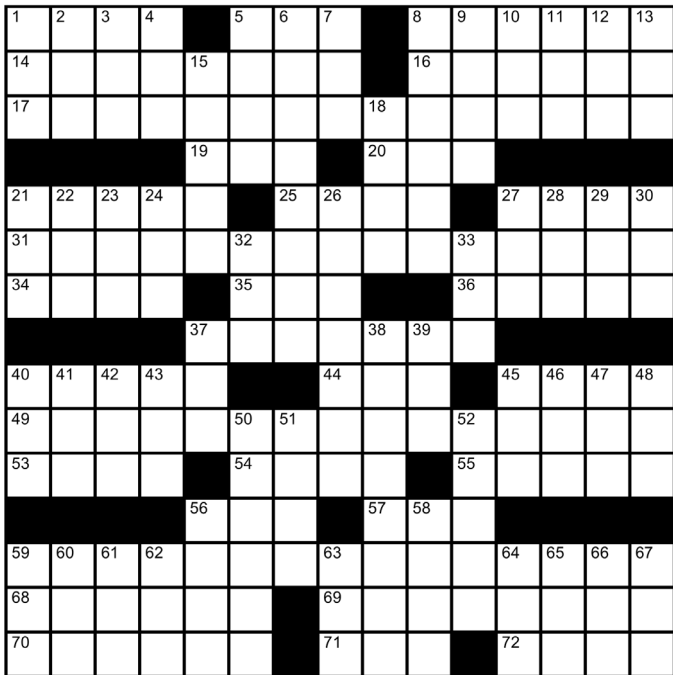
- Across

  1. Bent
  5. Body shop fig.
  8. Red shade
  14. Portion receiver
  16. Ancient meeting places
  17. Takes an extended stroll
  19. Battle of Britain grp.
  20. Discouraging words
  21. Calculus calculations
  25. Vermin
  27. Greek earth goddess: Var.
  31. Fails to act
  34. Kind of mark
  35. Big time
  36. Discompose
  37. Quarrels
  40. Insect stage
  44. Holiday quaff
  45. Hospital directive
  49. Does the best one can
  53. Old Icelandic literary work
  54. Boot
  55. Certain berth
  56. It's inspired
  57. The other woman
  59. Turns upside down
  68. Persian Gulf country
  69. With pleasure
  70. Operatives
- Down

  1. Catch
  2. U.N. workers' grp.
  3. Bass, for one
  4. Brillo rival
  5. Mount SW of Messina
  6. Certain bottom
  7. Abbr. to the left of a number
  8. River craft
  9. Roe
  10. Column's counterpart
  11. 401(k) alternative
  12. Mineo of "Exodus"
  13. Cry in cartoons
  15. Body
  18. Erstwhile
  21. Venom source
  22. \_\_\_ Rancho (suburb of Albuquerque)
  23. List ender
  24. Pump
  26. Game divisions
  27. Prattle
  28. Bibliophilic suffix
  29. Fingers
  30. Hair color
  32. Bottom line
33. Eats
  37. Boozehound
  38. Low slope
  39. Freudian topic
  40. Fury
  41. Kind of pie
  42. Conjunction
  43. Fed. construction overseer
  45. Dadaist
  46. Dope
  47. Air hero
  48. A pop
  50. Boosts
  51. 100 cents
  52. Risked, in days of old
  56. Passage
  58. See 23-Down
  59. Cousin of reggae
  60. Harbor craft
  61. Shock's partner
  62. Indian bread
  63. Franco-Spanish botanist
  64. Alter, in a way
  65. Shogun's capital
  66. Pledge of Allegiance ender
  67. Salon supply

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

- 1) Buriram; 2) Yale University; 3) Uranus; 4) Margaret Thatcher; 5) Stanley



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

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

in every 30 million lobsters is yellow.

2

percent of the world's population has green eyes, scientists have estimated.

37

percent of British workers think their jobs are meaningless, reported a YouGov survey in 2015.

70

cents is all that legendary singer Billie Holiday had in the bank when she passed away, but she had \$750 taped to her leg.

975

psi is the average biting force of a grizzly bear – enough to crack a bowling ball.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Storm approaching Layan Beach. Photo by Cynthia Tomaszewski

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This week in history



SpaceShipOne, June 2004.  
Photo: Don Ramey Logan

Sept 29, 2004

Burt Rutan's 'SpaceShipOne', the first private crewed spacecraft, performs a successful spaceflight, the first of two required to win the Ansari X Prize.

Sept 30, 2009

A 7.6 Mw earthquake shakes Sumatra with a maximum Mercalli intensity of VIII (Severe). The dip-slip earthquake kills 1,115 people, and is followed days later by a 6.6 Mw strike-slip event.

Oct 1, 1964

Japanese Shinkansen (bullet trains) begin high-speed rail service from Tokyo to Osaka.

Oct 2, 1789

George Washington sends proposed Constitutional amendments (The United States Bill of Rights) to the States for ratification.

Oct 3, 1849

American author Edgar Allan Poe is found delirious in a gutter in Baltimore under mysterious circumstances. It is the last time he is seen in public before his death.

Oct 4, 1997

WikiLeaks is launched by Julian Assange.

Oct 5, 1607

Assassins sent by Pope Paul V attempt to kill Venetian statesman and scientist Paolo Sarpi, who survives 15 stiletto thrusts.

Source: Wikipedia



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**THU 5 OCT**



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ner. Held at the award-winning Acqua Restaurant in Kalim on October 05, from 6pm. Dress code - Jacket's optional for men, no jeans, with Chainé ribbon. Members - THB 7,000 p.p., limited invited guests - THB 7,500 p.p. To book your seat at this very special dinner, please visit - phuketticketmaster.com \*Pay via Bank Transfer and only pay the dinner price, booking fees only apply to other payment options. (By attending this event, you consent to being photographed, and these photos may be used for promotional and advertising purposes. If you have any concerns, please inform the Chainé Phuket committee.)

**FRI 6 OCT**



**Grow Boating Evening**

We look forward to seeing you in four weeks time at the Grow Boating Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm on Friday the 6th of October. Sponsorship for drinks is available and includes a generous promotional package from our media sponsors The Phuket News, Live 89.5 FM and Phuket News TV. Send us a message or email growboatingphuket@gmail.com for more details. There will be a delicious finger food buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro for all attendees and if you are still hungry then there will be burgers for just 100 baht. As always, all your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming, please invite them along. A special thanks to our Media Partners The Phuket News and Live 89.5 Radio

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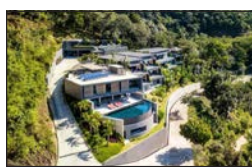
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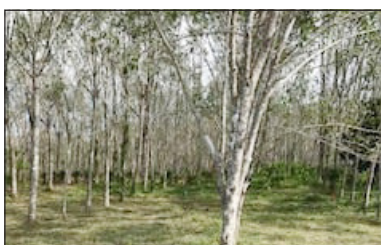
Excellent condition; purchased 2016 with 8000km; local driving only by elderly driver; 112000km; cameras; BMW service; leaving Thailand. B750,000. John, johnhkt2560@icloud.com, 0869890919

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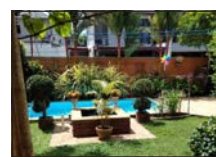
Yanui Beach Seaview are brand-new cabins/Pods. There are only two. On Baan Soi Rawai. Just before the gun club on the way to Laem Promthep. Beautiful seaview sunsets nightly, King-sized bed, small kitchenette. Suitable for couples. 30 square metres. Walking distance to Yanui Beach. 2 kilometres from Rawai and Nai Harn beaches. Available short term and long term. First time listed and brand-new. Negotiable. Ray Dixon, drraydixon@yahoo.com, 062-4488838



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## SKÅL INTERNATIONAL PHUKET DINNER - SEPTEMBER

The monthly Skål International Phuket dinner, was held on Sept 21 at Naughty Nuri's Patong. A fantastic evening celebrating the spirit of SKAL and the vibrant Phuket hospitality industry was enjoyed by all in attendance. Find out more at [skalphuket.org](http://skalphuket.org)



# The November/December 2023 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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## Kamala Koalas lose out in Pattaya

### BOWLS

THE SECOND ANNUAL Pattaya versus Phuket lawn bowls tournament was held on Sept 15 with the hosts ultimately emerging victorious from an absorbing contest.

The 'Kamala Koalas', a strong and talented nine-man team, made the journey north to represent Kamala Lawn Bowls Club at the Retreat Bowls Club in Pattaya.

Competing as three separate three-man teams, the Koalas performed admirably away from home and, halfway through the final end, looked to be set for a famous victory.

However, their valiant efforts were to ultimately prove fruitless as the experienced Pattaya team took advantage of home comforts to run out 16-6 winners.

"The bowls green in Pattaya is much longer and faster than what we are used to at home in Phuket," explained Carl Mesham, the youngest member of the Koalas team.



The Kamala Koalas team. Photo: Carl Mesham

"Not using this as an excuse but it means it literally takes twice as long and curls in a lot more to ultimately get to the jack than we are used to," he added.

"However, for everyone of our players on the tour to be involved in winning at least one game was a fantastic effort.

"We will be back next year to win it," a confident Carl concluded.

Kamala Lawn Bowls Club is open six days a week. All equipment is provided and large parties can be gladly catered for.

For further information please contact the club by calling 094 8987476 or 099-130255.

The Phuket News

## Red Bull win F1 Championship

### FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato

michael@boxofneutrals.com

Red Bull Racing has claimed its sixth constructors championship after Max Verstappen dominated the Japanese Grand Prix ahead of Lando Norris and rookie first-time podium-getter Oscar Piastri last Sunday (Sept 24).

Verstappen carried a freight train of momentum in the grand prix, having topped every session of the weekend and taken pole by more than half a second.

Victory wouldn't be denied to him, though the McLaren teammates came close, sandwiching him into the first two corners to try to generate a battle.

But some expert car positioning forced both rivals to yield, and suddenly he had only the open road ahead of him.

By the end of the 53-lap race, Verstappen had powered to a 19.3-second victory, stamping his authority all over the field and Red Bull Racing's superiority on the championship battle.

This is the team's second consecutive championship and sixth overall, putting it sixth on the list of teams title-winners behind Ferrari, Williams, McLaren, Mercedes and Lotus.

"Unbelievable, guys. You deserved that" said Verstappen, praising his team on the cool-down lap. "You've built a rocket ship of a car. You can all be very proud here at the track, back at the factory – everyone."

Victory moves Verstappen 177 points clear of teammate Sergio Pérez in the



Max Verstappen celebrates his win in Japan. Photo: AFP

drivers championship and into the box seat to seal the title at the next round in Qatar next weekend (Oct 6-8).

The Dutchman will likely claim the championship in the Saturday sprint race, where he need only prevent Pérez from outscoring him by six points to secure his third crown.

In Japan, Norris collected his fourth second-place finish of the season after a brief tussle with teammate Piastri.

The Briton moved up to second place off the line but lost the position to the Australian at the first pit stops, when a conveniently timed virtual safety car made the difference.

It left Norris more than seven seconds adrift of the sister car but wasted

little time shutting down that gap before radioing the team that he should be let through as the faster driver, which the McLaren pit wall acquiesced to.

A delighted Piastri finished third to secure a podium place. "It feels pretty special, definitely," he said.

"I can't thank the team enough for giving me this opportunity. There aren't many people in the world who get this opportunity in their whole life; I've managed to have it in my first season."

Charles Leclerc finished a comfortable fourth for Ferrari ahead of Lewis Hamilton and Carlos Sainz, with George Russell seventh ahead of Fernando Alonso and Alpine teammates Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly.

## Phuket Sports Association wins national development award

### ALL SPORTS

THE PHUKET SPORTS Association has been acknowledged for its outstanding performance in accordance with the Provincial Sports Association Management Model for 2022, it has been confirmed.

Phuket Sports Association President Thammawat Wongcharoenyot received a plaque of honour to mark the province's overall position of 4<sup>th</sup> in the national index, awarded by the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) at a ceremony in Bangkok on Sept 18.

The Provincial Sports Association Management Model defines a blueprint for creating and developing sports, athletes and teams within provinces throughout Thailand, explained Proud Samanmit, Deputy Governor of the Sports Promotion Department, who presided over the ceremony held at the Town Hotel in the centre of the capital.



Thammawat Wongcharoenyot (left) receives the award at a national ceremony on Sept 18. Photo: PR Phuket

Joining Mrs Proud at the awards ceremony was Kongphop Phothisuwan, SAT Regional Sports Director, and SAT board representative Sathit Bunthong, along with the heads of regional sports associations.

The awards ceremony was part of a two-day workshop meeting where the SAT's ongoing development objectives and operational

plan are outlined to the provincial sports association heads.

The ultimate goal is to provide support and direction to enable all provinces to identify and nurture local talent, especially at a young age, which can be developed to that of an international standard, officials stated.

The Phuket News

## Wales roar into last eight

### RUGBY

WALES BECAME THE first team to qualify for the quarter-finals of the Rugby World Cup as they produced a record-breaking performance to hammer Australia 40-6 in Lyon last Sunday (Sept 24).

Warren Gatland's Wales side, who had laboured to victory in their previous matches against Fiji and Portugal, looked to be in trouble when they lost influential fly-half Dan Biggar after just 12 minutes.

However, tries from Gareth Davies, Nick Tompkins and skipper Jac Morgan, and an exemplary kicking display from replacement fly-half Gareth Anscombe, who mustered 23 points in total, saw Wales into the last eight.

It was the most points they have ever scored against the Wallabies and the 34-point gap eclipsed their 28-3 win in Cardiff back in 1975.

With Australia's hopes of qualifying now depending on Fiji losing to Georgia or Portugal, the pressure will mount on coach Eddie Jones.

It was his side's seventh defeat in eight Tests since



Wales' Louis Rees-Zammit (centre) in action against the Wallabies. Photo: AFP

he took over the reins for the second time in January.

Scotland also remained in contention for the quarter-finals with a 45-17 bonus point win over Tonga, although they will likely need to beat Ireland in their final Pool B match to progress.

Ireland moved to the brink of the quarter-finals by beating reigning champions South Africa 13-8 in an absorbing match at the Stade de France on Saturday (Sept 23).

The world's number one ranked team showed they have what it takes to win the World Cup for the first time as they produced a statement victory.

Ireland absorbed near-constant pressure from the physically imposing South Africans and took their chances when they got them, while the Springboks' fly-half Manie Libbok spurned valuable kick-taking points.

Ireland top Pool B and complete their group matches against Scotland next week while the second-placed Springboks play Tonga in their final group match this weekend.

Meanwhile, Henry Arundell became just the fourth player to score five tries in a World Cup game as England outclassed Chile by 71-0 to all but guarantee their spot in the quarter-finals.

The 20-year-old's contributions matched the most scored by an England men's player in a Test and helped move the 2003 champions clear at the top of Pool D.

A victory over Samoa on Oct 7 will secure their spot in the knock-out phase.

Elsewhere, Portugal came within a missed injury-time penalty of winning a World Cup game for the first time as they had to settle for an 18-18 draw with Georgia in Pool C.

Hosts France thrashed Namibia 96-0 with Damian Penaud scoring a hat-trick of tries although star scrum-half and captain Antoine Dupont suffered a fractured cheekbone and it remains to be seen if he will play in the tournament again. AFP



# Honours even in north London

FOOTBALL

AFP

**A**pulsating Premier League north London derby last Sunday (Sept 24) saw Son Heung-min's double earn Tottenham a point in a 2-2 draw against Arsenal at the Emirates Stadium.

Spurs have still won just once in their last 31 away league meetings with Arsenal, but the optimism garnered under Ange Postecoglou's early weeks in charge was not punctured at the Emirates despite twice falling behind.

Spurs defender Cristian Romero had an afternoon to forget as he scored an own goal and gave away a penalty to twice gift the Gunners the lead although they fired back through captain Son to secure a valuable point that keeps them in fourth place in the table, one ahead of Arsenal.

Brighton took advantage of dropped points for both north London sides to move up to third after coming from behind to beat Bournemouth 3-1, thanks to a brace from Kaoru Mitoma and Milos Kerkez's own goal.

Manchester City moved five points clear at the top despite having Rodri sent-off in a fiery 2-0 win over Nottingham Forest on Saturday (Sept 23), thanks to goals from Phil Foden and Erling Haaland inside the first 15 minutes.

Liverpool cut City's lead at the top to two points with a 3-1 win over West Ham as Jurgen Klopp's men showed more promising signs of getting back



Tottenham captain Son Heung-min celebrates his first goal. Photo: AFP

to their best.

Mohamed Salah opened the scoring from the penalty spot and, despite Jarrod Bowen's equaliser, further goals from Darwin Nunez and Diogo Jota secured the win.

Newcastle thrashed Sheffield United 8-0 to shrug off their slow start to the season as the Magpies became the first side to have eight different goalscorers, not including own goals, in a Premier League game.

The size of the defeat sinks Sheffield United to bottom of the table on goal difference with Paul Heckingbottom's future as manager now in doubt.

Manchester United snapped their losing streak by beating Burnley 1-0 after a moment of world class quality

from Bruno Fernandes, while struggling Everton beat Brentford 3-1 to earn their first league win this term and climb out of the relegation zone.

Luton picked up their first ever Premier League point following a 1-1 draw at home to Wolves as Crystal Palace and Fulham remain in the top half after a 0-0 draw at Selhurst Park.

Chelsea's disastrous start to Mauricio Pochettino's reign goes on as the 10-man Blues lost 1-0 at home to Aston Villa.

Malo Gusto's straight red card for a lunge on Lucas Digne on the hour mark gave the home side a mountain to climb at Stamford Bridge.

Villa made their man advantage count when Ollie Watkins' powerful strike beat Robert Sanchez from a narrow angle.



## Superlek beats Rodtang in ONE Championship classic

MUAY THAI

**ONE LUMPINEE 34** HAD all the makings of one of the biggest fight cards of the year when it went down at Lumpinee Boxing Stadium in Bangkok last Friday (Sept 22). And after 11 scintillating contests, fans won't be forgetting what they saw any time soon.

The main event between ONE Flyweight Muay Thai World Champion Rodtang Jitmuangnon and flyweight kickboxing king Superlek Kiatmoo9 lived up to all the hype, as the Thai striking superstars put on a three-round war for the ages.

Rodtang connected with brutal elbows in the early going to open up a nasty cut on Superlek's head. But 'The Kicking Machine' fought through the damage, and he managed to stun 'The Iron Man' and

serve him the first eight-count he had seen in his ONE career in the second frame.

With the knockdown looming large over the contest, Rodtang picked up the pace. But it was too little too late for the flyweight Muay Thai king, and Superlek was handed the unanimous decision win in the end.

The co-main event delivered as advertised, too, as Seksan Or Kwanmuang took part in a brutal 140-pound catchweight Muay Thai affair with Amir Naseri.

The protagonists remained in close quarters throughout the nine minutes of action, leaving both with prominent war wounds thanks to their devastating elbows.

It was Seksan's pressure that made the difference at the end of the action, though, and he earned the unanimous decision victory to go 6-0 in ONE. *Bangkok Post*

## Panipak wins first Thai gold at Asian Games

ASIAN GAMES

**TAEKWONDO STAR** Panipak Wongpattanakit secured the first gold medal of the Hangzhou Asian Games for Thailand on Monday (Sept 25), defeating China's Guo Qing in the women's 49kg final packed with drama and a dose of controversy.

The 26-year-old from Surat Thani rallied from 6-0 down in the final round to beat the home athlete 12-9 for a 2-1 win.

The top-seeded Thai won the first round 7-6 and Guo took the second 2-1 before the second-seeded Chinese then soared to 23-0 in the third round.

The Thai team then protested and after a lengthy review the fight resumed with the Chinese leading 6-0.

With about one minute remaining after the restart, Panipak landed four consecutive head kicks for a 12-6 advantage to effectively end the contest.

"I have never seen anything like this. I was shocked when the score was 23-0," said an emotional Panipak.

"This was my last Asian



Panipak (left) on her way to Asian Games gold. Photo: AFP

Games and I gave my all. I am very happy."

It was her second Asian Games gold medal after her success in Indonesia in 2018.

Nicknamed 'Tennis', Panipak has said she will retire after the 2024 Olympics in Paris where she will chase her second Games title following her achievement at Tokyo 2020.

Elsewhere, Thai sailors Weka Bhanubandh and Noppassorn Khunboonjan secured gold medals in the ILCA4 boy's and girls' dinghy competitions respectively.

In table tennis, the Thai women's team won the country's first ever Asian Games medal in the sport although

they were outclassed 3-0 by China in the semi-finals.

Suthasini Sawettabut lost to Sun Yingsha 3-0, Orawan Paranang was defeated 3-0 by Wang Manyu and Tammolwan Khetkhuan lost to Chen Meng 3-0.

The losing semi-finalists receive bronze medals.

Thailand's first medal at the Games was won by rowers Nuntida Krajangjam and Parisa Chaempudsa who took the bronze medal in the women's double sculls final last Sunday.

Thailand are hoping to win at least 15 gold medals at Hangzhou 2022 which ends on Oct 8.

*Additional reporting by AFP*

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# Sport



**Red Bull win constructors title > p14**

## RACE ACE

### Porsche heads to go-karting world finals



Kamolphu 'Porsche' Anutchakun will be representing Asia at the IAME Warriors World Finals in Portugal next month after winning the Asian series. Photo: Supplied

#### GO-KARTING

**Ben Tirebuck**  
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The remarkable ascent of young Phuket racer Kamolphu 'Porsche' Anutchakun in the sport of go-karting continues after he recently won the 2023 IAME Asia Series to qualify for the world finals in Portugal next month.

Competing for the DRM Racing Team in the Cadet grouping, 10-year-old Porsche performed extremely impressively and consistently over the seven-race series to secure the title on overall points and will now represent Asia at the IAME Warriors world finals in Portimao on the Algarve between Oct 23-28.

Regular readers of *The Phuket News* will know Porsche's story well as the student from Kajonkietsuksa School in Kathu has developed impressively in the sport and won

numerous races and accolades in recent years, including a special award of recognition from Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew last year.

It is well known that go-karting is the introduction to motorsports for aspiring youngsters and the platform for many successful Formula One drivers such as Lewis Hamilton, Kimi Räikkönen, Jenson Button and current F1 world champion Max Verstappen. Only time will tell if young Porsche follows in such illustrious footsteps, although the signs are very encouraging.

His recent success stretches over a seven-month timeframe where seven separate races were contested as part of the IAME Asia Series, all in Malaysia.

Round one was held on Feb 12 at Shah Alam International Kart Circuit, Petaling Jaya, where Porsche finished a rather disappointing sixth place in the final race.

However, the structure of the scoring system in the IAME Asia series means that points accrued in both the final and pre-final race are combined to provide an overall score for the weekend. Porsche's score was therefore aided greatly by the fact he finished second in the pre-final race to secure an impressive overall points haul of 80.

Round two took place on Mar 12, once again at the Shah Alam International Kart Circuit, where Porsche secured an overall points tally of 81 after a fourth place finish in the final and a third place finish in the pre-final.

#### DOMINATING

RUD Sepang International Kart Circuit in Selangor hosted round three of the series on May 28 where Porsche achieved his highest points total so far of 83 thanks to a runners-up finish in the final race and a fourth place finish in the pre-final.

The same venue hosted round four on June 25 where Porsche finished fifth in the final race and second in the pre-final to score an overall 81 points.

Accustomed to the track and conditions at RUD Sepang International Kart Circuit, Porsche delivered his best performance of the series so far in round five on July 25 by dominating proceedings and winning both the final race and the pre-final to finish the weekend with an impressive score of 89.

RUD Sepang International Kart Circuit hosted round six on Aug 20 where Porsche finished fourth in both the final pre-final to pick up a total of 80 points.

The final round of the series took place on Sept 17 at the Elite Speedway Plus Karting Circuit in Subang Jaya.

It was a difficult weekend for young Porsche who finished a lowly eighth place in the final race and an

even more disappointing 10<sup>th</sup> in the pre-final to ensure his lowest points return of the series of 70.

However, the consistency that the young driver displayed over the course of the series ensured he had accrued enough points (494) to claim the overall winner's title ahead of Esteban Freijuhuer of the Philippines who ended in second place, and Michael Lederer of Malaysia who finished third.

In addition to his achievements in the IAME Asia series, Porsche is also going great guns in the 'Mini Max' age classification of the seven-race series Rotax Max Challenge Asia Trophy 2023 (RMCAT).

He leads the overall points table going into the series finale on Oct 7-8 at the UniMAP Racing Circuit in Perlis, Malaysia, and will be confident of adding yet another title to his ever-expanding and hugely impressive list of achievements in the sport.

## Laguna Phuket Triathlon aims to kickstart high season

#### TRIATHLON

LAGUNA PHUKET HAS CONFIRMED the 29<sup>th</sup> edition of its hugely popular triathlon will take place in November, coinciding with the start of the tourism high season.

More than 1,200 athletes and 2,000 visitors from approximately 30 countries are expected to attend the popular event on Nov 19, organisers said in a press release on Sept 20.

Staged at Laguna Grove, South-east Asia's longest-running triathlon includes a 1.8-kilometre swim in the Andaman Sea and lagoon, a 55km bike ride through Phuket's rolling

countryside and villages, and a 12km run through the landscaped grounds of Laguna Phuket.

A Sprint option is also available (comprising a 0.5km swim, 20km bike ride and 6km run), and a Duathlon (4km run, 5km bike ride and 12km run) is perfect for families or friends. The entire event will be expertly managed by a professional team and brought to life by commentator Whit Raymond.

The 29<sup>th</sup> Laguna Phuket Triathlon is fully supported by leading organisations, including the Phuket Provincial Office, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Sports Authority of Thailand (under the

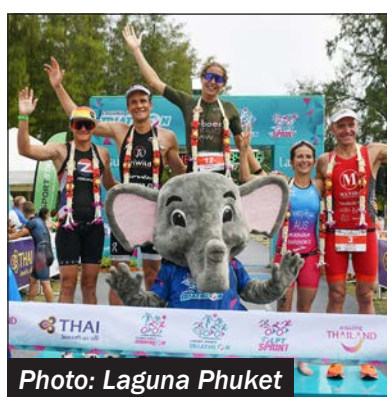


Photo: Laguna Phuket

Ministry of Tourism & Sports) and Thai Airways, among others. The event reaffirms Phuket's position as a premier sporting destination in Asia, said organisers, boasting

international standards, modern infrastructure and breathtaking natural beauty. Most importantly, the charitable event also supports Children First Fun (CFF) in Phuket.

"We are thrilled to announce the return of the Laguna Phuket Triathlon and we look forward to welcoming professional and amateur triathletes to this exceptional event, which is the perfect way to kickstart Phuket's high season," said Paul Wilson, Vice President and Deputy Managing Director of Laguna Phuket.

Over the years, the Laguna Phuket Triathlon has attracted top triathletes including Michael Raelert

from Germany, a four-time Iron Man champion, Massimo Cicana, the Italian triathlon champion, Ruedi Wild from Switzerland, who competed in the 2012 Olympics, Emma Pallant-Browne from the UK, who has over 20 Iron Man 70.3 victories, Inge Prasetyo from Indonesia, a silver medalist in the SEA Games, and Jaray Jearanai, a member of the Thai national triathlon team, along with many other athletes and celebrities. The event was even named one of the "10 Best Triathlons in the World".

Registration for the Laguna Phuket Triathlon is open until November at [www.lagunaphukettri.com](http://www.lagunaphukettri.com)

*The Phuket News*