

**ALGAE BLOOM RETURNS TO PATONG BEACH > PAGE 2**

## SEVEN DAYS



Police will be out in force for 'Seven Days', starting today (Dec 29). Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

## 'SEVEN DAYS OF DANGER' ROAD-SAFETY CAMPAIGN REBRANDED FOR 'FAMILY HAPPINESS'

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

The traditional annual road-safety campaign for the New Year begins in Phuket today (Dec 29), and has a new slogan that authorities hope can further minimise accidents, injuries and fatalities on the island's roads during the festive holiday period.

What has been traditionally known as the 'Seven Days of Danger' road safety campaign during the New Year period will now be referred to

as 'Seven Days of Family Happiness', officials confirmed at a press conference earlier this month.

Heading into the holiday period, as of last Friday (Dec 22) Phuket had already suffered 132 people killed and a further 21,481 people requiring hospital treatment in road accidents on the island since Jan 1.

A meeting overseen by Phuket Vice Governor Satta Thongkham was held at Provincial Hall on Dec 14 to officially announce the new slogan, while detailing additional key points regarding general road safety across

the festive period.

Joining Mr Satta was Udomphon Kan, the head of the Phuket Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office (DDPM-Phuket), as well as selected representatives from local government agencies.

The meeting followed another meeting held on Dec 13, chaired by Mr Udomphon, which outlined approaches for reducing accidents, injuries and fatalities on the roads during the busy holiday period, a time traditionally notorious for the high number of traffic accidents and

related injuries and deaths.

The meeting on Dec 14 went one step further by detailing specific strategies that officials hope can prove effective in enhancing safety standards on the island's roads.

The official road safety campaign is being divided into two categories, it was explained at the Dec 14 press conference.

First, a public relations awareness drive launched on Dec 1 and concluded on Dec 21 with numerous campaigns focusing on getting the key messages relating to road safety across.

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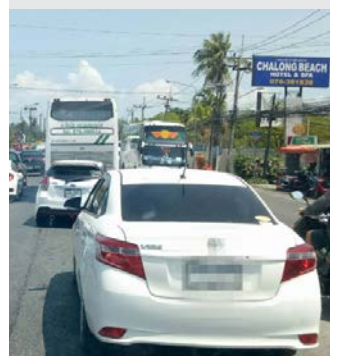
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**Taxi drivers lay siege to Provincial Hall**



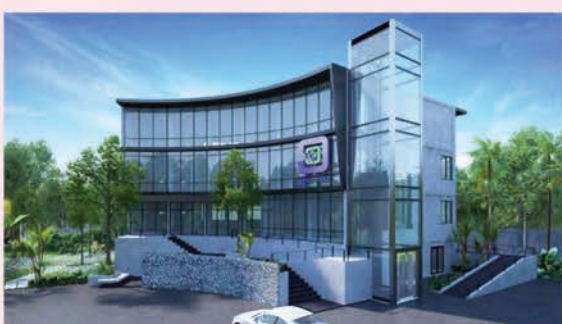
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**Easy ways to help alleviate Phuket's traffic**



**SPORT** PAGE 14

**Aon shows her class to retain singles title**



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# News



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Ukrainian man  
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## Algae bloom returns to Patong

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Workers from Patong Municipality's Public Health and Environment Division were dispatched to collect from the sand algae that had washed ashore Patong Beach on Dec 20.

The algae had washed ashore from an 'algae bloom', reported NBT Phuket.

The incident has yet to be publicly recognised by Patong Municipality.

The key aim of the cleanup was to "restore the beauty of Patong Beach", said the report. "If left for a long time, it will create a bad smell and will also affect the beautiful image of the beach."

The NBT report, remarkably, admitted that algae blooms returned to Patong Beach – by far Phuket's most popular tourist beach – around the end of January and continued through March each year.

However, the algae bloom had returned earlier than usual this year, the report noted.

"More than one tonne of 'seaweed' can be collected each day, and the maximum collected this time is three tonnes," the report said.

The physical characteristics



Photo: NBT Phuket

of Patong Bay, which has a deep concave shape, causes water from Pak Bang Canal, which empties into Patong Bay at the southern end of the beach, at this time of year to flow slowly into the bay, the report explained.

The lack of strong wind and waves experienced all through the southwest monsoon leaves the water from the Pak Bang Canal to mix with the beach water, which

tourists swim in.

"When finding the right sunlight, it causes abnormal algae growth, and there is too much to be eliminated naturally," the report said.

Not mentioned in the report was the level of pollution and the volume of untreated wastewater that continues to flow into Patong Bay from the Pak Bang Canal, which meanders throughout the length of Patong before emptying into the bay.

The Pollution Control Department's Environment and Pollution Office 15 (EPO15) no longer publicly releases its latest data on coastal water quality for Phuket, of which four water-quality monitoring stations are in Patong.

The four stations are: Pkml0 Station, in front of the Patong Merlin; Pkph0 Station, in front of the Patong Beach Hotel; Pkby0 Station, in front of the B-Lay Tong Beach Resort;

and Pkpb5 Station, in front of the Patong Bay Hotel.

The agency's most recent reports say only that the water quality is "fair" or "good".

EPO15 also no longer publishes its 'Source of Pollution Report'. The most recent source of pollution report posted shows a generalised graph marking data from 2021.

Likewise, EPO15 also no longer reports its latest information for its 'Community Wastewater Treatment Plant Report'. For this, the agency reports annual and seasonal averages only, for years past.

During a visit to Phuket in September, Dr Surasee Kittimonthon, Secretary-General of the Office of National Water Resources (ONWR), revealed that Phuket releases nearly 55,000 cubic metres of untreated wastewater per day.

The Patong Municipality Wastewater Treatment plant currently can treat up to 39,000 cubic metres of wastewater per day. Further expansion would require a high budget, Dr Surasee was told.

During his visit, Dr Surasee saw firsthand dark untreated wastewater flowing into the Pak Bang Canal and emptying into the beach water, and he saw tourists playing in that water.

## 'Seven Days' rebranded for 'family happiness'

Continued from page 1

Second, is the road safety operational period which effectively runs from Dec 22 to Jan 11. This is divided into the period between Dec 22-28 and Jan 5-11, with the seven days from Dec 29-Jan 4 targeted as the strict period where police focus will be at its most stringent – in effect, the 'Seven Days of Family Happiness' that used to be known as "Seven Days of Danger".

The whole campaign will adopt a policy of preventative measures across five key areas, namely: safety management; reducing road and environmental risk factors; reducing vehicle risk factors; road user safety; and post-accident assistance.

The change of slogan is one approach authorities are hoping will reduce accidents on the road, although it was not exactly explained how officials believe the re-wording and

re-branding can achieve this objective.

Further to the new slogan, there will be extra emphasis on drink-driving with a 'Don't drink, Don't drive' slogan campaign aimed at tackling the issue.

Officials acknowledged that the 4am closing of night-life venues in selected areas had also been factored into the campaign. The new law means licensed entertainment venues such as pubs and clubs can remain open and serve alcohol to customers until 4am. However, strict laws that prohibit the selling of alcohol to people under 20 years of age and people clearly already in an intoxicated state can help reduce drink-driving incidents, officials said, as can the provision of 'sobering-up areas' as per directives by the National Alcohol Beverage Policy Committee.

Furthermore, people in Patong unable to drive due to intoxication can contact local police officers for assistance in getting back to their ac-

commodation where Patong Police will arrange a taxi or even give tourists a ride in a police vehicle, all to prevent drunk driving.

Additional preventative measures include police officers being extra vigilant over the holiday period by setting up regular checkpoints to enable them to enforce strict road rules.

The wearing of helmets for those riding motorbikes was, unsurprisingly, another key topic of focus. Officials at the meeting said that rules enforcing the wearing of helmets need to be employed 100% without exception, something especially so in areas that have previously had high fatality numbers due to people not wearing helmets.

It was also explained that helmets will be distributed to students at selected schools across the island in an effort to encourage a better approach to road safety.

Additional measures that need to be enforced include ensuring vehicle safety stand-

ards are acceptable as well as the reduction of speeding and the wearing of seat belts in all vehicles.

Officials confirmed that tents will be set up at selected PTT petrol stations across the island to offer free vehicle inspection services to ensure vehicles are roadworthy and safe.

Also, using one's mobile phone while driving or in command of a vehicle is something that has become frequently more common and is something that needs to be clamped down upon immediately to minimise the chance of accidents on the road, officials said.

One of the key points highlighted during the meeting was the particularly high-risk group of youngsters, who tend to be more prone to road accidents and who need to be focused on specifically by police and during the awareness campaign. Youngsters riding motorbikes are a particular concern, officials added, and extra focus on raising safety



Photo: Patong Police / file

awareness among this demographic is key.

A specific focus was afforded to tourists in relation to safety on the roads, with it being disclosed during the meeting that the majority of foreign tourists that died in road accidents in Phuket were from Russia or the United States.

Providing a summary on the main offences committed by tourists on Phuket roads, officials in the meeting highlighted: not wearing a helmet while riding a motorbike; drink-driving; not wearing a seat belt; not having a correct driver's licence; speed-

ing; driving through traffic lights; overtaking cars in a tight and dangerous area of the road; driving in reverse; and using a mobile phone while driving.

Furthermore, there would be a more controlled focus on vehicle rental companies as the police create a database of rental operators and enforce car rental regulations as per the Phuket Provincial Transport Office. Currently there are 194 rental operators that offer a total of 2,429 vehicles, including 715 cars and 1,714 motorbikes, officials confirmed at the meeting.



# Taxi drivers protest, again

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Taxi drivers driving vehicles with green and yellow licence plates – who have long held a stranglehold on providing taxi services to tourists in Phuket – gathered at Phuket Provincial Hall on Dec 21 to “demand” action by the Phuket Governor to help curtail illegal taxi app drivers.

Leading the protest was Tinnakorn Chommuang, President of the Phuket Provincial Taxi Operators Association, joined by Sulaimarn Kaewngamdee.

The men claimed to have brought more than 3,500 taxi vehicles to Provincial Hall to highlight their solidarity – despite Phuket officials only a week earlier (Dec 14) reporting 2,429 hire vehicles legally registered in the province.

According to the the taxi drivers, they came to Provincial Hall to “demand fairness in the profession from the Department of Land Transport office in Phuket Province [Phuket Land Transport Office, or ‘PLTO’] and related agencies after encountering problems with illegal vehicles



Photo: PR Phuket

being used to transport passengers, such as RY18 vehicles [app taxis]”.

The drivers also highlighted the problem of foreigners transporting tourists by claiming to be friends or family.

The drivers said their complaints to the Governor’s office, Phuket officials and police have

been ignored, despite repeated reports of their grievances being heard time and again.

The drivers now want PLTO Chief Adcha Buachan, who has consistently supported Phuket’s taxi cartels through crackdowns on any taxi drivers except those who work for ‘co-operatives’ on the island – to make a direct request to

the Director-General of the Department of Land Transport to ask for help in solving “this problem”.

The group said they want Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat, who met the drivers, to order an immediate “sweep and suppression” of illegal taxis.

The drivers also called

for officials to enforce taxi app cars to clearly feature the government-issued stickers identifying the vehicle as an app taxi – a requirement already endorsed and enforced by law.

Governor Sophon told the drivers that he had already ordered the crackdown on illegal taxis.

Just before 8:30pm the night before the protest, the PLTO reported they were already cracking down on illegal taxis by targeting taxi app drivers.

Mr Sulaimarn said that he is not opposed to app taxis, of which he said there were already more than 2,000 on the island, “but what is unacceptable is RY18 [app taxis] from other provinces or the use of pickup trucks registered as RY18 taxis coming to pick up passengers.

“This includes ‘black plate cars’ [private vehicles used as taxis] as well as drivers given permission to work as taxi app driversIs being not properly dressed.

“While the cars are legal, they are subject to intense scrutiny. Therefore, I would like to ask for justice for the operators of yellow licence plates, green licence plates

and tuk-tuks for orderliness to reduce conflict as well as reducing traffic jams,” Mr Sulaimarn said.

The protest and demands came less than two days after a green plate taxi sped through a red light and struck a motorbike, leaving the rider, 28-year-old Ukrainian Artur Kostenko, seriously injured. (See page 4)

The PLTO under Adcha Buachan has yet to explain what action is to be taken against the green plate driver for speeding through the red light to cause the accident.

The PLTO also has yet to make any public comment or explain what punishment, if any, will be meted out to the two green plate taxi drivers who violently assaulted a Grab taxi driver at Bang Tao by beating him with a piece of wood and leaving the 25-year-old Grab driver in hospital with a punctured lung.

The protest by Phuket’s taxi cartel drivers, and the inaction by officials, including the PLTO, to prevent violent attacks by Phuket’s taxi thugs, came while Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin was on Phuket for a three-day holiday with family.

## Chinese worker arrests spur human trafficking probe

OFFICIALS ARE INVESTIGATING whether 30 Chinese men arrested for working illegally in Tambon Thepkasattri last week are victims of human trafficking.

Twelve of the Chinese labourers, all men 24 to 59 years old, were arrested at the Baan Pa Khlok Cheep housing construction worksite, in Moo 8, Tambon Thepkasattri on Dec 19. The remaining 18 were arrested along Wong Chalerm Village Road, in Moo 5, Tambon Thepkasattri, later that same day.

When Thalang Police officers arrived at the Baan Pa Khlok Cheep housing worksite, some of the workers were seen fleeing, according to a report by Thalang Police Chief Pol Col Nikorn Chuthong,

All 30 men detained were found to have legally entered the country, but were not permitted to work. All 30 have been charged with working illegally in Thailand, Col Kikorn said.

Police were continuing their investigation and have



Photo: Region 8 Police

arrested “the employer” (not named in the official report) for questioning “to gain clarity on the use of foreign workers”, he said.

The investigation into human trafficking continued at Thalang Police Station this morning (Dec 20) with officials from the Phuket office of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security called in along with officers from the Phuket Provincial Labor Protection and Welfare Office.

Tourist Police will provide an interpreter, and

Phuket Immigration will join Investigators from Thalang Police will join the questioning of the 30 men to determine how they came to be working illegally at a construction site in Phuket.

“If it is found that such foreign workers are victims according to the Human Trafficking Act, they will be referred to a victim separation centre and [police] continue to prosecute those involved according to the Human Trafficking Act,” Col Nikorn assured.

Eakkapop Thongtub

24<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023

Christmas Eve  
at Firefly  
Event starts from 6 pm - 10 pm  
Buffet 2,800++ per person  
Entertainment: Carols Performance from  
Kajonkiet International School

CHRISTMAS EVE  
at Alto  
Event starts from 6 pm - 10 pm  
4-course dinner with beverage pairing 2,200++ per person  
Entertainment: Carols & Violin concerto

Christmas Brunch  
at Alto  
Event starts from 12 pm - 4 pm  
Brunch Buffet 3,200++ per person  
Entertainment: Christmas and Rhythms by the DJ

360° CHRISTMAS GLAM  
at 360° Bar  
Event starts from 8 pm  
Enjoy a fabulous drag show by Junkyard Theatre  
while savoring delectable Japanese cuisine

NEW YEAR'S EVE Dinner  
at Alto  
Event starts from 6 pm - 10 pm  
4-course dinner with beverage pairing 2,800++ per person

TROPICAL TEMPTATIONS  
at Firefly  
Event starts from 6 pm - 10 pm  
Dinner Buffet 3,200++ per person  
Entertainment: KPK Live Band

360° MIDNIGHT Voyage  
at 360° Bar  
Party starts from 10 pm - 1 am  
Entertainment: Rhythms by the DJ

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25<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023



The Phuket News

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

www.foreca.com

FRI DECEMBER 29



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SAT DECEMBER 30



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN DECEMBER 31



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON JANUARY 1



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE JANUARY 2



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED JANUARY 3



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU JANUARY 4



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Ukrainian injured as taxi runs red light

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A 28-year-old Ukrainian man was seriously injured when a green-plate taxi sped through the Sam Kong Intersection in front of the main Lotus's branch on the bypass road and struck the motorbike he was riding last week.

Phuket Tourist Police identified the Ukrainian man as Artur Kostenko, who was rushed to Vachira Phuket Hospital immediately after the accident on Dec 19.

According to CCTV footage, the accident occurred at about 4:30pm, Phuket Tourist Police reported.

The force of the impact left the taxi with heavy damage to its front right, and to both doors on the taxi's left side.

The Yamaha big bike Mr Kostenko was riding was left with heavy damage in the gutter beside the traffic island in front of the underpass power control room on the far side of the intersection.

Mr Kostenko last entered Phuket on Nov 2 and is staying on a 'temporary resident visa' (NON-90), which expires on Jan 3, police confirmed.

The Yamaha big bike (model not reported) was registered in Phuket and registered with Mr Kostenko as the owner, police noted.



Photos: Help Artur Phuket

CCTV footage showed that Mr Kostenko was travelling north on the bypass road when he stopped for a red light at the intersection.

When the traffic light turned green, he moved off quickly, but only after the traffic light was green.

The green-plate taxi, a Toyota Altis driven by Naphatphong Thipprapai, 37, was travelling from Phra Phuket Kaew Rd towards Yaowarat Rd.

The taxi was travelling "very quickly" and struck Mr Kostenko, police reported.

Mr Kostenko was wearing a helmet when he was struck by the taxi.

Officers went to Vachira Phuket Hospital to meet with relatives and friends of Mr Kostenko, and explain the situation to them, police said. Mobile phone numbers for both Phuket City Police Chief Pol Col Pratheung Phonmana and Pol Lt Col Ekachai Siri of the Phuket Tourist Police were provided.

Officials at the Ukrainian embassy have been informed, police said.

Of note, the official incident report by police made no mention that by their own report from CCTV footage, for the taxi to enter the intersection at speed and hit Mr Kostenko, taxi

driver Naphatphong must have sped through a red light.

The report also made no mention of charges against Naphatphong at that stage.

A 'Help Artur Phuket' appeal has been set up on the Telegram platform to receive donations to help pay for his medical bills, which within days already spiralled over B500,000.

Details of the Thai bank account used to accept donations are as follows:

Bank: Bank of Ayudhya (Krungsri)

Account holder: Kateryna Shepetenko

Account number: 139-1-71327-6

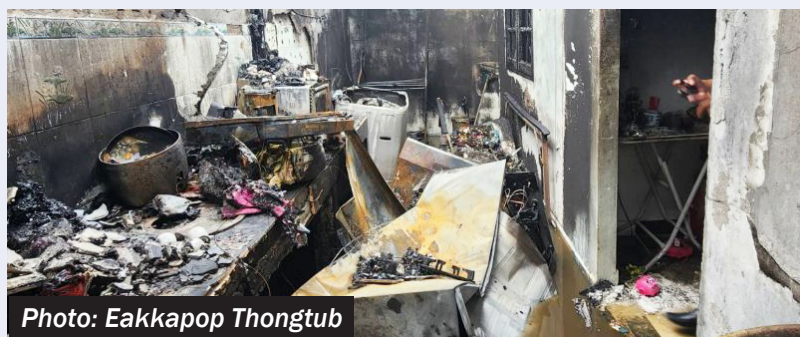


Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

## B300k damage in herbal brew fire

A MAN COOKING HIS OWN herbal medicine balm in Wichit on Dec 25 saw his own home catch fire, with an estimated B300,000 in damage caused.

Pol Lt Theppitak Puangmanee of the Wichit Police was informed of the fire, at a one-story townhouse at the Phuket Villa 3 housing estate, at 12:50pm.

Firefighters from Wichit Municipality rushed to the scene, with rescue workers and Wichit Police Deputy Superintendent Pol Lt Col Rachan Phanwai all arriving as well.

The fire was still burning in the kitchen behind the house, with a lot of smoke billowing towards neighbouring houses.

Firefighters took more than 20 minutes to bring the fire under control.

No injuries were reported as a result of the fire.

The owner of the house explained that he was boiling a herbal medicine containing Vaseline oil on a gas stove in the kitchen behind the house when the concoction caught fire.

He tried to douse the flames with a soaked cloth, but to no avail. The flames spread and the fire grew, and he called emergency services.

Despite the homeowner's explanation of how the fire started, officers noted that they were continuing their investigation in order to confirm the cause of the fire.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Paint stripper splash in neighbour spat

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING an incident in which a pickup was doused with paint stripper in what appears to be a dispute with a neighbour about noise.

Pol Capt Theppitak Puangmanee of the Wichit Police was informed of the incident just after 3am on Dec 21.

Officers arrived to find the pickup, a four-door Toyota Vigo, still parked in front of the owner's rented house near the entrance to Soi Phatthana in Moo 7, Wichit.

The paint on the pickup was blistering where paint stripper had been splashed on the roof, the driver's door and the rear right door.

The owner of the pickup, 'Mr Don' (not his real name), explained that he woke at about 2:10am to get up and ready for work. He showered, drank a cup of coffee and took the trash out to the bin in front of the house.

While outside, he used the garden hose to spray water under the pickup and to water the plants, then went back inside and dressed for work. At that time he did not notice anything different about the pickup.

But when he came back out and opened the door to get in the pickup, he noticed a bad smell.

"I turned on the lights and saw

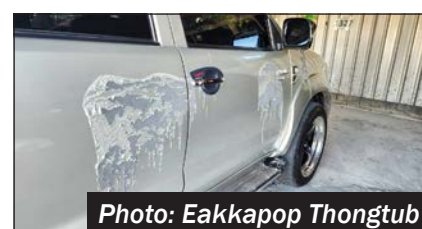


Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

that there were many places affected, so I notified my insurance rep to come and check," Mr Don said.

His insurance representative arrived at about 3:10am, and reported the incident to police. Mr Don, however, had to leave for work at 4am.

Mr Don explained that he and his neighbour had got along well for a long time, but recently they had been arguing about his neighbour creating noise, mainly involving music and his neighbour doing welding.

Mr Don said he had no issues with any of his other neighbours. "I'm pretty sure it was this one person," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr Don will have to do without the use of his pickup while it remains at the police station as evidence. It will also cost him B50,000 to have the paint repaired, he said.

"The initial repair cost is approximately B50,000 because the entire pickup must be done," he explained.

Eakkapop Thongtub



# Phuket readies for New Year

The Phuket News  
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Municipalities across the island for the past week have been announcing their key events to celebrate New Year 2024.

Phuket Town Mayor Saroj Angkhanapilas has announced Phuket City Municipality will hold its 'Discover Phuket Countdown 2024' event to usher in the New Year, with festivities centred in the Phuket Old Town area and the countdown concluding an "impressive" fireworks display.

Mayor Saroj announced this year's New Year event, themed 'The colours of happiness, saying goodbye to the old year', at a press conference held at the park area across from the iconic Chartered Bank building in Phuket Old Town on Dec 21.

The park area at Chartered Bank Intersection will be the focal point of festivities for the event, to be held Dec 30-31.

People taking part in the festivities will have the chance to win round-trip domestic flight tickets, Mayor Saroj said, though details of how to enter were not revealed.

Festivities, from 4:30pm onwards, will include live concert performances by artists including Jennifer Kim, Zani, Park the Voice and Koh Mr Saxman, Mayor Saroj said.

Meanwhile, throughout the holi-



Revellers enjoy a concert on Patong Beach at the Phuket Carnival earlier this month. Photo: Patong Municipality

days the streets of Phuket Old Town will be adorned with decorations and beautiful lights, he added.

"We invite citizens and tourists to join in enjoying the charm of Lard Yai Walking Street, Thalang Rd, Soi Rommanee and the Chartered Walking Street and Phang Nga Rd," Mayor Saroj said.

There will be more than 350 vendors selling food and wares along the Old Town streets during the festivities, he added.

However, there was no confirmation of which streets will be closed to traffic during which hours on which days.

"On Dec 31, come and enjoy

concerts by famous artists and live music performances from local artists," Mayor Saroj said.

"In addition, you are invited to participate in the sale of white peace symbol balloons, which will raise money for the Phuket City Care Center, and to take part in activities to 'snap, share, receive luck and send happiness' when counting down to 2024, starting a new era," he said.

Several areas have been decorated for tourists to take photos to promote as 'check-in' photos on social media to stimulate tourism in the town, Mayor Saroj noted.

The 'check-in' points are at the Surin Circle (the 'Clock Tower Cir-

cle'), Suriyadet Circle (the 'water cannon circle' where Ranong Rd meets Yaowarat Rd) and at the old police building at the Chartered Bank Intersection.

"Now there are tourists of every nationality and every language coming to visit, especially at the Chartered Bank Intersection, which is a popular 'check-in photo spot' in Phuket Town," he said.

"In organising this event, 36 organisations have supported the 'Discover Phuket Countdown 2024' event, including government agencies, the private sector, community enterprises and local communities as well," he added.

## DEE PHUKET FAIR

Meanwhile, the main 'Dee Phuket Fair', also long-called the 'Red Cross Fair', will be held at Saphan Hin from Dec 29 to Jan 6.

The event each year draws tens of thousands of visitors to enjoy the live concerts and high-profile celebrities on stage, and hundreds of stalls selling food.

Organisers have yet to announce the entertainment line-up for this year's Dee Phuket Fair, but have announced that tickets for the popular Red Cross lucky draw prizes are available.

Tickets cost B100 each, with books of 10 tickets costing B1,000 apiece. Numbers available for the

lucky draw tickets range from 1,000 through to 8,999.

Up for grabs is the main prize of a Toyota Fortuner 2.4V, with a Toyota Yaris ATIV 1.2 Smart as the second main prize. Other main prizes to be won include three Honda Scoopy-i motorbikes, five small electric scooters and seven 42-inch TVs.

The draws for the main prizes will be held at the centre stage area at 10pm on Saturday, Jan 6.

## PATONG AND KARON

Patong Municipality has yet to announce details of their New Year Countdown event, though the party in the town usually attracts large crowds with live concerts and EDM DJ performances on the beach.

Karon Municipality, however, has already announced its New Year festivities will be held at the Nong Harn Public Park near the Karon beachfront on Dec 29-31, touting three days and three nights of festivities, including a 'free, juicy concert' aimed at attracting teenagers.

The Karon 'Phuket Countdown 2024' event, jointly organised by the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), is being promoted as "bigger than ever before", and will include concerts by Thai chart-topping artists such as: NiceCNX, Ironboy, ParkMalody, Biew Kanlayanee and Tobii.

## Probe names government claims to Bang Khanun forest

A PROVINCIAL WORKING group chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan has revealed a list of the main claims to areas in the Bang Khanun Protected National Forest already granted to government agencies.

The working group, set up in September, met again at Phuket Provincial Hall on Dec 19.

The group was established by the Phuket Provincial Office at the behest of the Phuket Provincial Ombudsman's Office (Damrongtham Centre) in July following a slew of complaints regarding the Royal Thai Navy being granted to use all 3,700 rai of the protected forest.

The Navy aims to use the forest to create a new home for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Battalion, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Regiment, the Anti-Aircraft Command Unit, an Air Defense and Coastal Defense Center and the 4<sup>th</sup> Naval Police Battalion of the Naval Police Department.

As part of the working group's mandate to create a map of all areas in the forest that are occupied, the Sakhu and Thepkasattri Tambon Administrative Organisations



Photo: PR Phuket

(OBorTor) compiled a list of agencies that had submitted formal requests to the Royal Forest Department to use land in the Bang Khanun Forest.

As of Dec 19, 2023, seven government agencies and administrations have been granted to use areas in the forest, as follows:

- Phuket Highways Office, granted permission to use 9 rai 1 ngan 50 square wah from Aug 15, 1994 – Aug 14, 2024.

- Royal Thai Navy Third Naval Area, granted permission to use 3,763 rai 1 ngan 2 square wah from Jan 1, 2023 – Feb 28 2053.

- Phuket Provincial branch of the National Office of Buddhism, granted permission to use 14 rai 2 ngan 51 square wah from Aug 9, 2023 - Aug 8, 2053.

- Phuket Provincial Office of the Islamic Council of

Thailand, granted permission to 8 rai 2 ngan from Jan 13, 2014 – Jan 12, 2024.

- Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), granted permission to use 1 rai from July 24, 2017 – July 23, 2047.

- Vachira Phuket Hospital, granted permission to use 322 rai 2 ngan from Feb 22, 2022 – Feb 21, 2052 – and has requested permission to use a further 35 rai 1 ngan.

- Thepkasattri OrBorTor, granted permission to use 18 rai 3 ngan 32 square wah from April 23, 2019 to use for 'Kubor' burial (burial of unclaimed bodies) – and has requested permission to use a further 14 rai 2 ngan 74 square wah for office construction.

Four government agencies have requests that have not yet been granted: the Phuket Forestry Center, Thalang Technical College, Phuket Provincial Electricity Authority and the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office.

The one government office that was denied permission to use land in the forest was the Phuket Provincial Public Works and Town & Country Planning Office. *The Phuket News*

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# Sanlorenzo buys out Simpson Marine

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Italian shipbuilders specialising in luxury yachts and superyachts, Sanlorenzo S.p.A., have signed a binding share purchase agreement to acquire 95% of share capital of Simpson Marine Ltd.

The deal, signed earlier this month between Sanlorenzo S.p.A. and founder Mike Simpson, was secured through a payment of US\$10 million (about B356.47mn) plus an earn-out up to US\$7mn calculated on the net profit for the 2023 fiscal year, both paid with Sanlorenzo's cash on hand.

"Prior to the Sanlorenzo take over, Simpson Marine Limited will make a distribution from retained earnings in favour of Mike Simpson," said a release announcing the takeover.

"Simpson Marine Group, representing Sanlorenzo in Asia since 2015, has been operating for 40 years as a major yacht sales and service company throughout the APAC region, and it will allow Sanlorenzo to establish a direct presence in the strategic APAC region, maintaining and further developing the service offering leveraging on the experience and expertise accumulated over decades by Simpson Marine," said the release.

Simpson Marine started out as a small business called 'Charter Boats', offering boat and junk charters in Hong Kong, in 1984. The business



Photo: Simpson Marine

flourished, selling its first Beneteau First 345 in 1985, and the business 'Charter Boats' becoming 'Simpson Marine' in 1987.

Simpson Marine opened its first regional office in Singapore in 1989, then another in Port Dickson, Malaysia, in 1995, and another at Sentosa Cove, Singapore, in 2002.

The following year, 2003, the group opened their Phuket branch, and are now located at Ao Po Grand Marina, in Pa Khlok.

Massimo Perotti, Executive Chairman of Sanlorenzo, announced, "We are very pleased to have signed this

agreement with Mike Simpson of Simpson Marine. This is an important step for Sanlorenzo as we continue to expand our business globally.

"Simpson Marine is a well-established and widely respected company in the APAC region with a tremendous potential for further expansion, and we believe that this acquisition will enable us to further develop our business in this strategically important market.

"Under Mike Simpson's leadership, Simpson Marine has gained a strong reputation among customers and industry peers, having developed

a highly loyal team of around 140 professionals who are among the best in their respective fields, making it a sound and promising investment in line with our long-term strategic vision," he said.

Founder Mike Simpson commented, "I am delighted to have signed this agreement with Sanlorenzo. I have known Massimo Perotti, the principal shareholder and Chairman of Sanlorenzo, for nearly 40 years and have the greatest respect for his success in building Sanlorenzo into the power house it has become in the world of luxury yachts.

"This sale to Sanlorenzo provides an opportunity for Simpson Marine to build on their past success in the region and share in Sanlorenzo's ambitious plans for further expansion throughout APAC and beyond after they take over control next year.

"We have been selling, servicing, chartering and managing yachts in Asia for nearly 40 years and have built up a wealth of experience and expertise in the region. My teams located in 12 offices around Asia now have the opportunity of working with Sanlorenzo to take Simpson Marine and our range of services to the next level in the Asia-Pacific and globally."

The transaction is expected to close in the first quarter of 2024, explained the release.

"Once the sale of Simpson Marine has been finalised, the next steps will include deployment of the strategic alignment plan and regional expansion scheme for the Simpson Marine portfolio of brands and services," the release added.

Further details on financials of the target perimeter will follow upon closing and determination of the Earn-out amount based on 2023 full-year results.

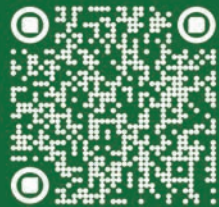
The law firm Musumeci, Altara, Desana e Associati assisted Sanlorenzo with the negotiation of contractual aspects, and the firm Howse Williams assisted Mike Simpson, the release concluded.

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## TAT targets higher tourist spending

THE TOURISM AUTHORITY of Thailand (TAT) plans to overhaul its strategy to stimulate spending per person, which significantly dropped following the pandemic, with foreign expenditure falling from an average of B50,000 to B42,000.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin on Wednesday, Dec 13 encouraged TAT executives and domestic offices to stimulate tourism spending by promoting second-tier cities, spurring expenditure during periods other than high season, creating products that meet tourism demand, and easing connectivity between destinations.

Tourism and Sports Minister Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol said the ministry will discuss a plan with TAT to increase the length of stay for both Thai and international tourists by offering combined tourism products for more than one destination.

She said TAT must encourage cross-border tourists to stay overnight in Thailand, instead of taking one-day trips.

This strategy should also be applied to domestic travellers across all provinces, as local visitors are driving tourism expenditure in second-tier



PM Srettha gives a keynote speech on stimulating domestic tourism spending with an emphasis on secondary cities, at a briefing at Government House on Wednesday. Photo: Bangkok Post

cities, Ms Sudawan explained.

In 2019, foreign tourists spent around B5,100 per day, or around B50,000 per trip.

Prior to the pandemic, the average growth of spending per person was 2.5-5% per year.

Average spending shrank this year as the country recorded more short-haul tourists from Southeast Asia who typically stayed fewer days than other markets, while the Chinese market remained weaker than expected.

However, she said not every province can accommodate overnight visitors as some may lack adequate hotels or infrastructure.

The TAT has to rethink its strategy by grouping them

as a tourism cluster instead of promoting each province separately, said Ms Sudawan.

She said the proposal to increase the proportion of domestic tourism revenue to 40% of the total from 30% would be a challenge and might not be accomplished by next year.

TAT Governor Thapanee Kiatphaibool said increasing spending via longer stays was the most feasible option.

The agency is preparing to approach tour agents from markets that usually offer chartered flights to Thailand to select two destinations in the country, combining lesser-known provinces with main destinations, she said.

Potential targets include countries granted stays of more than 30 days, such as Russia, which the government recently extended to 90 days, as well as tourists with long-stay visas, said Ms Thapanee.

As many people are unaware of second-tier provinces, the TAT might need to budget additional spending to offer joint promotions with airlines or tour agents to fly directly to or from these provinces, in addition to their preferred destination, she said.

Bangkok Post



# Same-sex marriage gets initial approval

BANGKOK

AFP

Thai lawmakers gave initial approval to legalising same-sex unions on Dec 21, moving the country a step closer to marriage equality.

The legislation must pass through several more stages before becoming law, but if it is enacted, Thailand would be the first country in Southeast Asia to recognise same-sex marriage.

The lower house of parliament voted through a first reading of plans to amend references to “men”, “women”, “husbands” and “wives” in the marriage law to gender-neutral terms.

The change would allow all Thais to marry without restrictions on sex or gender, as well as conferring adoption and inheritance rights.

“This law would reflect the government’s agenda to improve human rights... so that everyone will have the right to build a family without any limitation,” Deputy Prime



A couple register their partnership at an event held in Bangkok to celebrate Valentine's Day in February. Photo: Bangkok Post

Minister Somsak Thepsuthin told the House, referring to the government’s draft.

“This will provide rights, responsibilities and family status as equal to the marriage between a man and a woman presently in all aspects.”

Mr Somsak said a government survey conducted between Oct 31 and Nov 14 showed 96.6% public support for the draft bill.

During the debate, some MPs adorned their seats and desks with rainbow flags.

The 371 members present in the House of Representatives passed the government-drafted Marriage Equality Bill

by a vote of 360-10 with one abstention and the proposals will now go before a committee to be scrutinised in detail before a second vote.

Also passed were three other bills: one drafted by civil society groups, and one each by the opposition Move Forward and Democrat parties.

The passage of the four bills paves the way for the formation of a committee to merge them into one, using the government-drafted bill as the main framework, ahead of further debate and votes on second and third reading expected next year.

If the legislation is enacted

and receives royal assent, Thailand would become the third country in Asia, after Taiwan and Nepal, to recognise same-sex marriage.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin welcomed the vote on social media platform X, formerly Twitter.

“We are finally on the road to bridging the gap to equal rights for all today!” he posted.

“Congratulations to the LGBTQIA+ community for the Same-Sex Marriage Bill passing its first reading. May love finally triumph.”

Similar proposals were given initial approval by parliament in 2022, but the law progressed no further because the house was dissolved for a general election.

Chawinroj Terapachalaphon, an LGBTQ+ lawyer said that marriage equality would benefit all.

“For those who are against it, I would like to say that it won’t undermine your rights. It would only make our country even more livable,” Chawinroj said.

Additional reporting by Bangkok Post



## Charter Court ruling on Jan 31 in Pita, MFP case

BANGKOK

THE CONSTITUTIONAL Court has set Jan 31 to deliver its ruling on a petition against the Move Forward Party (MFP) and former leader Pita Limjaroenrat, accused of seeking to end Thailand’s constitutional democracy with the King as head of state through their election campaign to amend the lese majeste law.

The petition was filed by Teerayut Suwanakesorn, a former lawyer for former monk Suwit Thongprasert, better known as Buddha Issara. He alleged the campaign to amend Section 112 of the Criminal Code, the lese majeste law, was in violation of Section 49 of the constitution.

Mr Pita, advisory chairman of Move Forward, and MFP leader Chaithawat Tulathon

appeared before the court for cross examination on Dec 25.

Mr Pita said before testifying to the court that the party’s policy to amend Section 112 was lawful and constitutional.

He said the party was not seeking to overthrow the country’s administration and he would explain the policy in detail in court, adding that the move was intended to calm the political crisis.

Mr Pita said the petition did not seek to dissolve his party. It only wanted the party to stop seeking to amend Section 112.

“I do not worry that the ruling in this case could lead to another petition for the party to be dissolved. I have no idea who would do that, it’s a matter of the future. I am sure I can clarify to the court that the policy is not to overthrow the country’s administration,” he said. Bangkok Post

## Student says shooting was a part of gang related initiation

BANGKOK

A 20-YEAR-OLD STUDENT SUBMITTED a statement confessing to shooting and killing a vocational student and a female teacher in Klong Toey district last month, saying the slaying was part of a sophomore year induction adopted by his gang.

Anawin Kaewkeb, a student from Pathumwan Institute of Technology, was caught hiding in Hmong Doi Pui Tribal Village in tambon Suthep of Muang district in Chiang Mai, along with his alleged accomplice, Krit Lamlerd, 23, on Dec 19.

During the Nov 11 shooting, Anawin allegedly rode pillion on a motorcycle before dismounting and shooting Thanasorn Hongswat, a 19-year-old first-year student at Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok Uthenthawai Campus.

A stray bullet also killed Sirada Sinprasert, a 45-year-old computer teacher at Sacred Heart Convent School. Both died.

The arrest of Anawin came a day after 12 other suspects in the same case were nabbed during multiple raids in Bangkok, Nonthaburi and Samut Prakan on Dec 19.

The shooting was believed to be a revenge attack stemming from a feud between students from rival vocational schools, with the teacher being collateral damage.

National police chief Pol Gen Torsak Sukvimol told the media that Anawin has



Anawin Kaewkeb. Photo: Bangkok Post

admitted to the wrongdoing and regretted his action.

Pol Gen Torsak said it is a tradition for hardline students who are members of the gang to engage in shooting students from the rival school in order to enter into sophomore year, adding the shooting was premeditated.

Anawin told police that he stole a motorcycle registration plate in Din Daeng district then started to look for his target from Nov 10 in Rom Klao and Khlong 14 areas.

After searching for an entire day, he spotted a group of students from a rival school.

Anawin said he feels sorry for the crime and wants to atone for his actions by making merit on behalf of the victims.

He also warned vocational students against obeying a senseless tradition. After the shooting, none of the senior students who coaxed him into committing the crime showed up or offered to help. Bangkok Post



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# Learning to breathe



## SUSTAINABLY YOURS

Palmer Owyong

As we continue through the high season, restaurants and hotels are enjoying the time of year when they earn most of their money. But for residents of the island, it can turn what would normally be a quick trip to the market into a 30-minute ordeal with soul crushing bumper-to-bumper traffic. Each year, the situation worsens because of more people settling on the island and developers constructing housing without proper infrastructure.

So far, the government's solution has been to build more underpasses and to expand the number of lanes. This may create some short-term relief, but in the long-term this will not work because of a well-known phenomenon known as Jevons Paradox. Applied to roads, the paradox notes that the more roads we add, the more it will encourage people to drive, which leads to a never-ending game of road expansion.

So, what can we do to solve Phuket's worsening traffic problem? We need a multi-faceted approach that increases the flow of traffic, while getting people to ditch their cars in favour of alterna-



Traffic backed up at Chalong Circle.  
Photo: Rawai Municipality / file

tive transportation or just walking and biking.

### Roundabouts

What if we could solve Phuket's traffic problem, while saving money, reducing traffic accidents, saving lives, reducing air pollution, fighting climate change,

increasing biodiversity, improving road aesthetics and improving the quality of life on the island?

Sound like a tall order? Studies show that roundabouts can increase traffic flow by as much as 50% over traffic lights and stop signs. This is because cars are constantly moving rather than sitting and idling, which also reduces fuel consumption and cuts air pollution.

This reduces the number of lanes needed, while reducing car crashes that result in serious injuries or death, since cars are moving at a slower speed, and they are approaching each other at a different angle, which means roundabouts eliminate head-on collisions. According to the United States Federal Highway Administration, roundabouts decreased crashes involving serious injuries by 82% compared to stop signs and by 78% compared with traffic lights.

They are also considerably cheaper than traffic lights, which can cost up to US\$400,000 to install in the United States and cost \$5,000-8,000 per year in electricity costs plus maintenance costs. Roundabouts cost between \$250,000-500,000 depending on the complexity. Although not inexpensive, once built, there is little in the way of maintenance costs and they can be aesthetically pleasing, with art, manicured gardens, hedges and trees, which can help to fight air pollution, increase biodiversity and decrease flooding. Roundabouts are also considerably sturdier than traffic lights and not affected by the frequent storms and power outages we get on Phuket.

Although the island already has a handful of roundabouts, given its size and population density, it has nowhere near enough. For example, Carmel Indiana has a population of 100,000 and has almost 150 roundabouts. It is also, not coincidentally, been voted one of the best places to live in America because it is a safe, green place to live, with lots of walking and bike paths instead of traffic.

### Bike Lanes and Walking Paths

Getting people out of their cars should be the goal, so adding more bike lanes and walking paths to Phuket infrastructure would accomplish this. In urban areas 50% of trips are 10km or less, a perfect distance for walking and biking. A 2021 study showed that in cities where governments installed bike paths, the number of cyclists increased by between 11-48%.

Some roads in Phuket are too narrow for both cars and bikes, but there are plenty that are ideal for bike lanes. For example, the area around Laguna could have a network of bike lanes connecting the gated estates to Boat Avenue, which could also double as race courses during triathlons and marathons. This would go a long way to easing the constant congestion that plagues the area.

### Street Cars Desired

The next step would be to improve public transport. There has been a lot of debate about putting in a \$1 billion light rail system versus adding an electric bus system, but both solutions have problems. A light rail system is expensive to install, operate and maintain, and given the seasonal economics of Phuket and the transient nature of its population, would likely never break-even much less turn a profit.

The problem with buses is that they only provide a single point of entry, making it slow to get on them, and once riders are on, they are in for a jerky ride. They also billow clouds of smoke and since they don't always run on time, it makes depending on them difficult, so people who drive cars stay in them.

Studies show that while buses are useful for lower-income people who don't have cars, they are not terribly effective at getting people that have cars out of them. However, there is another solution that isn't being talked about.

Introducing trackless trams, also known as street cars. These are multi-car trams that run on wheels, not rails. So, they have the flexibility of a bus, with the conveniences of a tram. This means multiple points of entry making boarding and exiting quick and easy and a smoother steadier ride, which means people don't mind standing as much.

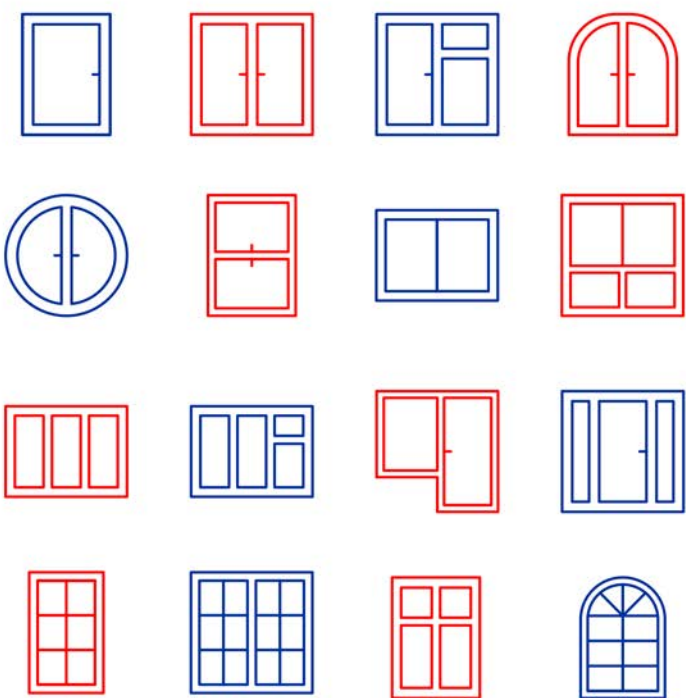
Trackless trams are also electric, so they are quiet and don't leave plumes of smoke behind. They are also considerably cheaper than a light rail system, coming in at just \$6-8 million per kilometre and can be installed over a weekend, which means no construction delays.

As dozens of new developments around the island near completion, traffic is only going to get worse. By increasing traffic flow and reducing the number of cars on the road, we could improve the quality of life on Phuket immeasurably, while also saving lives and reducing pollution.

Palmer Owyong is the author of 'Solving the Climate Crisis: A Community Guide to Solving the Biggest Problem On the Planet.' You can download the first three chapters from his blog [PalmerOwyong.me](http://PalmerOwyong.me)



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# Chalamet revives old magic in 'Wonka'

David Griffiths

Often when a film studio dares to touch a film classic in one way or another fans of the original become pretty nervous. A recent trend has been to take a classic film and then create a prequel, sequel or spinoff, but even when it is done as well as *'Mary Poppins Returns'* in 2018 there are still things that never make it equal to the original. In that case it was the fact that Emily Blunt just never compared to the iconic Julie Andrews.

With that in the back of film lovers' minds, there was little wonder that they became nervous when it was announced that director Paul King (*Paddington*) was going to tackle the classic Willy Wonka tale with a prequel to the 1971 *Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory*. Not only is that film considered a perfect masterpiece of a classic, but the performance of the late great Gene Wilder is considered an acting masterclass – something that Johnny Depp found out the hard way when he tried to recapture the Wilder magic back in 2005.

In Paul King's *Wonka*, Timothée Chamalet (*Dune*) plays a much younger Wonka. Here Wonka is dirt poor and arrives in the big city with a dream to use the ingredients that he has gathered from right around the world to start his very own chocolate shop.

But things take a very bad step



Timothée Chamalet in 'Wonka' (2023). Image: IMDb

for him from Day One. First of all he learns that the city has a kind of chocolate cartel – made up of Slugworth (Paterson Joseph – *The Beach*), Prodnose (Matt Lucas – *Alice Through the Looking Glass*) and Fickelgruber (Matthew Baynton – *Bill*) and they have paid off the local chief of police (Keegan-Michael Key – *The Super Mario Bros. Movie*) to the extent that he is willing to arrest Wonka whenever he tries to sell chocolate to the public.

Then Wonka has the misfortune of falling into the trap set by Bleacher (Tom Davis – *Paddington 2*) and Mrs Scrubbit (Olivia Colman – *The Favourite*), which leads to him being in their debt and then being kept prisoner in their sweatshop until he can work it off. It is here that he meets a young orphan named Noodle (Calah Lane – *This Is*

*Us*) and together they dream up a plan that may see them not only freed but start up a chocolate business that can make their dreams come true.

To their credit the filmmakers behind *Wonka* use all of their past experiences in the film industry to bring a warmth and feel to the film that many would just not be able to do. Paul King and screenwriter Simon Farnaby use the mix of humour and family-friendly entertainment that worked for them so well with the *Paddington* franchise. While the general look and feel of the world that Wonka finds himself in is not too far removed from the films that the producers have previously worked on – *Harry Potter* and of course *Fantastic Beasts*. All of that film experience comes together here and the result is something quite magical.

One of the other reasons that *Wonka* works so well is Timothée Chamalet. This young actor is a star on the rise for a reason. In the last couple of years he has shown us that he can carry an action blockbuster like *Dune* while also delivering the acting goods in a gritty film like *Bones and All*, but with *Wonka* he shows that he can mix it with the acting greats.

Despite playing a younger version of Wonka, Chamalet captures all the elements that made Wilder's version of Wonka so great. From the little mannerisms, including how Wilder had Wonka walking down stairs, through to the voice and charisma Chamalet nails the role and it is his performance that will win over a lot of the people that love the original film.

*Wonka* really does bring some old school movie magic back to the cinema. This film is destined to become a family classic and once again reminds us why Timothée Chamalet is one of the most gifted young actors going around at the moment. *Wonka* is pure magic that will be loved by the entire family.

*Wonka* is currently screening in Phuket and is rated 'G'

4/5 Stars

David Griffiths has been working as a film and music reviewer for over 20 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He is also an accredited reviewer for Rotten Tomatoes. You can follow him at [www.facebook.com/subcultureentertainmentaus](http://www.facebook.com/subcultureentertainmentaus)





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# POP QUIZ

1. Which island nation is the first to celebrate New Year, each year?
2. Up until 1752 (when the Gregorian calendar was adopted), on which day was New Year's Day celebrated in England?
3. The ball that drops in Times Square, New York, to mark the New Year is covered with which valuable material?
4. The lyrics to 'Auld Lang Syne' were originally from a poem written by which Scottish poet?
5. The first traveller's cheques were issued on Jan 1 of which year?

Answers below, centre

## SUDOKU

Medium

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

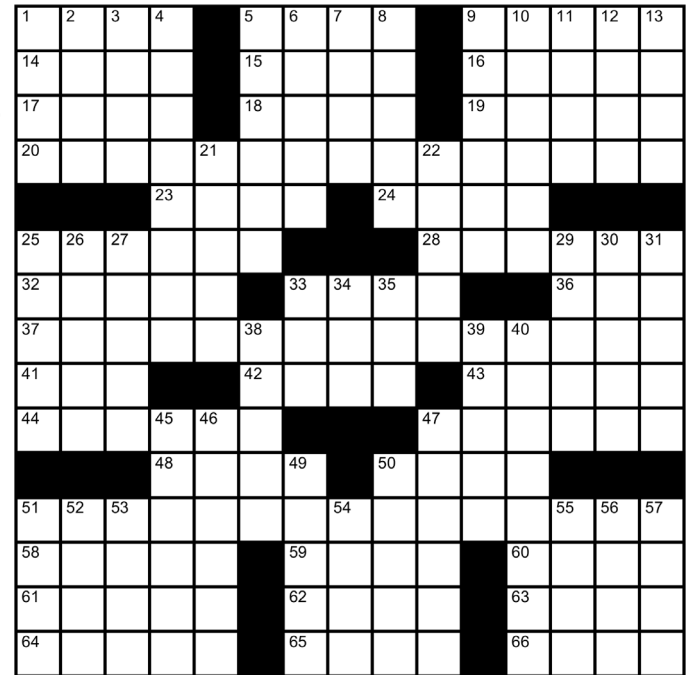
Across

1. Percussion instrument
5. Bleats
9. Ten-percenter
14. Purim's month
15. Microwave, e.g.
16. Mushroom caps
17. Astronomical sighting
18. Oscar winner Sorvino
19. Atlas feature
20. Wisconsin team
23. Shade of blue
24. Catch
25. Without much effort
28. 8 x 10, often
32. Crazy
33. Scruff
36. Not just any
37. Period of agricultural improvement
41. Ended a fast
42. Wild goat
43. Milk-Bone biscuit, e.g.
44. \_\_\_ to go
47. Religious celebration

48. Author Roald
50. Sushi fish
51. Chinese delicacy
58. African capital
59. Music category
60. "\_\_\_ cost you"
61. Nitrogen, formerly
62. \_\_\_ list
63. 11,000-foot Italian peak
64. Elaine \_\_\_ ("Seinfeld" role)
65. Fret
66. Horse color

Down

1. Jets or Sharks, e.g.
2. Carbon monoxide's lack
3. Church part
4. Adopt Hellenic ways, var.
5. Mumbai, formerly
6. For the birds?
7. Lofty nest
8. Loses it
9. At the top
10. Chinese tree
11. Choice word
12. Literary adverb
13. Small songbirds
21. Hose material
22. Broadway backer
25. Actress Samantha
26. Heart line
27. Contemptuous look
29. Pigpens
30. Young hog
31. Busybody
33. Kan. neighbor
34. Hail, to Caesar
35. Chicken \_\_\_
38. Appropriate
39. Handy
40. Having thicker hair
45. Imagine
46. 1598 edict city
47. Guy
49. Hungers (for)
50. Short musical piece
51. Seize
52. Bring down
53. Deep black
54. Cheer
55. Conductor Klemperer
56. Arm part
57. Arrange



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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
E	T	A	L	W	O	R	S	E	T	A	L	A		
N	O	G	O	A	B	E	A	M	S	U	E	S		
E	X	E	C	U	T	I	V	E	B	R	A	N	C	H
M	I	N	A	R	E	T	S	E	A	R	T	H	Y	
A	N	T	L	E	R	A	R	G						
A	S	S	E	T	P	I	N	D	I	C				
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3	7	4	9	6	5	8	1	2
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9	2	3	4	1	7	6	8	5
7	3	2	1	4	8	9	5	6
4	1	6	2	5	9	7	3	8
8	9	5	7	3	6	1	2	4

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year is how much the average man will spend of his life simply staring at women.

22

percent of Americans will be asleep before midnight on New Year's Eve.

32,256

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to 1 is the chance of dying from a fireworks incident.

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Source: *Uberfacts*

## ISLAND VIEW



Secret beach. Photo by Tina Olitakić

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

## This week in history

Dec 29, 1911

Mongolia gains independence from the Qing dynasty, enthroning the 9<sup>th</sup> Jebtsundamba Khutughtu as Khagan of Mongolia.

Dec 30, 1916

Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin, Russian mystic and advisor to the Tsar, is murdered by a loyalist group led by Prince Felix Yusupov. His frozen, partially-trussed body was discovered in a Moscow river three days later.

Dec 31, 1759

Arthur Guinness signs a 9,000-year lease at £45 per annum and starts brewing Guinness.

Jan 1, 1983

The ARPANET, developed by the US Department of Defense, officially changes to using the Internet Protocol, creating the Internet.

Jan 2, 1860

The discovery of the planet Vulcan, at the time believed to exist between Mercury and the



Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin.

Sun, is announced at a meeting of the French Academy of Sciences in Paris, France.

Jan 3, 1990

United States invasion of

Panama: Manuel Noriega, indicted by US federal grand juries on charges of racketeering, drug smuggling and money laundering, surrenders to American forces.

Jan 4, 1948

Burma gains its independence from the United Kingdom, becoming an independent republic named the Union of Burma with Sao Shwe Thaik as its President and U Nu as its first Prime Minister.

Source: *Wikipedia*



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FRI19JAN



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WED31JAN



Phuket Jewelry Fair 2024

Phuket Chamber of Commerce will host the Phuket Jewelry Fair during 31 January to 4th of February 2024. Held at the Floresta Mini Convention Hall Central Phuket, visitors will enjoy the jewels and gems gallery by the leading Phuket brand jewelry, a Diamonds & Ruby Fashion Show, seminar from The Gem and Jewelry Institute of Thailand (G.I.T), plus free real gems verification by G.I.T. For more info please visit picphuket.com/phuketjewelryfair

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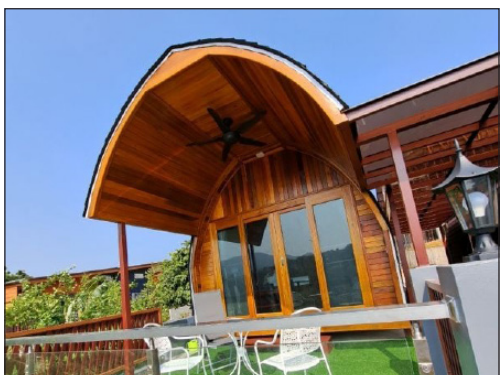
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## HILTON GARDEN INN BANG TAO - 2ND YEAR ANNIVERSARY

A tropical party to ring in two years was held on Dec 16 from 5pm, with guests heading to the rooftop pool area to enjoy the views, wonderful snacks and cold drinks. The Hilton Garden Inn Bang Tao team were on hand to entertain partners and guests that have supported them over the past two years. Congratulations Hilton Garden Inn, here's to many more years.



## ROTARY CLUB OF PATONG BEACH - CHRISTMAS DINNER

Held at the Holiday Inn Resort Phuket on Dec 16, over 85 Rotarians and guests enjoyed great fellowship, food and entertainment. The singing group from the Ban Ya School, which the Rotary Club of Patong Beach have supported for many years, sang Christmas tunes that had everyone joining along with. After dinner Moody's Band had most on their feet dancing the night away.

Photos: Alastair Carthew



# Aon wins back-to-back titles

## BOWLS

Rob Knight

**R**eigning singles Open champion Sunee 'Aon' Sampert proved she is a class above when she retained her title at the recent 11<sup>th</sup> annual Kamala Open Singles Championship.

A full complement of 24 aspiring bowlers took to the green at Kamala Lawn Bowls Club on Friday, Dec 15 to contest the tournament in hot, challenging conditions.

Emphasising how much has changed from a personnel perspective since the first tournament back in 2013, only George Sasanow and Rob Knight are still plying their trade and both were part of the most recent competition.

Of the 24 competitors nine had won previous competitions although it was difficult to try and pinpoint any outright favourite ahead of the action.

A preliminary round was established to reduce the field to a last 16 stage, with eight competitors receiving a bye to the next round and those eliminated entering into the Plate tournament.

As competition got underway at 12 noon in exceedingly hot conditions, all the field knew they would have to dig deep to negotiate through five gruelling rounds in order to



The finalists Frank and Aon. Photo: Rob Knight

ultimately triumph.

Additional stamina would be required in order for the bowlers to reach the jack due to overnight rain creating a much slower field than usual, conditions that would maybe favour the more powerful players among the field.

With the early stages being reduced to 8 ends per game, it was crucial for the players not to fall to an early deficit and restricting opponent's scoring in any end would be a sensible tactic.

One notable early casualty was last month's club champion Ken

'Sammy' Sampert who allowed Dean Lambert to come back from 6-2 down and force a deciding end which Dean won.

Other early casualties included George and Rob, with neither able to replicate their form from previous years.

## NAIL BITING

As in last month's club championship, seven of the eight bowlers who received a bye into the last 16 failed to take advantage and were relegated to the Plate competition, while three of the quarter-final lineup were female competitors.

Reigning champion Aon and Sireeton 'Wan' Sirimuangjan advanced to the semi-finals to face off against male opponents in Carl 'The Mesh' Mesham and Frank 'Borni' Born respectively.

Frank managed to overcome Wan in a nail biting contest, triumphing 8-6 on the final end while Aon defeated Carl 9-6.

The final was therefore set, with Aon looking to retain her title while Frank was looking to avenge his club championship semi-final defeat to the same opponent on Nov 20.

Learning from this previous experience, Frank attempted to play more cautious and restrict Aon to fewer scores although he still trailed 6-2 at the half way stage.

Any hopes Frank had of a come-

back were quickly quashed as Aon delivered a number of high-class bowls, regularly putting her opponent under pressure from the outset with a series of 'touchers'.

Against any other opponent Frank's standard of bowls would have seen him emerge victorious. However, following her historic victory in last year's Open Aon proved beyond doubt that she is currently the standout bowler on the island as she coasted to victory.

Her win also meant the championship was kept within the Sampert family as husband Ken won prior to Aon last year, meaning three consecutive titles for the Sampert household.

In the Plate final Ray 'Rocket' Austin beat previous serial winner Ulf 'Ue' Egeertstaad 9-6 to claim the trophy.

It was a fantastic day of action and clear to players and spectators alike that the standard has improved considerably in recent years, so huge kudos to all involved.

*Kamala Lawn Bowls club is open six days a week and all equipment is provided. Members days are Monday and Friday and beginners day Wednesday from 2:45pm onwards. For more information please contact: Tel 099-130-7255 or 097-173-0221; email: galations1402@gmail.com or Gordonjenkins1963@gmail.com.*

## SAT names top athletes of 2023

### ALL SPORTS

MOTORCYCLE RACER Somkiat Chanttra and LPGA golfer Atthaya Thitikul were named Thailand's best male and female professional athletes of 2023 respectively by the Sports Authority of Thailand on Dec 16.

Badminton star Kunlavut Vitidsarn and taekwondo fighter Panipak Wongpatanakit won the top male and female amateur awards respectively.

The athletes were honoured at a ceremony presided over by Tourism and Sports Minister Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol.

Kunlavut made history by becoming the first Thai to win the men's singles world title this year while Panipak won her second successive Asian Games gold medal in Hangzhou in September.

Somkiat, 24, won his second Moto2 title at the Japanese Grand Prix and finished third at the Thailand Grand Prix this year.

The 24-year-old Idemitsu Honda Team Asia rider became the first Thai



Somkiat with his award. Photo: Bangkok Post

to finish sixth in the world championship standings.

Weightlifter Weerapol Chuma received the best male youth athlete award while the female award went to junior world badminton champion Pitchamon Opatniputh.

The best male Muay Thai fighter award went to Nattawut Simma (Petjakkajan Chor Hapayak) while Janjira Parunai (Karakate Por Muangphet) took the female award.

Wheelchair racer Pongsakorn Paeyo and wheelchair fencer Saysunee Jana won the best male and female disabled athletes respectively.

The best team (sport) award went to the women's volleyball team, who won their third Asian Championship crown and an Asian Games bronze medal.

The best team (event) were mixed doubles shuttlers Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai.

Bangkok Post

## Denwit seals hat-trick of wins

### GOLF

DENWIT BORIBOONSUB COMPLETED a rare hat-trick of titles when he recorded a three-shot victory in the US\$1 million (B35mn) Saudi Open at Riyadh Golf Club on Dec 17.

The 19-year-old Thai, who won the Thailand Open on the All Thailand Golf Tour and the Aramco Invitational on the Asian Development Tour (ADT) in the two weeks previous, shot a final-round seven-under-par 64 for a four-round-aggregate of 18-under 266.

Sweden's Henrik Stenson raced through with a 65 to secure second place while Travis Smyth from Australia was third after a 67 in an event that brought to a conclusion the Asian Tour's 23-event, \$35mn season.

Phachara Khongwatmai from Thailand, the overnight leader, signed off with a 70 and tied for fourth, five behind the champion, with his nation's brilliant young amateur Ratchanon "TK" Chantanuwant finishing on 66.

Denwit also has the distinction of becoming the first player to win the final events of the year on both the Asian Tour and ADT, as the Aramco Invitational was also the season-ender.

"It is an unbelievable feeling because it is incredible winning three weeks in a row. It is like magic!" said the Thai youngster who won \$180,000 and leapt into 21<sup>st</sup> place on the Asian Tour Order of Merit from 133<sup>rd</sup>.

"I was really confident before coming to this week because I just know my game. I hit my drives good, my irons and putting were also good, so my goal this week was to win. Fortunately, I made it."

This was only Denwit's 15<sup>th</sup> start on the Asian Tour, and he mirrors the performance



Denwit with the trophy in Riyadh on Dec 17. Photo: Asian Tour

of American Berry Henson back in 2011 by winning on the Asian Tour a fortnight after claiming an ADT event.

On the eve of the Aramco Invitational, Denwit was 30<sup>th</sup> on the ADT Merit list and facing an uncertain future before a lifechanging month of golf.

"I told my caddie that there is nothing to lose now," he said. "If we didn't make this tournament we had to go to Q School but I just tried to play my best and hopefully just make top three but luckily I won it."

Former British Open champion Stenson made a valiant late run making four consecutive birdies from the 12<sup>th</sup> and another on 17 but he ran out of holes.

He said: "It's been a good week here in Riyadh. It's been my first trip to the capital. I came in with two months off, so it was a good opportunity for me to kind of see where we're at and what needs to be worked more on when we start preparing for next year in the middle of January." Bangkok Post



# Festive cheer for Gunners as they maintain top spot

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Arsenal held title rivals Liverpool to a pulsating 1-1 draw at Anfield last Saturday (Dec 23) to ensure they spent Christmas at the top of the Premier League table.

Mikel Arteta's Arsenal took an early lead through Gabriel Magalhaes' header, but Mohamed Salah hauled Liverpool level before the interval.

A draw was arguably the right result after both sides flexed their muscles to show why they have emerged as the leading contenders to win the title this season.

The result left Arsenal one point clear of second-placed Liverpool heading into the rest of the festive period games.

The team that has topped the Premier League at Christmas has gone on to win the title in six of the past 10 seasons, but the draw on Merseyside was also a boost to the chasing pack.

Third-placed Aston Villa



Arsenal's Gabriel Magalhaes opens the scoring in the 1-1 draw with Liverpool on Dec 23. Photo: AFP

are level on points with Liverpool, fourth-placed Tottenham are three points further back, while champions Manchester City are six points adrift of the leaders with a game in hand.

"An unbelievable game of football, one of the most intense I've witnessed in 20 years in this league," Arteta said afterwards.

Aston Villa needed an injury time equaliser from substitute Nicolo Zaniolo to snatch a 1-1 draw with bottom club Sheffield United while Spurs overcame Everton 2-1

thanks to goals from Richarlison and Son Heung-min.

Manchester United side were blown away by late West Ham strikes from Jarrod Bowen and Mohammed Kudus, condemning Erik Ten Hag's team to an eighth Premier League loss already this season.

United, languishing in eighth place, have managed just one win in their last seven games in all competitions, have lost three of their last four matches and failed to score in any of them for the

first time since 1992.

They have lost 13 games in all competitions this season – their most defeats before Christmas since 1930-31 when they finished bottom of the table.

At Craven Cottage, Rebecca Welch became the first woman to referee a Premier League match as struggling Burnley won 2-0 at Fulham.

Luton bolstered their bid for survival with an impressive 1-0 win against Newcastle at Kenilworth Road.

Paying the perfect tribute to Tom Lockyer as the Hatters captain recovers from his recent on-pitch cardiac arrest, Andros Townsend scored the winner in the 25th minute.

Bournemouth's Dominic Solanke ruined Nuno Espirito Santo's first match in charge of Nottingham Forest as the striker's hat-trick sealed a 3-2 victory, while Crystal Palace and Brighton drew 1-1.

In the first game played on Christmas Eve since 1995 Wolves defeated Chelsea 2-1 thanks to second-half goals from Mario Lemina and Matt Doherty.



Joshua celebrates his win. Photo: AFP

## Big wins for Joshua, Parker

### BOXING

FORMER WORLD CHAMPIONS Anthony Joshua and Joseph Parker re-established their heavyweight title credentials with victories on the same bill in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia last Saturday (Dec 23).

British boxer Joshua produced one of his best performances of recent times by stopping Sweden's Otto Wallin, who was pulled out by his corner after the fifth round of a one-sided bout.

Victory gave Joshua his third win of 2023 after he beat Jermaine Franklin Jr by unanimous decision in April before a seventh-round stoppage of Robert Helenius in August.

It also took the 34-year-old's professional record to 27 wins and three defeats as he inflicted the first 'inside the distance' loss of Wallin's career.

Joshua is looking to become a three-time world champion following two defeats by Oleksandr Usyk and a shock 2019 loss to Andy Ruiz.

Earlier, Parker enjoyed a unanimous points-decision win over fellow former world champion Deontay Wilder, the New Zealander triumphing 118-111, 118-110, 120-108 in a dominant display.

Parker, comprehensively defeated Wilder in the former World Boxing Council champion's first bout in over two years.

"Everyone had other plans but this is God's plan," said Parker, 31, who improved to 34-3 with 23 knockouts.

Parker lost the World Boxing Organisation title to Joshua by a unanimous points decision in Cardiff five years ago.

"Well done Joseph, he did a great job avoiding my punches," said Wilder, who fell to 43-3 with one draw and 42 knockouts. AFP

## FAT, FIFA collaborate to lift women's game

### FOOTBALL

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION of Thailand (FAT) has been praised by FIFA for its ongoing efforts to develop the women's game.

The FAT hosted a two-day workshop on women's club licensing and capacity-building for administrators for 26 club representatives and coaches on Dec 16-17, and received praise from Simon Toselli, technical expert for women's football at FIFA.

"I have to admire the organisation. Not only this time, but also throughout the last two years FIFA has been supporting the member association with many different programmes on club licensing and league development," he said.

"FIFA also recognised the impact of the FAT's work by featuring images of some of these activities on-screen at the FIFA Women's Football Convention in Sydney in August."

For the FAT, it is essential to drive development at club level and raise the standard of clubs and leagues in women's football.

During the workshop exercises on how to set an appropriate budget for women's football were demonstrated.

The workshop participants also visited Thai League 1 club BG Pathum United, who offered the opportunity to observe a high-ranking club structure with a clearly defined strategy.

"I believe workshops like the one organised by the FAT in collaboration with



Girls in action at the Ubon Ratchathani event. Photo: Bangkok Post

FIFA play a crucial role in the continuous development of the women's football clubs in Thailand," said FIFA consultant Andres Portabella.

The workshop on capacity-building for administrators on the second day covered a range of topics, such as sponsorship in football and strengthening a global network of women's football staff off the pitch.

"The range of topics, such as the importance of having a strategy, grassroots development, safeguarding, sponsorship in football and strengthening a global network of women's football staff off the pitch are essential to drive development at club level and raise the standard of clubs and leagues in Thai women's football," said Toselli.

The FAT also organised a women's football event in Ubon Ratchathani, introducing young girls to the sport and thus attracting new players to grassroots youth football.

A total of 240 girls aged between six and 14 from clubs and the community took part. Bangkok Post

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- ✂ Food & Beverage
- ✂ Luxury Product Exhibits
- ✂ 50+ Boats On-Water
- ✂ Private Jets
- ✂ Entertainment Until Late

**COMPLIMENTARY CHILDREN'S DAY  
ENTERTAINMENT FUN FOR ALL ON  
SATURDAY THE 13TH JANUARY 2024  
OPENS 14.00 HRS.**

**Kick Off 2024 With A Great Party !**

**OPEN TO ALL**

Scan Here To Reserve Your Tickets ▶



Robb Report



Yachting Awards Gala Dinner

*Gala* DINNER  
10TH JANUARY 2024

- ◆ Drinks on Arrival
- ◆ Live Band & DJ
- ◆ Free-Flow Beverages
- ◆ Award Ceremony
- ◆ Top-Class Entertainment
- ◆ Party Until 1 AM

*\*Dancing to EKA SOUNDZ Nine Piece Band*

Menu Created & Delivered By **DANIEL ISBERG**  
Celebrity Chef & Culinary Artist



## 6-Course Dinner Menu

### 1ST Course

Hokkaido Scallop Served in The Shell with Fresh Yuzu / Ponzu Dressing Shiso Leaf & Wasabi Micro Greens.

### 2ND Course

Main Lobster Bisque, Dill Foam, Two Caviar Cookie & Popcorn Shoots.

### 3RD Course

Wagyu Beef Tartar with Truffle & Farmers Market Salad

### 4TH Course

Local Seabass with Gremolata, Smoked Tiger Prawn, Sauteed Baby Spinach & Red Pepper Coulis.

### 5TH Course

Beef Wellington with Pommes Gratin, Green Asparagus and Port Wine Sauce.

### DESSERT

Assiette Mignardises Patisserie (Pastry Chefs Plate) W. 5 Special Selected Desserts Tarte Tartin, Pave of Trioanon, Lychee Macaroon, Lime Curd Tartelette & Turkish Delight

**Tickets Priced at 10,000 THB per person  
(VAT & Service is included)**

**Prepare to be captivated!**

The Thailand International Boat Show, a Luxury Lifestyle Event, proudly presents the Robb Report Thailand Awards Gala Dinner, an unparalleled celebration in the heart of Phuket. This prestigious evening, unfolding in the White House at NH Boat Lagoon Phuket Resort is not just another event; it's a night like no other, offering a unique blend of gourmet cuisine by Chef Daniel Isberg, prestigious Awards, and vibrant entertainment.

**TO VISIT THE SHOW REGISTER FOR FREE & THE CHANCE TO WIN APPLE PRODUCTS**

Online Registration: [www.thailandinternationalboatshow.com](http://www.thailandinternationalboatshow.com)

To Purchase Tickets & For More Details Of All The Above

Call: +66 76 600 225 Email: [info@thailandinternationalboatshow.com](mailto:info@thailandinternationalboatshow.com)



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