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CLEAR VIEW

RAWAI MAYOR-ELECT VOWS FULL TRANSPARENCY



Photo: Thames Kraitat

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Rawai born and raised Thames Kraitat, who was voted Mayor of Rawai in the elections held earlier this month, has vowed to make his administration fully transparent to help address the slew of infrastructure woes that blight the popular tourist area at the southern end of the island.

Critical issues of overdevelopment through construction, poor facilities, flooding, traffic and even garbage collection have all gone unaddressed by the previous administration under former Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos, Mr Thames explained.

Of note, former mayor Mr Aroon was not allowed to run for re-election as Rawai Mayor as he is facing corruption charges.

Mr Thames (pronounced “Thames”, as in the famous river of London) contested the election for the District 1 seat as a Phuket MP, but was bested by the well-respected Chalermpong Saengdee – prompting him to focus his attention on his home ground.

As a member of the Chart Pattana Kla Party, Mr Thames, a Thai-British native of Rawai, will arrive in office with a whole new agenda and a very different perspective to local politics.

After completing Primary School at Baan Bang Neow Municipal School in Phuket Town

and Junior High at Dulwich International College – Phuket, he graduated High School at Murdoch College in Perth, Australia, where he also completed his bachelor’s degree at the University of Western Australia.

With his Western education, Mr Thames, who turns 38 years old next month, promised full transparency during his term. “I will open everything – budgets, spending, decisions. I’m not afraid of scrutiny,” he told *The Phuket News*.

He acknowledged the corruption cases that occurred under the previous Rawai Mayor but declined to comment on the past, stating that his focus is on ensuring transparency and reform-

ing the internal system during his term.

CONSTRUCTION

Mr Thames highlighted that many new construction projects in the Rawai area have raised concerns among local residents.

Regarding large developments on a steep slope beside Nai harn Lake, Thames explained that the projects were already approved long before the election, during the term of Mr Aroon.

“As I have not been officially appointed Mayor, I do not have access to the full information about those projects, but I will do so as I am installed,” he promised.

Mr Thames also expressed frustration with outdated laws that...

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News



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Mayor: A new future for Rawai

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...tie the hands of local governments when it comes to urban planning, especially concerning construction blocking natural drainage, thus causing flooding in key areas in Rawai.

"Landowners want to maximise every inch of their land. They build up to the edge of their title deed. When that blocks water flow and causes flooding, the municipality has no real power to stop them unless the law changes," he said.

While Thames did not yet elaborate on measures to control the volume of future construction, he reiterated his intention to uphold the law.

WATER

"Water shortages are not just Rawai's issue – they are a Phuket-wide crisis," Mr Thames said.

"Rawai is a subdistrict with no water sources because the terrain does not feature natural dams or reservoirs. Most people dig wells and rely on tap water, which the municipality must expand each year depending on budget," he said.

Among the long-term solutions for Rawai, Mr Thames proposed a desalination plant. "If we cannot extract fresh water, we must convert saltwater into drinkable water," he suggested.

WASTEWATER

On wastewater management, Mr Thames noted that larger hotels



Construction woes. Photo: Thames Kraitat

generally comply with environmental regulations, but small businesses often violate waste disposal laws.

"Hotels and large businesses follow the law strictly. What's more worrying are small businesses... many dump waste directly into canals," he said.

"Many restaurants skip grease tanks and dump waste directly into drainage canals... For this we must enforce the law. Violators will be fined," Mr Thames warned.

TRAFFIC

Rawai's notorious traffic congestion, especially at Chalong Circle, is outside municipal control, Mr Thames admitted, as it falls under the Department of Highways.

"Our roads end where the Highways Department begins. All

we can do is improve alleyways and internal routes for motorcycles to ease congestion," he said.

However, he added, "We can create more internal connections in the small streets to reduce congestion on main roads, especially for motorcycles.

"The only way out of Rawai is to pass Chalong. Cars from all directions want to turn to Kata here. The Department of Highways should create alternative routes to reduce pressure," he said.

FIVE MUSTS

Mr Thames outlined five immediate areas as his first priorities, with waste management at the top of his list.

"Garbage collection is slow and incomplete. Half our trucks are broken. Before asking residents to separate waste, we

need a functioning basic system," he said.

"Waste is collected slowly, not on time, and is piled up all over the place. The management of Rawai Municipality has been unsystematic and ineffective for a long time.

"The second thing that I will push is the flood prevention plan because we are already behind this rainy season. I've ordered emergency dredging, but proper maintenance should have started years ago," he said.

His remarks included criticism of the Rawai canal and flood system, calling past maintenance inadequate.

"We should have dredged canals twice a year. But our mud suction truck is broken, and the one from the provincial authorities is shared across the province, it's slow," he said.

"Flooding, even if short, still ruins people's lives. We must fix this now.

"Next I would like to fix the municipal system. People complain, and nothing happens. That must change. We need a fast, accountable response system," Mr Thames said.

"And upgrading public services, I want to rebuild the municipal building and introduce a Rawai-based civil registry, so residents can manage ID cards and household documents locally," he continued.

"Last is tourism and culture. Rawai is already beautiful. We

don't need new projects, we need to maintain and manage what we already have," he said.

"To do that, we need to fix all the above so we can have an efficient system, and maintain a decent destination."

AUTONOMY

Whether he can transform Rawai's administration remains to be seen – but Mr Thames is strong in his belief that Phuket needs more power to govern itself.

"Phuket is governed like any other province that relies on agriculture, but we generate far more income and we are ready to stand on our own," he said.

Mr Thames believes that granting Phuket greater autonomy would allow the island to design and implement development strategies that truly reflect its unique needs and potential.

"If that means removing the position of mayor entirely for a more efficient system, I would support it... I don't mind," he added.

"We are the province that generates the most income for Thailand. We should elect our own governor and plan our own urban design. This isn't just an idea – it's a proposal that could truly benefit Phuket.

"While we don't yet have that kind of political system in place, what I can do now is take action at the local level, and that's why I chose to run for mayor," he said.

Heavy rain triggers local flooding

LOCAL OFFICIALS have ramped up efforts to manage flooding and prevent further disruptions after heavy rainfall inundated parts of Phuket last Saturday (May 24), according to reports from the Phuket Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM Phuket) Command Center.

As of 6am last Saturday, significant rainfall was recorded across the province, with the highest 24-hour accumulations measured at Baan Sakhu Reservoir Station (85.5mm), Phuket Station (69.2mm) and Ban Pa Khlok Station (67mm).

Earlier in the day, other areas also reported high rainfall totals, including Bang Neow Dum Reservoir (55mm) and Rawai Municipality (48.4mm).

Flooding was reported in several parts of Mueang Phuket District, including:

* Wichit: near Wichit Songkhram Rd and Muang Thong Road

* Karon: in front of Por Piang Market in Kata

* Koh Kaew: Immee Phiman Curve, Koh Kaew – Kathu Road

* Phuket Town: Tha Kraeng Intersection

* Rawai: entrance of Soi Salika (still flooded as of noon)

Meanwhile, Cherng Talay in Thalang District

also reported standing floodwater in Soi Pasak 1. However, no flooding was reported in Kathu.

Thalang District Chief Siwat Rawangkun and senior officials, including Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob – visited flood-affected areas in Cherng Talay, including Soi Pasak 1.

In response, the PPAO announced the installation of eight high-pressure pumps positioned along the Sen Pho Canal, the main drainage route in Thalang District and four additional large pumps provided through coordination with the Royal Irrigation Department.

One pump was installed at the end of Soi Pasak 1 to rapidly drain floodwaters. Plans were also underway to implement a major underground drainage system in the same area, with construction expected to begin by the end of the year.

The DDPM Phuket coordinated with local administrative organisations and district-level emergency command centres to provide continuous 24-hour monitoring. Emergency personnel were deployed to flood-prone areas to assist residents and oversee drainage efforts, said an official report of the flood response.

Red flags were also placed on local beaches to warn tourists against



Photo: PR Phuket

swimming due to strong waves and dangerous sea conditions, while Phuket International Airport urged travellers to allow extra time for reaching the airport so that passengers will arrive in time for their flights.

The flooding came as the Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) last Sunday reissued its warning, urging the public to remain vigilant due to potential flash floods and run-off hazards.

The warning marked that heavy to very heavy

rainfall was expected to continue across the Andaman seaboard, with the heavy weather expected to continue through to Tuesday this week (May 27), though the downpours started to abate by Monday (May 26).

The TMD also warned of strong winds and rough seas in both the Andaman Sea. Fishermen and small boats should exercise caution and avoid venturing out into open waters during the period. *The Phuket News*

Fehr sentenced, now missing

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Swiss expat Urs Fehr, nicknamed by the Thai media as 'Swiss David', has been sentenced to one month in prison for kicking Dr Thandao Chandam, a doctor at Dibuk Hospital, in front of his luxury villa at Cape Yamu in February last year.

The sentence was handed down by the Region 8 Court of Appeal on May 23, overturning his acquittal by Phuket Provincial Court in the initial case against him in September last year.

Fehr was accused of kicking Dr Thandao in the back and verbally abusing her while she sat on the steps in front of his rented beachfront villa on Yamu Beach, in Pa Khlok, on Feb 24, 2024.

Fehr had accused Dr Thandao of trespassing, but Dr Thandao, then 27, filed a physical assault complaint shortly after the incident, which was partially captured on video and shared widely online, sparking national outrage and demands for his deportation.

Public Prosecutors and Dr Thandao's legal team, led by lawyer Nipit Intarasombat, jointly appealed the initial decision to have the case against Fehr dismissed.



Urs Fehr (left) speaks with his lawyer during a hearing held with the Phuket Governor last year. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub / file

The jail sentence handed down on May 23 was not negotiable, as the court ordered that Fehr serve the time "without probation".

However, the sentence is also the minimum jail term that can be handed down for the assault charge, filed under Section 391 of the Criminal Code.

Section 391 of the Criminal Code states: "Whoever commits an act of violence without causing bodily or mental harm to another person, shall be punished with imprisonment, not more than one month, or fined not more than ten thousand baht, or both."

Fehr was not present at the court on May 23, despite a warrant for his arrest already being issued after he failed to

present himself to the appeal court last month.

Fehr already had a court subpoena issued in advance clearly stating that he was required to appear in person for the hearing in April.

"Under Thai criminal law, defendants are required to appear in person for all hearings. He cannot send a legal representative on a criminal case," Dr Thandao's lawyer, Mr Nipit explained.

However, queries by *The Phuket News* later confirmed that police never acted on the warrant, as senior officers at Thalang Police explained that although they were aware of the warrant and its instructions for Fehr's arrest, they were powerless to act

on it as they had never officially received it.

Mr Niphit confirmed to *The Phuket News* last week that Fehr has the right to appeal the May 23 decision, but added, "At present, the defendant [Fehr] has fled the court's arrest warrant and is likely to have left the country."

Following the initial incident in February last year, which sparked a wave of anti-foreigner sentiment across the island, Phuket Immigration launched a probe into Fehr's conduct, including allegations of firearm possession and visa violations.

However, it was explained that any decision on deportation was expected to follow the conclusion of the criminal proceedings.

FALLOUT

In the fallout of the Fehr incident, Pol Lt Col Yutthana Praedam, Acting Director-General of Thailand's Department of Special Investigation (DSI), visited Phuket in March last year to oversee the agency's investigation into Fehr, his wife Khanuengnit and their associated businesses and land holdings.

The probe was to focus on potential violations of the Alien Business Operations Act and the illegal use of public land, Pol Lt

Col Yutthana said.

The DSI chief met with a multi-agency task force at the Phuket Tourism and Sports office. Agencies involved include the DSI's Security Cases Division, the Department of Business Development, Department of Tourism, Tourist Police and Phuket Immigration.

Nine key areas were to be investigated, covering both Fehr's Green Elephant Sanctuary Park in Cheng Talay and the luxury Cape Yamu villa where Fehr assaulted the doctor on land later confirmed to be public.

Investigators were to examine whether foreign ownership of the sanctuary exceeded legal limits and whether nominee shareholders were being used to bypass Thai business laws.

The Green Elephant Wildlife Foundation, now under Fehr's wife's name and registered as non-profit, was also under scrutiny.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat called for the foundation's dissolution. Additionally, officers are reviewing the land title history of the Cape Yamu site for possible irregularities.

However, the results of those investigations still have yet to be made fully public.

Bomb hoax delays flight

A 62-YEAR-OLD BANGKOK man was arrested at Phuket International Airport last Friday (May 23) after causing panic aboard an AirAsia flight by claiming there was a bomb in his carry-on bag.

The incident occurred at 3:17pm aboard AirAsia flight FD3092, which was scheduled to depart Phuket for Don Mueang Airport in Bangkok.

As the aircraft was preparing for takeoff and taxiing from parking bay 1, the suspect, identified as Thanavut Wichaidith, reportedly told a flight attendant to "watch out for the bomb" in his black shoulder bag.

Airline staff immediately alerted the captain, who aborted takeoff and returned the plane to parking bay 39, explained an official report of the incident.

Passengers were disembarked, and a full inspection of the aircraft, passengers and luggage was conducted by the airport's Explosive Ord-



Photo: Sakhu Police

nance Disposal (EOD) team.

No explosive device was found.

Thanavut was arrested at the scene and taken into custody by Sakhu Police. Authorities have charged him with disseminating false information that caused public alarm, a serious offense under Thai law, particularly when it occurs in an airport or on an aircraft.

Police said the incident was formally recorded under criminal case number 134/2568 and noted as a serious and shocking event by both Sakhu Police Station and

Phuket Provincial Police.

Thanavut was detained following a report from Pol. Sgt. Maj. Phuridet Suksong, a squad commander at Sakhu Police Station, who acted as the primary accuser in the case.

The investigation is being led by Pol Lt Col Chapinya Suriyathamkun, with oversight from Pol Col Salan Santisanakul, Superintendent of Sakhu Police Station.

Phuket Airport officials confirmed that after the security sweep, the flight resumed with the remaining passengers.

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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 11 m/s

MON JUNE 2

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Wind 4 m/s

TUE JUNE 3

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WED JUNE 4

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Wind 4 m/s

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Wind 4 m/s

Outrage over tourists defecating spills over

A PHUKET RESTAURANT owner has taken to social media to express frustration after a foreign tourist was caught defecating in front of the restaurant while it was closed – marking the second such incident in a month.

The incident occurred in front of Salalay Restaurant in Rawai, and was brought to public attention by Facebook user Pananart Atsawaphitakchon.

Pananart posted a photo showing a woman squatting behind a Naga statue at the entrance of the restaurant. According to the post, the woman walked away without cleaning up afterward.

“This is the second time this month that someone has defecated here,” Pananart wrote, referring to a similar incident that happened on Thursday (May 22) – also a day the shop was closed.

While the restaurant allows passersby to use its restroom when open, the recurring problem



Photo: Pananart Atsawaphitakchon

highlights what Pananart described as Thailand's lack of preparation to manage the negative impacts of tourism.

“We’ve discussed charging a small fee for restroom use to help cover costs like cleaning supplies and water, but we’ve tried to absorb those costs because we understand that tourists bring income to the country,” the post continued.

Despite their efforts to be accommodating, the shop has repeatedly faced the unpleasant task of cleaning up human waste left behind by visitors.

“I don’t know if other business owners are facing this too, but I’d like the authorities to help address this small, yet very real, issue,” Pananart said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Residents react over street parking antics

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A parcel delivery company on Chao Fa East Rd in Wichit is under investigation for allegedly encroaching on public land and causing traffic obstructions, following complaints from local residents.

A joint inspection was carried out by multiple government bodies on May 22, in response to the complaints initially filed with Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee.

Present for the inspection yesterday were officials from the Phuket Provincial Ombudsman's Office and the Phuket branch of the Internal Security Operations Command (Isoc), as well as officers from the Phuket Highways Office, the Mueang District Office, Wichit Municipality and Wichit Police.

The investigation focused on reports that the company, which offers parcel pickup and delivery services, was using public space along Chao Fa East Rd, in Moo 2, Wichit, to park large transport vehicles.



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

Residents claimed the practice blocked views, disrupted traffic and posed safety risks.

According to a company representative, goods are delivered twice a day – once by a large vehicle in the morning and once by a smaller vehicle in the afternoon, reported MP Chalermpong.

Each delivery operation lasts about 30 minutes.

The company admitted it had previously received similar complaints and had taken steps to improve the situation, though officials said the measures were still insufficient.

Following the inspection, officials issued a set of directives for the company to comply with.

The company, not named in MP Chalermpong's report, is to adjust its delivery receiving hours to avoid peak traffic, and restrict operations to not receive its deliveries between 6am and 10am and from 3pm to 7pm each day.

The company is also to ensure delivery vehicles do not obstruct roads, sidewalks or private residences, and remain within legal parking boundaries.

The company was asked to use smaller vehicles where possible and ensure delivery vehicles are parked within company premises, and was warned that continued violations will result in strict legal action by relevant authorities, MP Chalermpong explained.

Body found off Nui Beach

THE BODY OF A FOREIGN man was discovered floating off the coast of Nui Beach in Karon on May 21, prompting an investigation by local police and forensic officials.

Karon Police were called to the beach at about 3:20pm.

Upon arrival, the investigation team observed the body floating in the open sea. Lifeguards used a speedboat to retrieve the deceased and bring him ashore.

The deceased was a foreign male wearing only black underwear, police reported. A preliminary examination conducted jointly by a forensic doctor from Vachira Phuket Hospital and Phuket's provincial forensic team revealed no visible wounds.



Photo: Karon Police

The man had tattoos on his right arm and right leg and was believed to have been dead for approximately three days.

The body was transported to Vachira Phuket Hospital for a detailed examination to determine the cause of death.

At last report, police said they were working with hotels and other police stations across the island to check for any missing person reports that may help identify the deceased.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Italian flees collision, hits SUV

A 28-YEAR-OLD ITALIAN MAN and a 23-year-old Thai man were left unconscious and severely injured after their motorbike collided with an SUV in Patong early on May 20, while the men were fleeing a previous collision with a passenger van.

Police were called to the scene of the second collision, with the SUV, near the entrance of Soi Phra Barami 5 on Phra Barami Rd in Patong, at around 7:42am.

Officers along with rescue workers from the Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation arrived to find the two men – identified as Italian national Yazid Idrissi Aatouf and Hakimi Sudog from Narathiwat.

They were found unconscious and in critical condition. Both were transported to Patong Hospital.

According to police, the two men were riding a red Honda Zoomer-X motorbike, registered in Phuket, which initially collided with a van at Loma Circle at the north end of Patong Beach.



Photo: Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation

They then fled the scene but lost control while speeding along Phra Barami Rd. The motorbike veered across lanes and crashed head-on into a black SUV, also registered in Phuket.

Patong Police collected the damaged motorbike and SUV for evidence and questioned both the van and SUV drivers.

CCTV footage from the area is being reviewed as part of the ongoing investigation, Patong Police confirmed.

However, at time of press police had yet to clarify who was driving the motorbike when it struck the van, or the SUV.

Patong Police said legal action will be taken following further questioning of both of them once their conditions stabilise. Eakkapop Thongtub

Blood Bank marks 58 years

The Phuket News
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Phuket officials celebrated the 58th anniversary of the Vachira Phuket Hospital Blood Bank on May 23, honouring decades of lifesaving contributions under the theme ‘The Giver is Happy, Giving Breath to the Recipient’.

The commemorative event, held at the Phuket Merlin Hotel, was presided over by Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam, with distinguished guests including Natthakanya Saengpho, Vice President of the Phuket branch of the Red Cross Society, and Dr Supalak La-onghphet, Deputy Director of Vachira Phuket Hospital.

In his opening remarks, Vice Governor Suwit reflected on the historic foundation of the hospital’s blood bank on May 23, 1967.

He paid tribute to His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit the Queen Mother, who officiated the original launch of the Red Cross Blood Center at the hospital. He credited their royal grace for inspiring generations of blood donors, helping save the lives of countless Thais and foreign nationals over nearly six decades.

“Blood donation is a selfless and irreplaceable act of compassion,” he said. “It builds a warmer society, one that breathes life into others.”



Photo: PR Phuket

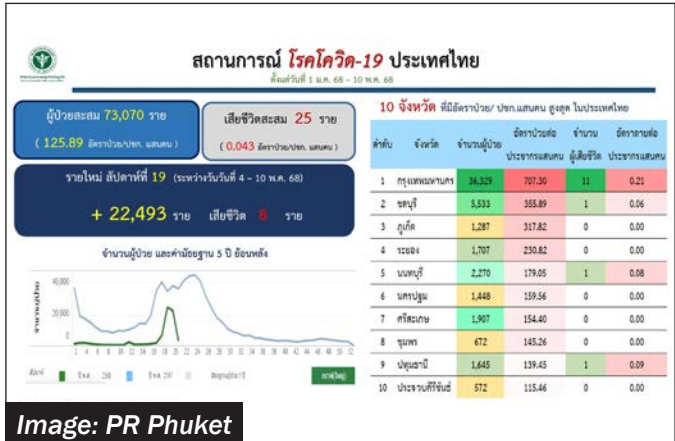
The ceremony drew over 200 attendees from various sectors, who gathered to express their gratitude and the legacy of giving. The event featured a video tribute titled ‘The Giver is Happy, Giving Breath to the Recipient’, along with a series of awards honouring exemplary blood donors and supporters.

Certificates of honor were presented to individuals who have donated blood 300, 200, 100 and 50 times. Commemorative pins recognised donors with 96, 84, 72, 60 and 48 donations. Agencies supporting blood procurement efforts and dedicated blood bank volunteers also received certificates and souvenirs in appreciation of their continued efforts.

Dr Supalak outlined the event’s objectives: to honor the royal legacy, encourage blood donation as a vital humanitarian act, raise awareness of the hospital’s blood services, and thank donors and partner agencies for their unwavering support.

In closing, Vice Governor Suwit encouraged the public to carry forward King Bhumibol’s vision by regularly donating blood, reinforcing a spirit of unity and compassion throughout Thai society.

Meanwhile, Vachira Phuket Hospital last week announced that it has so far received B402,264,094 in donations to go towards the construction of its new cancer-treatment facility. The initial call for donations was for B290mn.



Phuket third for COVID

PHUKET HAS BEEN ranked the third-highest province in Thailand for COVID-19 infection rates per 100,000 population, according to the latest update from the Department of Disease Control covering data from Jan 1 to May 10, 2025.

The data shows that Phuket recorded 1,287 cumulative COVID-19 cases, with an infection rate of 317.82 per 100,000 people, Dr Kusuma Sawangphan, Head of the Communicable Disease Control Group at the Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) explained at a meeting last week.

While no deaths have been reported in the province during this period, the high infection rate

places Phuket just behind Bangkok and Chonburi in terms of COVID-19 infections, Dr Kusuma said.

Across the country, a total of 73,070 COVID-19 cases have been reported since the start of the year, with 25 deaths – reflecting a national death rate of 0.043 per 100,000 people.

During the most recent reporting week (May 4-10), 22,493 new cases were added nationwide, along with eight new deaths, Dr Kusuma said.

Dr Kusuma also reported the provinces with the highest infection rates. Leading the list is Bangkok, with 36,329 reported cases – an infection rate of 707.30 per 100,000 population – and 11 deaths.

The Phuket News

Foreign diplomats visit Phuket

THE AMBASSADOR OF the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Thailand, Rukhsana Afzal, paid a courtesy visit to Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat at Phuket Provincial Hall on Monday (May 26).

The visit highlighted the country’s commitment to strengthening bilateral ties at the local level, said an official report of the event.

During the meeting, Ambassador Afzal expressed appreciation for the warm welcome and praised the province’s support for Pakistani tourists and residents, said the report.

She noted the positive role of the Pakistani community in contributing to Phuket’s development.

Amb Afzal, who has served in Thailand since late last year, reaffirmed her hope for closer collaboration between Thailand and Pakistan, particularly in the areas of politics, economics and cultural exchange, the report continued.

“Thailand and Pakistan have enjoyed strong relations for over 75 years, with cooperation in many fields,” she said. “Today’s



Pakistan Ambassador Rukhsana Afzal. Photo: PR Phuket

visit is an important step in continuing that friendship and building connections at the provincial level.”

Governor Sophon welcomed the ambassador and her delegation, and echoed the importance of fostering international partnerships, especially with countries that share long-standing diplomatic ties with Thailand, the report concluded.

CHINESE CONSUL DROPS IN

The visit by Amb Afzal followed Chinese Consul General in Songkhla, Wang Zhijian, paying a courtesy visit to Governor Sophon at Provincial Hall on May 21.

According to an official report of the meeting, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening Thai-Chinese cooperation, particularly in tourism,


infrastructure and sustainable urban development.

The meeting was attended by senior local officials, including Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum and Tourist Police Division 3 Superintendent Pol Col Naraphon Wattanagornthawi, along with representatives from Phuket Immigration, the Phuket Chamber of Commerce and the Phuket office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT Phuket).

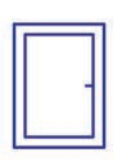




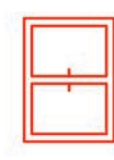
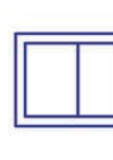
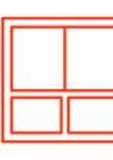








During the talks, Mr Wang praised Phuket’s role as a key driver of Thailand’s tourism sector and highlighted China’s willingness to support projects in areas where it holds expertise, such as infrastructure development and tunnel construction, said the official report of his visit.

Governor Sophon welcomed the Consul General’s remarks and expressed appreciation for China’s continued support. He emphasised Phuket’s priority on tourist safety and extended a warm invitation to more Chinese visitors to explore the island.

The Phuket News



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Navigating Thai real estate

Paul Crosio

Thailand's real estate market offers diverse opportunities for foreign investors, yet its legal framework imposes distinct restrictions on land ownership.

Under the Land Code of Thailand (1954), non-Thai nationals are prohibited from owning land outright. However, structured alternatives exist to enable foreign participation while adhering to statutory requirements. Here, we explore permissible land-use and ownership avenues, while emphasizing compliance with Thai law to mitigate risks.

Long-Term Leasing: A Regulated Approach

Leasing remains the most accessible and secure method for foreigners to utilise land in Thailand. Governed by Section 540 of the Civil and Commercial Code (CCC), leases for immovable property are capped at 30 years. Notably, the Supreme Court Judgment No. 4655/2566 clarified that leases structured as '30+30+30 years' must reflect genuine renewal intent rather than premeditated circumvention of statutory limits.

In the cited case, a 90-year lease agreement, prepaid in full and executed concurrently with renewal clauses, was invalidated for violating Section 540 CCC. The court emphasized that substance supersedes form;

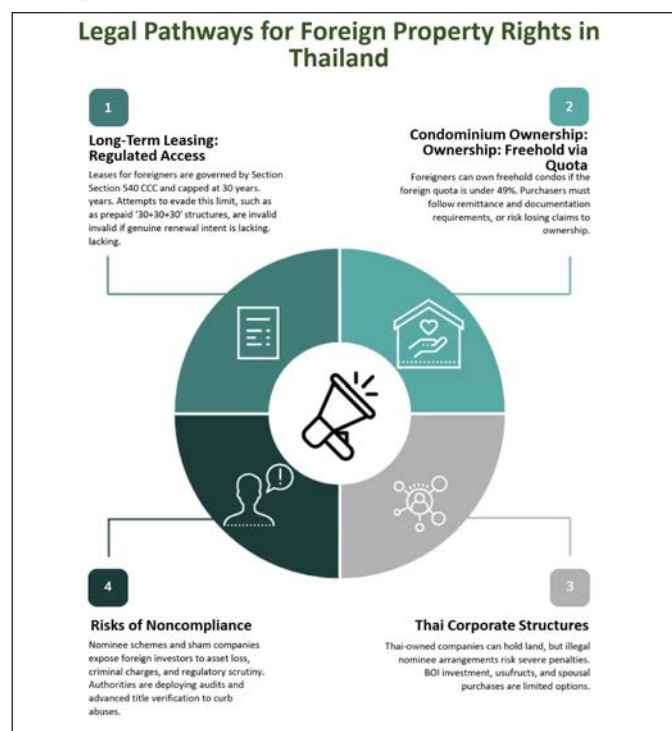
automatic renewals or lump-sum payments for extended periods may render agreements unenforceable.

The Department of Lands clarified its stance through Circular Letter No. MorThor. 0515.1/Vor8867, permitting registration of sequential 30-year leases. However, registration does not shield parties from judicial scrutiny if the arrangement is deemed a disguised long-term lease. Investors must ensure renewal clauses are contingent on future mutual agreement, not pre-arranged commitments.

In short, the Department of Lands will allow registration of sequential 30-year leases between two parties. Still, the lease agreements must state clearly that there is no certainty that the two subsequent 30-year leases will be recognised. The parties can only register and confirm the second lease period after the first 30-year lease has been completed. Generally, this requires complex drafting of the lease and any associated agreements, and at this stage, there is no solid court guidance on the accepted form of the agreement.

Condominium Ownership: Freehold Rights Under Quota

Foreigners may acquire freehold condominium units under the Condominium Act B.E. 2522 (1979), provided foreign ownership does not



exceed 49% of a project's total floor area. To qualify, purchasers must remit funds internationally and obtain a Foreign Exchange Transaction Form (TorTor3) from a Thai bank, verifying the foreign-sourced capital. Noncompliance with these requirements may nullify ownership claims.

While condominium ownership offers straightforward freehold rights, investors must verify the project's foreign quota status before purchase. Developers exceeding the 49% cap may resort to leasing unsold units, potentially affecting marketability and returns.

Thai Corporate Structures: Compliance Over Convenience

Establishing a Thai limited company allows indirect

land ownership, provided the entity is majority Thai-owned (minimum 51% Thai shareholders). Under the Foreign Business Act B.E. 2542 (1999), companies must operate legitimate businesses.

Nominee arrangements – wherein Thai shareholders act as proxies for foreign beneficiaries – are illegal under the Land Code, Thai Civil and Commercial Code, and the Anti-Money Laundering Act. Recent enforcement actions, such as the Koh Samui land investigations (2023) and the Phuket Nominee Scandal (2025), underscore severe penalties for violations, including fines up to B1 million, imprisonment and asset forfeiture. Foreign investors must ensure transparent shareholding structures and genuine capital

contributions by Thai partners.

Alternative Acquisition Methods

Spousal Ownership: A Thai spouse may purchase land independently, though foreign partners hold no legal claim unless structured via a usufruct (see below) or a lease.

BoI Approved Investments: Foreigners investing at least B40 million in government-promoted sectors may acquire up to one rai (0.16 hectares) of land, subject to approval by the Minister of Interior under Section 96 bis of the Land Code.

Usufructs: While less common today, usufruct agreements (governed by Sections 1417–1428 CCC) grant usage rights without ownership, though enforceability hinges on the landowner's cooperation.

Risks of Noncompliant Strategies

Nominee schemes and sham corporate structures expose investors to legal jeopardy, including forced divestiture within 180 days, criminal charges, and reputational damage. The Land Code explicitly prohibits such arrangements, and authorities increasingly employ audits and blockchain-based land title verification to detect fraud.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Foreign nationals should prioritise legally sound strategies:

- Opt for condominium ownership within the 49% quota, ensuring compliance with foreign currency regulations.

- Structure leases as sequential 30-year terms without prearranged renewals.

- Establish Thai companies only for bona fide commercial activities, avoiding nominee shareholders.

To navigate this complex landscape, prospective investors are advised to consult licensed Thai legal counsel and reference official resources, including the Department of Lands and the Board of Investment. Using a non-qualified, non-impartial advisor as a source of information is fraught with issues and the potential loss of your investment.

Paul Crosio is a Partner at Formichella & Sritawat Attorneys At Law (www.fosrlaw.com), a Chambers, Asia Business Law and Legal 500 highly rated law firm. Paul specialises in real estate law, foreign direct investment, bankruptcy, and company rehabilitation.

The information in this article is only for general knowledge and learning purposes. This article shouldn't be treated as legal advice. Consulting a qualified legal professional is always recommended. For any questions, contact Formichella & Sritawat at info@fosrlaw.com

46,918 companies flagged as potential nominee businesses

THE COMMERCE Ministry is accelerating its investigation into nominee businesses while aiming to finalise revisions to the 1999 Anti-Money Laundering Act within three months.

After the committee on the prevention and suppression of nominee business and substandard products met on May 21, Commerce Minister Pichai Naripthaphan said relevant government agencies have prosecuted 39,186 cases concerning substandard and illegal products over the past nine months, with total damages of more than B2.07 billion.



Commerce Minister Pichai Naripthaphan. Photo: Bangkok Post

Agencies also collected value-added tax (VAT) of B1.8bn from imported goods valued less than B1,500 per item, Minister Pichai added.

Officials adopted a 'notice and takedown' approach by removing 10,378 illegal products from online platforms.

Mr Pichai said Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra made this issue a priority and directed the Commerce Ministry to take decisive action.

Given rapid changes in the global economy, illegal and substandard products are flooding the Thai market, which affects local

small and medium-sized enterprises, he said.

Regarding the crackdown on nominee businesses, there have been 875 prosecutions, with damages amounting to B15.3bn, said Mr Pichai.

He said the cases were in the sectors being monitored including tourism, real estate, road transport, warehousing, construction and agricultural land trading businesses.

Napintorn Srisunpang, deputy commerce minister, said recent data indicates 46,918 companies were flagged as being potential nominee businesses.

To address this issue, provincial-level working

groups will be set up to ensure comprehensive fact-checking.

The investigation will focus on tracing the origins of funding, assessing the operational capabilities of these businesses and examining any connections to foreign entities.

He said each province is expected to complete the investigations of all high-risk companies within three months, although provinces with a lot of companies on the watchlist may need more time and must report the progress every three months.

Mr Napintorn said the draft amendment of the Anti-Money Laundering

Act is nearly complete, which will allow the authorities to confiscate assets of nominee-related individuals.

The draft will be submitted to the cabinet and parliament for approval, with all processes expected to be completed within three months, he said.

In addition, the Foreign Business Act is under review, with amendments based on recommendations from the Council of State, covering the framework, definitions of nominee businesses and penalties.

Bangkok Post

Medical certificates required for weed use

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Public Health Minister Somsak Thepsutin has confirmed that cannabis users in Thailand will be required to have medical certificates to make sure that the plant is used for medical purposes only.

His announcement is the latest twist in a long and confusing journey towards regulating cannabis use since it was decriminalised nearly three years ago.

"I will improve regulations on cannabis use in Thailand. For example, cannabis smokers may have to show medical certificates. Foreign and Thai cannabis users must have medical certificates," Mr Somsak said at a press conference on May 21 in Bangkok.

"We will order government organisations to keep enforcing the law and not to allow any problems to develop," said the minister from the governing Pheu Thai Party.



A cannabis shop in Bangkok. Photo: Bangkok Post

The key change would require cannabis users to have a medical certificate, with prescriptions issued by licensed medical professionals, including both traditional Thai medicine practitioners and general physicians.

Somsak said he wanted to see the regulation issued by the Ministry of Public Health within 40 days.

Dr Somlerk Jeungsmarn, Director-General of the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine, told the press conference that regulations should make it clear that cannabis use is for medical treatment only.

"In the future, there may have to be medical certificates to prove that users suffer from diseases such as seizures, headache, pain and insomnia," he said.

"There may be restrictions on its use, such as a permitted dosage for one month's use. If the duration of use exceeds one month, that will not be considered for medical purposes and there will be prosecution. As for punishment, I will discuss the possibility of imprisonment," he added.

Decriminalising cannabis has been a flagship policy of the Bhumjaithai Party, which saw the potential for creating a

lucrative cannabis-based economy.

When Bhumjaithai leader Anutin Charnvirakul was the Minister of Public Health in the government of Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, he issued a ministerial regulation removing cannabis from the national list of narcotic drugs.

But few other regulations existed to govern cannabis usage, and a free-for-all ensued, with recreational use skyrocketing and weed shops sprouting up all over the country.

Bhumjaithai proposed a law to plug the holes, but the Prayut government's term ran out before it could be debated.

The Pheu Thai government last September proposed a new bill to regulate the cannabis industry and restrict marijuana use to primarily health and medical purposes, the latest effort to rein in recreational smoking after several policy U-turns.

The bill has not yet been introduced in the House of Representatives.

Temple fraud suspects 'amassed a fortune'

NAKHON PATHOM

AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATING a high-profile embezzlement case at Wat Rai Khing have uncovered suspicious property acquisitions worth more than B40 million within a single year.

Records also show Aranyawan Wangthapan, 28, attempted to purchase a luxury beachfront condo in Pattaya and a villa in Cha-am, worth nearly B7mn in total, before later cancelling the deals, police said.

Authorities noted that nearly all of the acquisitions occurred within a single year – an implausible financial leap for someone whose previously declared income came from running a vegetable stall with her boyfriend in front of a garment factory, earning just B30,000 per month.

She reportedly transitioned into real estate brokering in late 2024, only months before her arrest by the Cyber Crime Investigation Bureau for alleged involvement in illegal gambling websites. Police



Aranyawan. Photo: Bangkok Post

are investigating whether her relationship with the former abbot played a role in the property acquisitions.

Meanwhile, investigators are also looking into the assets of another key figure, identified as Patcharaporn (no surname given), and her husband, Chief Petty Officer 1st class (CPO1) Chatchai – an influential couple at Wat Rai Khing.

Police found the couple owned 23 vehicles, including six luxury cars – such as a Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Mini Cooper and Hyundai – along with properties worth over B100mn. They also operate a music label.

The Anti-Money Laundering Office (Amlo) is currently working to trace the origins of these assets.

Bangkok Post

Administrative Court cannot force Yingluck to pay rice compensation

BANGKOK

THE ADMINISTRATIVE COURT says it has no authority to order former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra to pay B10 billion in compensation for her administration's failed rice-pledging scheme, noting that it is the responsibility of other authorities to do so.

The court issued a statement on Monday (May 26) clarifying the legal basis in Yingluck's case after Yingluck and her common-law husband, Anusorn Amornchat, requested the court to revoke the compensation order.

The case involving Yingluck stems from a Finance Ministry order, which held her liable to pay B35.7bn. This constituted an administrative order requiring payment, the court said in its statement.

If such an order is not complied with, the Finance Ministry and other related agencies have the authority to enforce the order through asset seizures or auctions without having to file a lawsuit in court, the court explained.

However, if an administrative order is believed to be unlawful, it may be challenged in the Administrative Court, the court said.

In this case, the plaintiffs – Yingluck and Mr Anusorn – requested the court to revoke the order, it said. Therefore, the



Yingluck. Photo: Bangkok Post

case falls under a category of disputes in which an agency or official is alleged to have issued an unlawful order, and the court's authority is limited to only annulling the order, either wholly or in part.

The court emphasised that it does not have jurisdiction to order the plaintiff to pay compensation to the defendants.

Nine defendants are named in this case, including PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the Finance Ministry and the Legal Execution Department. They are tasked with issuing a new order and carrying out actions that comply with the court's ruling, the court said.

In its ruling on May 22, the Supreme Administrative Court found parts of the disputed order unlawful and revoked only the portion of the Ministry of Finance's order that required Ms Yingluck to pay, the court said.

The court did not issue any order requiring Yingluck to compensate the nine defendants. Bangkok Post



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Mission: Impossible series finale fails to fly

David Griftiff

When you think of the *Mission: Impossible* franchise you think of Tom Cruise and epic stunts. So when you hear that *Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning* is perhaps the last film of the series you would expect that the cast and crew would amp up the adrenaline to 11 and go out with a big bang. Right?

Well perhaps that answer to that question should have been wrong, because while I was hoping that this final installment would blow my socks off I am sad to report that while it is okay watch it doesn't do anything that we haven't seen previously.

Set only a month after *Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part 1* the plot here finds Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise - *Top Gun*) still on the run much to the dismay of US President Erika Sloane (Angela Bassett - *Black Panther*) who watches as the world turns on itself as the mysterious Entity creeps through cyber-space taking control of each country's nuclear arms one by one.

Her plea to Ethan doesn't fall on deaf ears and together he, Benji (Simon Pegg - *Shaun of the Dead*), Luther (Ving Rhames - *Pulp Fiction*) and Grace (Hayley Atwell - *Captain America: The First Avenger*) decide to have one last attempt at capturing the elusive Gabriel (Esai Morales - *La Bamba*) and using him to ascertain how to stop the Entity.



Tom Cruise hanging on in *Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning*. Photo: IMDb

Ethan soon realises that the best way to capture Gabriel is to have the criminally minded Paris (Pom Klementieff - *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2*) on his team and while rescuing her they end up recruiting a young CIA Agent named Degas (Greg Tarzan Davis - *Top Gun: Maverick*) to help with the mission.

The first unusual part of *Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning* is that during the first hour of the film every scene seems to contain the same thing - Ethan meets somebody new, has to convince them that they can trust him and then they take his side. It feels like the screenwriters are just repeating themselves as the film feels like the film is one large video game where they must conquer one level in a bid to go on.

After that the film does feel like it

raises its suspense levels yet at the same time is held back by an influx of unnecessary characters. A great example being Ethan's arrival on the submarine - the audience probably really only needs to know Captain Bledsoe (Tramell Tillman - *Baron's Cove*) and Kodiak (Katy O'Brian - *Love Lies Bleeding*) for the plot to work but they suddenly have a heap of other characters introduced at the same time.

To their credit director/screenwriter Christopher McQuarrie (*Jack Reacher*) and his co-writer Erik Jendresen (*Ithaca*) do let the suspense reign supreme for the second half of the film - but the problem here is that the sequences in the submarine and the bi-plane chase have all been done in a number of other films over the years.

Still it is pretty exciting to see Tom Cruise hanging off a plane like that.

To be honest it is Cruise's presence in this film that saves it. If this plot didn't have the star power and charisma of Cruise to save it then it would have made this film a B-Grade action flick that would have been hidden away on a streaming platform.

The screenwriters also give Rhames, Pegg and Bassett some decent moments but the rest of the cast seem wasted. Atwell and Klementieff aren't really used nearly enough which is a shame considering the skills of the characters set up in the previous films. You would think that Paris's killer instincts would have been used more this time around.

There is no doubt that *Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning* is an okay film to watch but it certainly doesn't reach the dizzying heights of the past films in the franchise. While it may entertain you for awhile it certainly isn't a fitting finale to this series.

3/5 Stars

Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning is currently screening in Phuket and is rated '13'.

David Griffiths has been working as a film journalist for over 25 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He currently hosts a film podcast called *The Popcorn Conspiracy*. He is also a Rotten Tomatoes accredited reviewer and is an alternate judge for the Golden Globes Awards. You can follow him at Facebook: *SubcultureEntertainmentAus*.

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Some 450 thoroughbred horse farms populate the bluegrass region. Photo: Todd Miller



GLOBETROTTER

Todd Miller

Most visitors to the United States flock to the coastal cities. If you seek the 'other America', consider an off-beat visit to the state of Kentucky. I have deep roots in Kentucky and a post-Songkran trip reminded me of the unassuming allure of this state known for bluegrass, horses and bourbon.

THE BLUEGRASS IS GREEN

Let's start with the bluegrass, which is vibrantly green and sweeps across the region's rolling hills. At dawn, this landscape shimmers under a soft, bluish hue, giving this region its name and an enchanting vibe.

Surrounded by 450 horse farms, Lexington is the self-proclaimed horse capital of the world. Many legendary Triple Crown winners and champion racehorses were bred in the area. Horse farm tours, the Kentucky Horse Park and the Keeneland Racecourse – the world's largest and most prominent thoroughbred auction house – are ways to experience Kentucky's horse culture.

GUSSY UP AND LIQUOR UP

I never pass up an opportunity to visit Keeneland during the April and October race seasons. Keeneland adheres to tradition. Here, folks gussy up and liquor up, southern style. Ladies wear outlandish fascinators and gents sport plaid jackets. Everyone trades horse tips while boozing and betting. Win or lose, it's a fine party.

In the General Admission section, you'll rub shoulders among dedicated fans who have no better place to be on a weekday afternoon.

During the recent Spring Meet, my shoulder neighbour advised me to "always bet on the jockey". Not to be outdone in the advice department, a slightly tipsy woman interjected "Takoma is a hot sire!!" She elongated the pronunciation of "sire" as southerners do, before rattling off an encyclopedic knowledge of equestrian statistics.

"Do you see the legs on Velvet Devil?" asks another. Velvet Devil soon won that race.

Banking on the hindlegs proved the most practical tip of the day.

OFF THE GRID

The races are fun, but my favourite way to experience the pastoral bluegrass is

to meander narrow country roads outside Lexington. In the rolling terrain, thoroughbreds forage on expansive, emerald fields framed by iconic white four-board fences. On scenic routes like Old Frankfort Pike or Paris Pike, you'll pass historic farms with names like Calumet and Claiborne, which have bred champion racehorses for generations.

If you want to go off the grid – not just the tourist grid, but the electrical grid – venture further east, toward Carlisle. Many bluegrass towns are sleepy, but Carlisle is near comatose. It's the kind of place where everyone knows your name, your business and probably what you had for breakfast.

For a taste of authentic America, head into Dick's on Main, facing the county courthouse that anchors the town square. At lunchtime it's a lively scene, when seemingly the whole town shows up. Patrons wear overalls, boots and the occasional red 'Make America Great Again' hat. And they usually greet strangers with a bubbly, "How ya doin'?"

In downtown Carlisle, you'll likely see horses and buggies. Amish families began moving into the area two decades ago in search of affordable farmland. The Amish eschew modern technologies in favour of maintaining traditional ways of life. They dress modestly – women wear bonnets, men broad-brimmed hats – and get around town on horse-drawn buggies. The rhythmic clip-clop of hooves striking the country roads is a familiar sound. Driving on the backroads, it's easy to spot an Amish farm by the presence of horse-powered farm equipment and the absence of electrical power lines.

THE NATIVE SPIRIT

Just as Napa Valley and Bordeaux are pilgrimage sites for wine lovers, Kentucky stands as the undisputed home of bourbon.

Bourbon is a distinctly American whiskey made primarily from corn and aged in new charred oak barrels. There are more bourbon barrels than people in Kentucky. The state produces 95% of the world's supply, thanks to limestone-rich waters.

There are 60 distilleries scattered across the bluegrass on The Bourbon Trail. Maker's Mark and Jim Beam are the heavyweight distilleries, but there are many smaller stillhouses to explore the tastes, scents and personalities of Kentucky firewater.

Recently I visited Woodford Reserve, a modern premium brand with pedigree. The distillery, a national historic landmark, is surrounded by gorgeous thoroughbred farms, not far from the

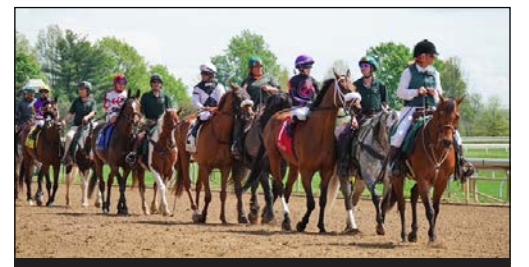
well-preserved 19th century railroad town of Midway.

Touring the distillery, I learned the maturation process determines 100% of bourbon's colour and half of its taste. The morning tour was followed by a five-flight tasting. It was just past 10am and Caine, our guide, suggested savouring each glass. "Don't 'spring break' it," he counselled. On the first pour Caine asked, hopefully, "Anyone picking up mint or eucalyptus in the nose of that glass?" But this zealous group was already spring breaking it, and on to the next glass.

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



Amish communities eschew modern technologies and populate the area around Carlisle, Kentucky. Photo: Todd Miller



Horses heading to the starting gate at Keeneland. Photo: Todd Miller



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

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POP QUIZ

- Which airport in the United States was the busiest by passenger volume in 2024?
- What was the name of the ancient Egyptian sun god?
- What is the primary ingredient in the Italian dessert tiramisu?
- As of May 2025, which is the highest ranked film by viewers on movie site IMDb?
- What was the middle name of Argentinian football star Diego Maradona?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

- Virus type
- Mitts
- Sea eagle
- Pine exudation
- Unbending
- Aggravate
- Madonna hit
- Give
- Earache
- South African org.
- Yemeni port
- Standard of living?
- Witch's broom
- Italian turnover
- Desert
- Football Hall-of-Famer Hein
- Take night classes, e.g.
- Bossy remark?
- Ties
- Stance
- Cavalry weapon
- Eye sores
- Ice melter
- Mad. ____
- Engine enclosure
- Lily family member
- Be independent
- Sundae topper
- Ripens

Down

- Home built in a day?
- Colorless solvent
- Jellies
- Demoiselle
- Needle point?
- Ski trail
- Indo-European
- Seventh anniversary gift
- Tight-fitting
- Unreal
- Spawn
- Valueless
- One with a pole position?
- Settler's building material
- Cambodian currency
- Early pulpit
- "Where the heart is"
- Turow book
- Theme of this puzzle

- It fits in a lock
- Masked critter
- Alimentary canal orifice
- Testify
- Actress Campbell
- Turn red, perhaps
- Pucks
- Kind of court
- Floral arrangement
- Deteriorate
- Watering hole
- Sinew
- B-52 org.
- Whalebone
- Come about
- Brought down a mast
- More cunning
- At ____ for words
- Moldovan moolah
- Wrap
- Therefore
- In a muddle
- Coxcomb
- Part of B.C.E.
- Just out
- Dashboard abbr.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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59						60					61			
62						63					64			
65						66					67			

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, Atlanta, Georgia; 2) Ra; 3) Mascarpone cheese; 4) The Shawshank Redemption (Average score of 9.3 based on 3 million ratings); 5) Armando

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

3.05
metres (10 feet) is the regulation height of an NBA basket

42
dots appear on a pair of dice

202
metres is the depth of Dean's Blue Hole in the Bahamas, the world's deepest sinkhole

5,895
metres is the height of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania

61 million
paggers were in use in 1994.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW

Sunset parasail at Kamala Beach. Photo by Josie Burgess

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

This week in history

May 30, 1631
Publication of *Gazette de France*, the first French newspaper.

May 31, 1859
The clock tower at the Houses of Parliament, which houses Big Ben, starts keeping time.

June 1, 1980
Cable News Network (CNN) begins broadcasting.

June 2, 1692
Bridget Bishop is the first person to be tried for witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts; she was found guilty the same day and hanged on June 10.

June 3, 1937
The Duke of Windsor marries Wallis Simpson.

June 4, 1989
The Tiananmen Square protests and massacre are suppressed in Beijing by the People's Liberation Army, with official estimates stating between 241 and 10,000 dead.

June 5, 1949
Thailand elects Orapin Chaiyakan, the first female member of Thailand's Parliament.

Source: Wikipedia

Big Ben.

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FRI 30 MAY



Wine Snobs - A musical Comedy by Jim Newport

Theatrx presents a deliciously silly new comedy! Step into 1990s Napa Valley, where chaos erupts at a peaceful vineyard when a glamorous jet-setting couple – and their wine-sniffing dog Randy – turn up uninvited. May 23, 25, 29, 30 & June 1. Dinner, theatre and selected beverages included. Brought to you by Theatrx Group, in collaboration with Junkyard Theatre. Expect sharp wit, catchy tunes, and high-energy comedy. Bookings - theatrxphuket@gmail.com



Joint Chambers Phuket Members Briefing

Phuket's Infrastructure Development: Challenges and Future Prospects. This high-level session will explore Phuket's urban transformation, economic expansion, and sustainable growth – bringing together policymakers, urban planners, developers, and investors for an insightful discussion. Featured Speakers: Rathawat Kuvijitruwan (Job) – SVP, Advisory & Asset Management – Asia, JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group, Jon Cannon – SVP, Hotel Asset Management (Thailand & Vietnam), Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL). 17:00 – 18:00 hrs. Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort. Cost: Free of charge for Phuket Sundowners attendees. To book contact - office@austchamthailand.com



AustCham Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Swedish Chamber, will host the Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners from 18.00 - 21.00 hrs., at Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort. Join us for a wonderful night of making new connections and catching up with familiar faces in the Australian-Thai business community in Phuket. 650 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members, 1,200 THB for non-members. To book contact - office@austchamthailand.com



Friday Mussels Night

6 PM onwards: Belgian style mussels served with French Fries. All you can eat. Your choice, Your style: Marinere, Selected drinks, Provencale, Garlic & cream, Creamy curry, Blue cheese or Thai style We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 325 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

SAT 31 MAY



Give It Up For Music And Helping Children

Rotary Club of Patong Beach invite you to their White Dinner Gala on May 31 at the ballroom at SAii Laguna Phuket. Starting at 7pm with welcome drinks followed by an awesome buffet with assorted beverages until 11pm. Proceeds go to the RCOBP service projects for children. Tickets - THB 2,500 per person, reservations required. For bookings please contact Claudia on rotaryhelpthechildren@gmail.com

SUN 1 JUN



Sunday Roast

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

MON 2 JUN



Monday BBQ Night

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

WED 4 JUN



Wednesday BBQ Night

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

FRI 6 JUNE



AustCham Thailand Phuket CEO Breakfast Briefing

AustCham Thailand is pleased to invite you to the Phuket CEO Breakfast Briefing on topic of "From Pills to Thrills: The Spectrum of Healthcare" and "With deep roots in Phuket & an eye on the future", bringing together influential leaders and forward-thinking executives for a morning of insights, networking, and strategic discussion. 08:30 - 10:00 hrs at Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town. 1,100 THB for AustCham members, 1,300 THB for non-members, please contact executivedirector@austchamthailand.com



BCIS Phuket Open Day

Discover BCIS Phuket – BCIS Phuket warmly invites families to our Open Day on Friday, 6th June at 9:00 AM. From Nursery to Year 13, explore what makes our school a leading international learning community on the island. Join us for an engaging morning where you can: Explore our purpose-built Early Years, Primary, and Secondary campuses Experience the BCIS buzz with real classroom learning and exciting student showcases Enjoy a relaxed coffee and conversation with our friendly admissions team Whether you're new to Phuket or looking for a fresh start for your child, come and discover a school that values curiosity, connection, and creativity. BCIS Phuket, Chalong. 063 473 8800 - admissions@bcisphuket.ac.th Register now and be part of something extraordinary. Explore • Connect • Discover at BCIS Phuket



Grow Boating Evening - June 2025

We look forward to seeing you at the June event at Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm. Drinks sponsorship for the evening is available. There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. Find us at facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/

SAT 7 JUNE



Charity Dinner at Bucha Gallery & Restaurant

An unforgettable Charity Dinner at the stunning Bucha Gallery & Restaurant in Chalong. Savour the intense flavours of Pak Pha Nang, Southern Thai Cuisine. Enjoy a sumptuous four-course dinner, live entertainment and the chance to win fantastic raffle prizes throughout the night. Seats are limited for this intimate soirée – reserve yours today with a donation of 2,200 Baht by contacting Tina@phukethasbeen-goodtous.org

TUE 10 JUNE



United Legends Supporting Emerging Thai Soccer Stars

Between the 10th and the 15th June 2025 three Manchester United Legends will be coming to Thailand to support 'Copa Tailandesa' 2025, a youth football academy tournament taking place at Arena, Hua Hin. Brian McClair and his United friends will also be meeting locals, fans and players at a Legends dinner on the 14th June at Avani+ Hotel. Tickets are now on sale now at 2950 Baht. facebook.com/copatailandesat

FRI 13 JUNE



Phuket Business Networking - June 2025

Make sure to bring lots of business cards, as getting to know each other is what PBN is all about. A small entry fee, THB 500 per person, that includes the first 3 drinks and pizza. Location - Oasis Bar, Koh Kaew, starting 5pm. Register your attendance here - facebook.com/phuketbusinessnetworking or call Jason - 086 479 7471.

SAT 19 JULY



100 Legends Summer Ball 2025

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

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COLLECTIVE ART EXHIBITION

HeadStart International School, Phuket is thrilled to announce the opening of the expanded GCSE and A-Level Art Exhibition at the Phuket Cultural Centre, Rajabhat University. This special exhibition showcases the hard work, creativity and dedication of their talented students over the past two years. It is an exciting opportunity to witness the artistic achievements of the young artists in a professional setting. The Grand Opening Ceremony was held on Friday, May 23 with live music performances by their Performing Arts students. For more details - headstartphuket.com



SKÅL PHUKET GOES PARISIAN – A NIGHT OF STYLE & CONNECTIONS

Held at the Hilton Garden Inn Bangtao on Thursday May 22, General Manager Marie Berthe and team welcomed members and guests for an evening of French flair and island charm. It was a night of tropical vibes mixed with French elegance. Wonderful food, flowing drinks and warm connections all added to make the evening memorable. To find out about Skål Phuket and next months dinner, visit facebook.com/SkalPhuket

Sadom pips Poom to win Korean Open

GOLF

THAILAND'S SAdom Kaewkanjana put an end to a three-year wait for another victory on the Asian Tour after winning the Kolon Korea Open last Sunday (May 25).

Sadom closed with a combative one-under-par 70 to defeat compatriot Poom Saksansin by two shots at the unforgiving Dunes Course La Vie Est Belle golf club.

The victory also saw Sadom move to the top of the Asian Tour Order of Merit, overtaking Mexico's Carlos Ortiz and American Ollie Schniederjans.

It was Sadom's first success since his memorable win in another of the region's National Opens, the Singapore Open, in 2022.

"I'm very happy. It is a big honour to win this event – it's one of the biggest in the region," he said afterwards.

Sadom becomes the third Thai to win this



Photo: Korea Golf Association

event after Thongchai Jaidee in 2000 and Jazz Janewattanamong in 2019.

Korean Songgyu Yoo claimed third place after shooting 72, while Hong Kong's Taichi Kho finished strongly, carding the lowest round of the week, a 64, to end in share of fourth with a group of seven players that included Zimbabwe's Scott Vincent and 19-year-old Korean amateur star Minsu Kim – the reigning Korea Amateur and Taiwan Amateur champion.

The Asian Tour's next stop is the International Series Morocco. The US\$2million (B65mn) event will be played at Royal Golf Dar Es Salam from July 3-6. *Asian Tour*

Lando's 'dream' Monaco win

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Lando Norris trimmed McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri's lead in the drivers' world championship to three points with a controlled maiden triumph at a chaotic and tactical Monaco Grand Prix last Sunday (May 25).

In a race heavily influenced by the introduction of a mandatory requirement for two pit stops by each driver, Norris managed to focus on his task and turn his 11th pole position into the sixth win of his career.

Norris resisted intense pressure to claim his deserved victory, his first since Australia's season-opening race, to finish 3.131 seconds ahead of Ferrari's local hero Charles Leclerc with championship leading McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri third. Max Verstappen finished fourth.

"It's a long, gruelling race, but good fun. We could push for quite a lot of the race, but in the last quarter, I was nervous with Charles behind and Max ahead," said Norris.

"But we won in Monaco and it doesn't matter how you win. For me, an amazing weekend. This is what I dreamed of when I was a kid, so I achieved one of my dreams."

After eight of this year's 24 races, Piastri has 161 points, Norris 158 and Verstappen 136. Mercedes' George Russell is fourth on 99 after finishing



Norris leads the field on his way to victory in Monaco. Photo: AFP

11th. In the teams' competition, McLaren lead with 319 ahead of Mercedes on 147, Red Bull on 143 and Ferrari on 142.

Norris became the first McLaren winner in Monaco since Lewis Hamilton, in his first title-winning season of 2008.

Amid widespread 'gamesmanship' as teams asked one driver to slow and hold up the traffic to create a pit-stop window for the other, the race featured much cosmetic incident, but it was very different from the oft-procesional events of previous years.

"It's not the way we want to go racing," admitted Williams team boss James Vowles who had instructed Carlos Sainz and Alex Albon to

dawdle deliberately on their way to top 10 finishes as did the RB pair French rookie Isack Hadjar, who came home sixth, and Liam Lawson, eight.

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton was fifth in the second Ferrari after starting seventh.

As a result of Albon's slow pace, both Mercedes drivers George Russell and Kimi Antonelli felt forced to cut the chicane to avoid a collision. Russell declined to give the place back and was hit with a drive-through penalty.

"That's Monaco and it's how the game goes," said Russell. "The only way to score points. You are damned if you are and damned if you don't. It's a bit of a flawed system."

Tour de France to go through Montmartre

CYCLING

THE TOUR DE FRANCE will make three circuits of the historic Paris district of Montmartre on its last stage this year in what organisers said would add a competitive finale to the world's greatest bike race.

The new format of the final stage on July 27 introduces an outside possibility that the leading contender could crash out, adding suspense to what had traditionally become a procession into the French capital.

The riders will for the first time on a Tour de France race a total of 16.8km in Montmartre before the peloton heads to the Champs-Élysées where it will complete three circuits, instead of the previous eight.

The change prolongs the suspense because a break-away on the narrow, cobbled streets of Montmartre could tempt a few adventurous



Photo: AFP

riders to join and force the big guns to follow them.

The circuit will climb Rue Lepic in Montmartre and pass the Moulin Rouge cabaret made famous by 19th century artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec before the steep ascent to the domed Sacre Coeur Basilica.

The 117th edition of the race begins on July 5 in the northern French city of Lille, contested by 184 riders covering 3,320km over three weeks.

The concluding 21st day of competition culminates in an eight-lap sprint of the Champs-Élysées, the French capital's most famous boulevard, with the finish in the shadow of the Arc de Triomphe. *AFP*

ONE Championship packing a punch for Thai tourism

MMA

ONE CHAMPIONSHIP CHIEF executive Chattri Sityodtong says martial arts promotion does more than organise fighting competitions in Bangkok – it is now a key engine for Thailand's tourism economy.

According to a new report commissioned by Nielsen and shared this month, ONE Championship generates an estimated US\$470 million (B15.3 trillion) annually in economic value for Thailand through its slate of combat sports events, including its primetime cards at Lumpinee Stadium.

Chattri described the findings as a "validation" of what he already believed.

"Without a doubt, ONE is the largest and most consistent driver of tourism, investment and awareness for Thailand on the global stage via our weekly broadcast to more than 190 countries and our rabid fan base of 500 million people around the world," he said.

"Our live events, coupled with our superstar heroes and global content engine, continue to drive Thailand's economy forward and bring prestige, honour and glory to Thailand."

The Nielsen study in April 2025 estimated that ONE's monthly primetime events under the ONE Fight Night banner generate nearly \$7mn in economic value per show,



ONE Friday Fights 107 on May 9. Photo: ONE Championship

while its weekly Friday Fights series contribute another \$7mn each week.

The biggest impact comes from numbered events, such as January's ONE 170 at Impact Arena, with nearly \$21mn in estimated value per show.

The report found 82% of international fans travelled specifically to attend a ONE event in Thailand, with 65% extending their trips beyond Bangkok to explore other parts of the country.

Major tourist markets include Australia, the US, France, the UK, and Canada – nations where ONE has been aggressively expanding its broadcast and content reach.

"While I knew intuitively that ONE has been the single biggest driver of tourism in the Tourism Authority of Thailand's '5Fs' [food, fashion, fight, film and festivals] vision, I am happy Nielsen quantified our contribution to Thailand," said Chattri.

Nielsen also reported that the retail and leisure sectors have seen

the biggest benefits, pulling in \$105mn annually from ONE-related activity, followed by accommodation (\$54mn) and food and beverage (\$38mn).

The timing of the report may prove significant as Thailand faces growing regional competition. Vietnam posted record growth for international visitors last year, with some travel analysts suggesting Hanoi and Da Nang could soon eclipse Bangkok and Phuket as Southeast Asia's top destinations.

As traditional tourism hubs battle rising costs and changing consumer habits, sports entertainment has emerged as one of the few sectors offering consistent international pull.

ONE's strategy in Thailand, built around frequent shows, homegrown Muay Thai heroes such as Stamp Fairtex and Rodtang Jitmuangnon, and a prime broadcast footprint, is now being held up as a potential blueprint for sports tourism.

Bangkok Post

Premier League season ends in dramatic fashion

FOOTBALL

AFP

Manchester City, Chelsea and Newcastle secured places in next season's Champions League after a dramatic final day of action in the Premier League last Sunday (May 25).

A record-equalling 20th league title for Liverpool and relegation for Ipswich, Leicester and Southampton had long since been decided, leaving the focus of attention on the battle for European places.

Liverpool and Arsenal had already secured their place in the Champions League by finishing in the top two, while Tottenham will join them after winning the Europa League on May 21.

City ensured a disappointing season did not end in disastrous fashion by qualifying for Europe's top competition for the 15th consecutive season by beating Fulham 2-0 to finish third.



Liverpool players lift the Premier League trophy at Anfield. Photo: AFP

Chelsea ended Nottingham Forest's dreams of a first appearance in the Champions League since they were European champions back in 1980 thanks to Levi Colwill's goal securing a 1-0 win at the City Ground.

Forest have to settle for seventh and a place in the UEFA Conference League.

Newcastle narrowly avoided throwing away their place in the top five after losing 1-0 at home to Everton.

However, the Magpies finished fifth on goal difference after Aston Villa were

controversially beaten 2-0 at Manchester United.

The visitors thought they had taken the lead at Old Trafford only for Morgan Rogers' effort to be ruled out for kicking the ball out of the hands of Altay Bayindir.

Villa were furious at the call and were hit with a sucker punch moments later when Amad Diallo headed in Bruno Fernandes' cross before Christian Eriksen's penalty sealed the win.

A place in the Europa League is Villa's consolation for finishing sixth.

There was a mutual guard of honour at Anfield

as Crystal Palace paid homage to Liverpool before the hosts repaid the favour to mark the Eagles' FA Cup victory over City on May 17.

Liverpool's last title celebrations in 2020 took place in front of an empty stadium due to coronavirus restrictions, meaning it was the first time in 35 years they could celebrate lifting the trophy in front of the Reds' support.

Ismaila Sarr slotted home the opening goal after just nine minutes before Mohamed Salah equalised late on.

Tottenham were hammered 4-1 by Brighton to condemn Spurs to a 22nd league defeat of the season and a 17th placed finish.

Arsenal needed an 89th minute winner from Martin Odegaard to beat bottom-of-the-table Southampton 2-1, West Ham were 3-1 winners at Ipswich, Leicester lost 2-0 at Bournemouth and honours were shared between Wolves and Brentford in a 1-1 draw.



Photo: AFP

Spurs edge Man Utd to win Europa League

FOOTBALL

BRENNAN JOHNSON'S scrambled goal ended a 17-year Tottenham trophy drought with a battling 1-0 win over Manchester United in the Europa League final on May 21.

Spurs, who had not won European silverware since 1984, will play in next season's Champions League, while failing to qualify for it is a severe financial set-back for Manchester United.

Despite their triumph in Bilbao, manager Ange Postecoglou's future is still on the line following a shambolic domestic campaign, with Spurs sitting a place below United in the lower reaches of the Premier League table.

The Australian furiously insisted he was "not a clown" on the eve of the

final and had the last laugh on a nerve-racking night at the San Mames, as he made good on his claim to always win a trophy in his second season in charge of a club.

It was a match between teams languishing in 16th and 17th place respectively after dismal Premier League campaigns and that was the essence of it too, played at high intensity but with low confidence and a prize on the line so big it overawed.

Spurs made the breakthrough after 42 minutes when Johnson's attempted flick bounced off Luke Shaw's shoulder, brushed Johnson's boot again and crossed the goal-line in slow motion with Andre Onana unable to claw it out with a desperate arm.

It meant a 21st defeat this season for United and a fourth against Spurs, who claimed their third Europa League trophy. AFP

Thai athlete, 105, unrivalled at World Masters Games

ATHLETICS

SAWANG JANPRAM WAS IN A league of his own at the World Masters Games in Taiwan – at 105 he was the oldest competitor and the only person in his age group.

It meant that Thailand's Sawang was certain to win gold in the men's 100-plus discus, javelin, shot put and 100 metres at the May 17-30 tournament that saw 25,950 athletes from 107 countries compete.

All Sawang had to do on May 22 was finish, and the former school principal reached the 100m line in his solo race in a very respectable 38.55 seconds.

Sawang, a father of five, began exercising at the age of 90, inspired by daughter Siripan and a desire to avoid becoming bedridden like his friends.

Three to four times a week, Sawang joins his daughter to trot on a beach near their home in Rayong.

"I sometimes like to walk, sometimes run," said Sawang, peering through aviator sunglasses as he explained his training regimen.

"Sometimes I do javelin throw, depending on what I have to do for competitions."

Other times, Sawang said he just goes to the local market.



Sawang. Photo: AFP

It's proved to be a winning strategy, with the wiry centenarian winning more than 60 medals on the masters circuit.

Held every four years, the event brings together competitors aged 30 and over from all walks of life for the sheer joy of taking part.

This year's edition was more than twice as big as the 2024 Paris Olympics in terms of competitor numbers.

The next World Masters Games will be in Japan in 2027 after it was postponed twice during COVID-19.

Whether he competes there or in another masters event will be "up to my health", Sawang said.

Before athletics, Sawang used to work on his farm, where he grew durian and rubber trees.

Now he just focuses on sport.

"Exercise makes our life better and we get to meet friends who also exercise," Sawang said.

"It's like our lives are livelier and we do not feel lonely at home." AFP

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Big final day drama unfolds in EPL > p15



Vagabonds beat Gulf Legends at ACG

Scrum action at the ACG in the match between the Phuket Vagabonds and the Arabian Gulf Legends. Photo: Supplied

RUGBY

Anthony van Sleetuwen

The Phuket Vagabonds returned to winning ways as they ran in six tries to one against the touring Gulf Legends at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalang on Saturday, May 17.

Age was just a number in the most recent hit out for the Phuket Vagabonds against a touring collection of Arabian Gulf Legends. Yes, the Legends were predominantly a vets team and yes, they had already subjected themselves to two nights indulging under the bright lights of Bangla Road in Patong. However, it was a welcome chance to return to form for the Vagabonds against

an experienced and hardened squad from the Middle East.

With the annual Phuket International Rugby 11s tournament only weeks away the Vagabonds made the most of the opportunity to work on combinations with a full squad and find their attacking flair.

The Legends made it anything but easy as they consistently challenged the ruck defense with a barrage of bulky ball carriers and an incessant swarm at the breakdown.

It didn't take long though for the Vagabonds to acknowledge that success could be found in the wider channels and the pace of winger Alex Sears found space on the edge leading to the first try of the match. Two more tries followed in rapid succession again

from the outside backs in Thomas Powell and a second to Alex Sears.

The early lead was not without cost, however, as club President Joe Miles succumbed to a nasty gash across the brow, ending his day early. It was a tough day at the office for the forward pack with props Paul Hickey and Darren Parry initially having trouble at the scum before finding their feet against a tenacious Legends tight five.

There was yet more competition at set piece as Vagabond turned Legend Lee Stones kept the Vagabonds line-out honest in an excellent contest throughout the game.

GENEROUS

Not long into the second half, however, seasoned Vagabonds

captain Sten Van Aardt and fly-half Dan Ashburn combined seamlessly in the midfield with Sten bouncing off his right foot and showing a turn of pace to score beside the posts.

More tries followed with impressive new recruits Cillian O'Neil and Shane Buckley once again finding their way to the line following excellent recent performances.

The Legends were not to leave empty handed though as they scored a fantastic long-range try after finding space amongst a broken Vagabonds defensive line late in the second half.

Overall, the Vagabonds were pleased with the hit out and grateful to Lee Stones and the Gulf Legends for making the trip and providing the challenge. Post

game the ACG clubhouse was filled with praise for all that made the effort as both teams bonded over adult beverages and a barbecue feast.

Presentations also included a generous donation of junior playing kit in the Legends strip with the Vagabonds logo for the Phuket Academy squad to utilise in coming fixtures, a heartfelt and generous gift from the Legends. Once again, on another enjoyable Saturday at the ACG Phuket, rugby was the winner!

The Vagabonds will soon be back in action at the Phuket International Rugby 11s, hosted at the ACG next weekend (June 6-7). Spectators are most welcome. If you would like to learn more about the Phuket Vagabonds visit their website at www.phuketvagabonds.com

Prime Minister stokes hopes of a Thai F1 Grand Prix

FORMULA ONE

THAILAND'S PRIME MINISTER Paetongtarn Shinawatra has hinted at good news in the government's persistent efforts to secure a deal for the country to host a Formula 1 street circuit race.

The PM met Stefano Domenicali, CEO of Formula One Group, at the Monaco Grand Prix last Saturday (May 24) to discuss the feasibility of hosting an F1 race in Thailand before touring the track and observing F1 practice sessions.

The PM later posted on her X account, describing the outcome of her meeting with the Formula

One Group as an important step forward and good news for the Thai people

"Tourism is a key economic engine, and the government aims to expand beyond seasonal tourism by investing in 'Man Made Destinations' to host global events such as F1," she said.

Organising an F1 event in Thailand would spur major investments – from road upgrades to accommodate racing, to building grandstands, paddocks and installing electronic and digital infrastructure, she said, adding these projects would create big employment opportunities.

Ms Paetongtarn said she updated Mr Domenicali on efforts by Thai agencies to study the necessary conditions, limitations and opportunities for hosting the race. Their discussions also included site feasibility and broader collaborative processes between F1 and the government.

While at the Monaco circuit, the PM also met Thai drivers Alex Albon and Tanapol Inthrapuvasak. Both expressed their willingness to return to Thailand to promote the sport, raise its profile and help nurture the next generation of Thai F1 drivers, she said.

In March 2025, Mr Domenicali visited Thailand and met Ms

Paetongtarn and Tourism and Sports Minister Sorawong Thienthong. The visit followed earlier talks initiated by former prime minister Srettha Thavisin in 2024. Both governments and F1 executives have since explored locations, including potential use of land near U-Tapao Airport for the race.

At the time, the Formula One Group CEO said that hosting an F1 race in Thailand would present a wide range of opportunities and offer benefits in several areas, particularly in the economy and tourism.

He added that Thailand has a strong motorsport fan base and could leverage the popularity of



Photo: Bangkok Post

well-known drivers to promote additional related activities, while saying F1 could further support tourism by encouraging visitors to extend their stays in Thailand.

He said the Formula One Group would work closely with the government to explore the feasibility of the project and to create a memorable experience for motorsport fans around the world. *Bangkok Post*