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# THE SLIDE

An aerial view of the landslide on the hill behind Wat Kata that struck early last Friday (Aug 23). Photo: PR Phuket

## CONSTRUCTION NAMED ‘SIGNIFICANT FACTOR’ IN DEADLY LANDSLIDE

**Natnaree Likidwatanasakun & Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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**S**opon Thongsai, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office (DDPM Phuket), has named construction at the bottom of the hill a ‘significant factor’, but not the sole cause, of the deadly landslide that killed 13 people behind Wat Kata early last Friday morning (Aug 23).

“Construction activities are considered a significant factor contributing to the devastating impact of the landslide,” Mr Sopon told *The Phuket News* on Monday (Aug 26).

“Imagine the vibrations caused by a moving car... Now amplify that

by the weight of heavy machinery, digging and building. These actions destabilise the soil, making landslides more likely and more destructive,” Mr Sopon explained.

The location of the landslide, behind Wat Kata, was not even on DDPM Phuket’s list of areas at risk of landslides or flooding, Mr Sopon admitted.

“I admit that Karon was overlooked as a potential landslide risk, with our initial focus solely on Kamala,” he said.

“The landscape has changed significantly over the years, with a rise in housing developments and construction activities. I believe this is a critical issue that needs to be ad-

ressed,” Mr Sopon noted.

However, Mr Sopon argued the cause of the landslide was not solely construction, but a combination of factors, not least of which was the 200 millilitres of rainfall that fell on the area in a period of about six hours.

“A large amount of rainfall in a short period caused the soil to absorb excess moisture, leading to its collapse... When intense rain falls in a short time, it can trigger landslides,” Mr Sopon said plainly.

“Also, the area has a steep slope combined with rocky terrain, which increases the risk of erosion and makes the ground more slippery and unstable. As a result, the environmental factors also play a significant role in

increasing the landslide risk in the area,” he added.

Mr Sopon specifically highlighted the areas of Karon, Kamala and the Khao Phanthurat hills at the western fringes of Koh Kaew as areas at risk of landslides during any potentially similar heavy downpours.

“We will focus on issuing clear warnings through various channels, including warning notices, a LINE group, village headmen and public news updates to ensure the information reaches everyone effectively,” Mr Sopon said.

### DEADLY

The disaster began with relentless rainfall from late last Thursday night...

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Locals go wild about dugongs in Rawai > p5

# Deadly landslide claims 13 lives

Continued from page 1  
...(Aug 22) through to last Friday morning. The deluge saw a total of 200 millimetres of rain fall on the area, Governor Sophon on Monday explained to Pheu Thai MP Dr Sriyada Palimaphan, who had been dispatched to Phuket by Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra.

By 5am last Friday, a massive mudslide occurred on the hill behind Soi Patak 2, burying homes and claiming the lives of 13 people. Among the dead were a Russian husband and wife, two Thai women (one from Surat Thani and one from Sakon Nakhon) and nine Myanmar nationals.

Governor Sophon noted that the landslide struck a steep area where homes, particularly those of Myanmar workers, were not securely constructed.

Rescue efforts were launched immediately. The search for bodies, with the use of rescue dogs, was officially terminated at 1:45pm last Saturday as no additional missing persons were reported.

In total, 817 people from 260 households in three sub-districts and nine villages were affected by the landslide and flooding brought on by the deluge, with 19 other people injured, Governor Sophon said.

The Phuket Provincial Office, headed by Governor Sophon, was quick to declare the following areas as disaster zones: Moo 1, 2, 3, 4 in Karon; Moo 1, 2 in Rawai; and Moo



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

8, 9, 10 in Chalong.

Provincial officials were urgently working to assist both Thai and foreign victims. Coordination with the consulates of the deceased foreign nationals underway, and arrangements are being made to cremate the bodies of seven Myanmar workers in Phuket before transporting the remains back to their home country, Governor Sophon said.

## RELIEF EFFORTS

To restore the affected areas, local administrative organisations are mobilising water spray trucks daily to clean roads and mud-covered regions.

Meanwhile, Karon Municipality formed a working group to provide ongoing assistance to those impacted by the disaster.

Deputy Minister of Interior Chada Thaiset along with other government officials visited the affected areas to provide support and distributed 100 survival kits to disaster victims in Karon.

Various agencies, including the Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command, and local municipalities, are involved in providing ongoing assistance.

A temporary command centre and

evacuation centre were set up at Wat Kittisangkham (Wat Kata) with the collaboration of the Phang Nga Naval Base and Karon Municipality.

Donations of survival kits and drinking water were provided by the Phuket branch of the Red Cross Society, the Big Buddha Foundation, and others. Royal volunteers organised a ‘Big Cleaning Day’ in the affected areas in Karon.

## PREVENTION

Governor Sophon expressed grave concern over the risk of further landslides, revealing that Phuket’s soil structure is vulnerable to such

disasters. Aerial surveys have identified fault lines across all three districts, making the region particularly susceptible during heavy rains.

In response, Phuket authorities have held preliminary meetings to discuss long-term preventive measures, including the planting of ground cover plants like banyan trees and giant leucaena, he said.

The trees, known for their rapid growth and reproduction, will be planted in target areas using seeds provided by the Royal Forest Department, which will be scattered by helicopter. Additionally, plans are in place to construct water-retarding weirs to slow down water flow during the rainy season, Governor Sophon explained.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee told *The Phuket News*, “My main focus right now is on taking preventive and corrective actions. We’re visiting the affected areas to clear and organise water channels to ensure water flows smoothly, which is what we’re currently doing on the ground.

“Secondly, we’ll restore areas that are blocking the water flow by revoking them and returning the land to its natural forest state.

“Third, we’ll implement measures to increase warning levels in high-risk areas. This will help ensure that residents receive timely alerts and can prepare for evacuation or stay informed about potential flooding,” Mr Chalermpong concluded.

# EXAT ready to finance B16bn ‘Patong Tunnel’ project alone

THE EXPRESSWAY Authority of Thailand (EXAT) has confirmed its commitment to proceed with the Kathu-Patong Expressway Project in Phuket, better known locally as the ‘Patong Tunnel’ project, without altering the design or reducing the size of the proposed tunnel.

The decision comes despite recommendations from the Ministry of Transport to consider modifications that could lower construction costs and enhance safety, noted a brief report posted online by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) on Aug 20.

EXAT has sent a formal letter to the Ministry, stating that any adjustments to the tunnel design would require



Image: EXAT

a complete reassessment of the project’s Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

report, a process that could delay the project by at least one year, said the report.

To avoid such delays, EXAT has decided to self-finance the project, with an

estimated budget of B16 billion, the report added.

“The agency is currently exploring funding options, including the possibility of securing loans or issuing bonds,” ONEP noted.

Originally, the project was to be developed through a public-private partnership (PPP). However, due to a lack of interest from the private sector during the bidding process, with the project receiving no bids from contractors, EXAT has proposed to the Ministry of Transport to revise the investment plan, allowing EXAT to take full control of the funding and construction.

The proposal is expected to be submitted to the new Cabinet, whenever that is created, for approval before the end of this year, the report said.

If and when the new Cabinet grants its approval, EXAT will promptly begin the contractor selection process, which is anticipated to take around six months.

Construction is scheduled to start in 2025, with the expressway expected to be operational by 2029, said the ONEP report.

The project aims to alleviate traffic congestion, reduce accidents on Route 4020 (Wichit Songkram Rd) and provide an evacuation route in case of emergencies, it added.

Additionally, the tunnel project will enhance connectivity between Kathu and Patong, supporting local travel and boosting tourism in Phuket, the report concluded.

*The Phuket News*



# Punishment promised in airport corruption probe

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Airports of Thailand (AoT) President Kerati Kijmanawat has ordered disciplinary action be taken against the Deputy Director of Phuket International Airport and three other senior employees following an investigation into alleged corrupt practices involved in a contract to install see-through stickers at the airport in honour of His Majesty the King.

The corruption probe followed a slew of online reports questioning the procurement process involved in the installation of the stickers at the airport.

"AoT is investigating a case involving the installation of see-through stickers at Phuket Airport, where executive-level employees have been found guilty of serious disciplinary offences," said a notice posted on the national AoT website.

"Dr Kerati Kijmanawat, CEO of Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited (AoT), addressed the situation, which was initially reported in



AoT President Kerati Kijmanawat. Photo: AoT

the media. The issue involves the hiring of a company to print and install see-through stickers to celebrate His Majesty the King's 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday on July 28, 2024. The process used was not transparent and did not follow proper procedures," the notice confirmed.

"Recognising the potential impact on AoT's reputation as a publicly listed company, AoT launched an investigation through a fact-finding committee, as per Order No. 1866/2567 dated Aug 6, 2024.

"The investigation, concluded on Aug 16, 2024, revealed three major violations:

(1) setting an unreasonably high median price, (2) using a procurement method that did not comply with the Government Procurement and Material Management Act B.E. 2560, and (3) allowing the contractor to install the stickers before the contract was officially signed," the AoT notice continued.

"As a result, AoT has charged four executive-level employees with serious disciplinary offences related to these issues. A disciplinary committee will be established to determine appropriate punishments, following AoT's

regulations and relevant laws.

"AoT remains committed to upholding principles of good governance, transparency, and accountability to ensure the sustainable growth of its airport operations," the notice said.

The AoT notice did not name the four to face "appropriate punishments", but a report by MGR Online identified them as:

- Jirattikul Eiamhiran, Deputy Director of Phuket Airport (Operations and Maintenance)

- Peera Akkhachai, Director of the Business Support Division at Phuket Airport

- Pakin Sirichan, from the Airport Department (Operations and Maintenance Division)

- Wiwatana Aimchoi, Director of the Supplies Division at Phuket Airport

All four have been reassigned to work at the AoT head office, performing tasks "as directed by AoT".

Airport General Manager Monchai Tanode was not named as involved in the scandal.

# PPAO election set for end of year

THE PHUKET OFFICE OF the Election Commission of Thailand (PEC) has reported its findings on a public feedback survey on redrawing the boundaries of constituencies for seats on the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) Council ahead of the PPAO election to be held in December.

PEC Director Onphin Achivasuk presented the findings at a meeting held at the PEC offices on Aug 20, chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong and attended by other key officials, said an official report of the meeting.

The main agenda focused on the proposed division of 24 electoral districts across Phuket. The breakdown includes 14 voting districts in Mueang Phuket District, seven in Thalang District and three in Kathu District.

The committee reviewed public opinions and suggestions before finalising at least three possible models for the electoral boundaries, ranked by suitability, said the official report.

These proposed models will be submitted to the Election Commission of Thailand



Photo: PR Phuket

by Aug 30. The Commission will then have 60 days to select the most appropriate model for the upcoming elections, the report noted.

However, the official report failed to mention any of the findings presented.

Despite the PEC inviting feedback from local residents from Aug-9-18, the PEC also has yet to publicly reveal any of its findings.

The current terms of the elected members of the PPAO Council and the PPAO President will end on Dec 19, 2024.

Current PPAO President Rewat Areerob, representing the 'Phuket Yatdai Party', was elected to office in the PPAO election held on Dec 20, 2020.

In total, the Phuket Yatdai Party secured 20 of the 24 seats available on the PPAO Council, while the Khon Baan Rao Party secured three seats, and the Gao Na Party secured just one seat. *The Phuket News*

# Officials turn to Chinese expertise with wastewater

PHUKET GOVERNOR SOPHON Suwannarat and a delegation of government and private sector leaders have returned from a visit to three major cities in China to engage in discussions and explore collaborations on wastewater management and waste disposal systems.

The delegation visited the cities Chengdu, Guizhou and Xi'an during the visit from Aug 16-20, said an official report of the tour.

Joining the delegation were Phuket Vice Governor Norasak Suksomboon, former Phuket Chamber of Commerce President Thanusak Phungdet and current President Kongsak Koophongsakorn and Phuket Sports Association President Thammawat Wongcharoenyot, among others.

The intent of the tour was to investigate advanced environmental management systems in China that could potentially be implemented in Phuket, said the report.

During the visit, the delegation met with executives from the China Water Environment Group (CWEG), who provided a comprehensive tour of their facilities, including a solar cell project.

Both parties signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to explore future collaboration in wastewater management.

The group also held discussions with SUS Environment, a company specialising in waste disposal systems, to evaluate the feasibility of adopting similar technologies in Phuket.

The Phuket Provincial Administrative Committee is now considering how local administrative organisations might implement

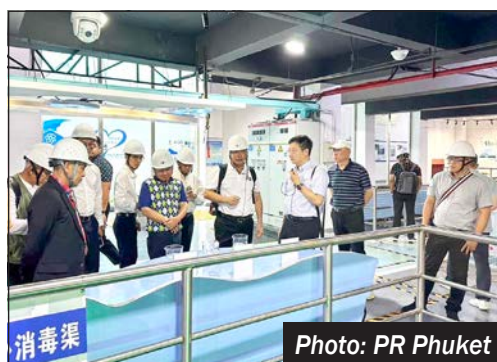


Photo: PR Phuket

these advanced wastewater and garbage management systems to improve environmental sustainability in the province, the report noted.

Governor Sophon said the initiatives could have a significant positive impact on environmental management in Phuket, enhancing the island's reputation as a sustainable tourism destination.

The tour follows Dr Surasee Kittimonthon, Secretary-General of the Office of National Water Resources (ONWR), revealing during an inspection tour of Phuket last year that nearly 55,000 cubic metres of untreated wastewater is released in Phuket each day as the island does not have the capacity to treat it.

Apichart Sirisunthon, chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Land, Natural Resources and Environment, arrived in Phuket on a study tour in March to investigate the island's wastewater woes.

The visit by Mr Apichart followed black wastewater flowing across beaches and into the sea where tourists swim at Patong, Karon, Kamala and Bang Tao. *The Phuket News*



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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 4 m/s

TUE SEPTEMBER 3



High: +35°

Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED SEPTEMBER 4



High: +37°

Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU SEPTEMBER 5



High: +36°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Tourists assaulted on Bangla

ANOTHER INCIDENT of violence on Bangla Rd, Patong, this time early on Aug 21, has drawn attention and criticism after a video clip of the incident was shared widely on social media.

Patong Police noted that the incident began inside the Amfine pub, where a dispute between a group of Kuwaiti tourists and three Thai women escalated at about 4am.

The confrontation allegedly started when one of the Thai women threw alcohol at a female Kuwaiti tourist, leading to a heated exchange between the two groups.

After the pub closed, the argument spilled into the street. The video posted online showed one of the Thai women slapping one of the tourists on the head. The tourist, a man, swung a leg at the woman in a poor attempt to kick her while he was being held back.

As the tourists were walking away, the same woman is seen chasing after them and began hitting the tourists with what appeared to be her shoes. Some people were seen trying to dissuade her, but to no avail.



Screenshot: Supplied

The conflict continued further down the street out of clear view, with bystanders plainly seen trying to keep the two groups apart.

One young man, seemingly Thai, is seen carrying a knife and pointing it at people in a threatening manner.

Local patrol officers intervened and managed to separate the parties involved, escorting them to the police station for further investigation.

The video clip, which lasts 1 minute and 39 seconds, was shared on a popular Phuket-based social media page, sparking outrage among viewers. The post criticised the lack of law enforcement in the area and called for stricter measures to maintain order on Bangla Rd. Some commenters expressed disbelief at the chaos, likening the scene to a "bunch of monkeys fighting".

Eakkapop Thongtub

## MMA fighter investigated for rape at Chalong spa

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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Chalong Police Chief Pol Col Ekkarat Phlaiduang has confirmed that officers are investigating a complaint reporting the rape of a 19-year-old staffer at day spa in Chalong by a well-known MMA fighter training in Phuket.

"Now the case is in the process of investigation, a complaint has been filed, and an accusation has been made. The case is currently under investigation, with evidence being collected to proceed with a lawsuit in court," Col Ekkarat told *The Phuket News*.

"I cannot provide any further details at this time. The case files are confidential, and some information must remain undisclosed until we gather more evidence and have an update," Col Ekkarat added.

Pol Lt Attha Liang, Deputy Inspector (Investigation) at Chalong Police Station, received the complaint on Aug 21.

According to the complaint, the incident occurred at the health spa in a small side street off Soi Ta-iad on Aug 18.

The staffer, a resident of Chalong, told police that she was working at the shop



Chalong Police Station. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub / file

counter when the man, a well-known MMA fighter from Kyrgyzstan, entered the shop at about 1pm.

She opened the sauna and prepared ice for him, then returned to sit at the counter. The man used the service as usual.

Later, at around 5pm, the man walked out to his black motorcycle and spoke to her in English, saying that he had finished with the sauna and ice bath.

She went to turn off the heat to the sauna and then walked back, but the man followed her, kissed her on the mouth, then entered the bathroom. He beckoned her to follow him. When she did, he led her into the second shower room, where he sexually assaulted her. The police report gave explicit details of the incident.

Afterward, the man put on his pants and exited the bathroom. Through a translation app he told the woman to not tell anyone about the incident.

The man then left, driving off on his motorbike.

After the incident, the young woman went to a room next to the shop counter.

The woman told Pol Lt Attha that she was reporting the incident to take legal action.

Regarding the delay in filing the complaint, Pol Col Ekkarat said, "So far, I can say that the victim may have felt fear and uncomfortable disclosing that she was raped."

"The victim may have felt too ashamed or frightened to report the rape to anyone, including her boss or coworkers. It's not uncommon for individuals to keep such traumatic experiences to themselves," he noted.



Photo: Phuket City Police

## Police arrest underpass power cable thieves

PHUKET CITY POLICE have arrested two young men for cutting electrical wires at the Bang Khu Underpass in Koh Kaew in the early hours of Aug 21.

A patrol officer reported that two individuals were seen cutting electrical wires inside the underpass at about 2:48am.

Officers rushed to the scene, where they found the two suspects climbing stairs and using pliers to cut

the wires inside the tunnel.

The suspects – one identified as Preecha Suphawan and the other a 17-year-old minor – attempted to flee on separate motorcycles. However, the police pursued and successfully apprehended them.

The pair were taken to Phuket City Police Station to be charged with damage to public property and the theft, police reported.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Patong taxi dispute ends with stabbing

A DISPUTE BETWEEN two taxi drivers in Patong escalated into violence early on Aug 20, resulting in one of the drivers being stabbed with a knife.

Patong Police were called to the scene, in front of the Novotel Phuket Vintage Park Resort on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, at about 6:45am.

Officers arrived to learn that the drivers, Apinan Bupa, 40, and Rapeepan Sae-Lor, 55, had been involved in an argument that turned violent.

According to witnesses and initial police investigations, the two men had previously been engaged in a heated online exchange within their taxi group.

The dispute revolved around accusations of stealing customers and inappropriate conduct within the taxi queue.

The argument culminated when the two drivers encoun-



Photo: Patong Police

tered each other in person at the taxi queue outside the hotel.

During the confrontation, Rapeepan drew a knife, some 27cm long, wrapped in a blue cloth, and stabbed Mr Apinan once in the abdomen.

Both men were quickly taken to Patong Hospital for treatment. Mr Apinan's stab wound was not described as serious.

Speaking to police from his hospital bed, Mr Apinan recounted the incident. He

claimed that the argument began after he confronted Rapeepan about previous comments made in their online group chat.

Mr Apinan, who is relatively new to the taxi queue, stated that he was unfamiliar with the specific rules and regulations of being a member of the group, which may have contributed to the misunderstanding.

CCTV footage from the scene showed Mr Apinan parking his Isuzu vehicle behind Mr Rapeepan's red car before approaching and appearing to initiate a physical confrontation.

Moments later, Rapeepan is seen pulling out a knife and stabbing Mr Apinan.

Police said they were continuing their investigation into the incident, with charges expected to be filed.

Eakkapop Thongtub



# Phuket explores governor elections

The Phuket News  
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Key Phuket figures last week attended a seminar aimed at exploring and proposing appropriate models and guidelines for the election of provincial governors.

The event, organised by the Foundation for the Promotion of Local Administration in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation of Thailand and the Andaman Natural Resources Conservation Foundation, was held at The Pogo Design Hotel Phuket in Ratsada on Aug 23,

The seminar, titled 'Driving the Origin of the Provincial Governor: Proposals for the Form and Guidelines for the Appropriate Election of the Provincial Governor', brought together various experts and representatives from various areas of society.

Samran Sinthong, Secretary of the Andaman Natural Resources Conservation Foundation, and Naphacharee Jiwananthaprawat, a representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation of Thailand, delivered the welcoming remarks and officially opened the event.

Key presentations included a discussion on the origin and future of the provincial governor role by Prof Dr Kowit Puangngam, project leader and representative of the Foundation for the Promotion of Local Administration, and Suthikiat



Photo: PR Phuket

Angkaburana, a project researcher. Contributions also came from Associate Professor Dr Kitchet Kraiwat, a member of the Academic Council of Walailak University, and Sutej Wuttisak, former Inspector-General of the Ministry of Interior.

Mr Samran highlighted the importance of the seminar in gathering diverse opinions and formulating a comprehensive approach to the election of provincial governors. He emphasised that the insights gathered would be crucial for future efforts to amend or improve the process.

Ms Naphacharee underscored the significance of local government in a democratic system, noting that decentralisation is essential for addressing the specific needs and problems of local communities.

She drew comparisons to Europe-

an models, where local governments play a key role in self-management, suggesting that adopting similar principles in Thailand could greatly enhance local governance.

The seminar presented five proposed models for the election of provincial governors:

- Direct Election of Provincial Governors: Along with restructuring the administrative system to a two-tier structure.

- Direct Election with Limited Regional Power: Maintaining the position of the provincial governor as a central government representative but with reduced powers.

- Transfer of Power to Provincial Administrative Organisations: Electing provincial administrative organisation presidents instead of provincial governors, transferring

duties, budgets, and resources accordingly.

- Pilot Elections in Ready Provinces: Testing the election of provincial governors in select provinces that are ready for this change.

- Hybrid Model: Combining elements of the current administrative structure with a new approach to electing provincial governors.

The seminar concluded with an emphasis on refining these models based on the feedback and opinions of participants, aiming to develop an election system that aligns with the needs and preferences of local communities, particularly in Phuket.

Phuket has for decades championed for its right for self-governance, with pleas falling on deaf ears in Bangkok. Ironically, it must be Bangkok officials who must approve Phuket's right to elect its own governor, just as people in Pattaya do with Chonburi designated a Special Administrative Area.

At last report, Bangkok officials were entertaining the concept of Phuket Town alone being granted status as a special form of local government organisation.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat, himself a Bangkok-appointed official, voiced his support for Phuket to be given 'special administrative status', in April.

Governor Sophon highlighted the pressing need for Phuket to access greater fiscal autonomy.

Currently constrained by a limited budget, he argued that the province's development potential is stifled. Drawing parallels with the administrative structures of Pattaya and Bangkok, he proposed a reformed model whereby Phuket could assume greater control over taxation and budget allocation.

Under this proposed framework, Governor Sophon suggested the establishment of an elected provincial governor, empowered to oversee strategic management while also advocating for a revised system of budget allocation. He proposed a new mechanism by which a portion of provincial GDP and tax revenues would be reinvested locally, fostering healthy competition among provinces to drive economic growth.

While former Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin was in Phuket on Apr 19, Wirintra Paphakityotphat, head of the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) Region 11 branch, which represents Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi, presented a list of four formal requests to the then Prime Minister – the first of which was to permit Phuket become a 'Special Administrative Zone' for the tourism industry in Phuket.

The request was for Phuket to receive a budget allocation of not less than 1-5% of the revenue generated by Phuket's service and tourism sector that is currently handed over to the central government.

## Locals ecstatic over dugongs spotted near Rawai Pier

THE SIGHTING OF DUGONGS NEAR Rawai Pier has been praised as a positive indication of the condition of the marine environment in the area.

Following reports of the dugong sightings being shared online on Aug 20, Rawai Deputy Mayor Nikorn Paphakityotphat, along with municipal officials, arrived at Rawai Pier to confirm the sightings themselves.

Mr Nikorn confirmed the sighting, with an adult dugong observed swimming near the pier, occasionally surfacing for air.

Mr Nikorn expressed his excitement about the presence of the dugong. "As reported by the villagers, we found a dugong near Rawai Pier. We walked around and observed it surfacing. This is a significant event for Rawai and a positive sign of our marine ecosystem's health," he said.

Dugongs, which are herbivorous marine mammals, feed on seagrass, indicating the continued fertility and richness of Rawai's coastal waters, Mr Nikorn said.

"The fact that a dugong has come here shows that our environment is still thriving. Dugongs only come to areas where there is an abundance of the plants they eat, so this sighting is very encouraging," he added.

Local authorities plan to continue monitoring the area and will provide updates on any further developments related to the dugong sighting, he noted.

Irina Demidova of the 'Mermaid Couple Tribe', which provides lessons on becoming a 'mermaid' through underwater modelling and dance, was likewise ecstatic about the sighting.

"There are two dugongs swimming around



Photo: Mermaid Couple Tribe

Rawai Pier in Rawai and looking for seagrass to eat!" Ms Demidova posted online.

"Totally happy and grateful to Kongkiat Kittiwatanawong to inform and Nedrangsee Pranama Chitrat for guiding, informing and helping with SD card for my camera," she added.

"Thank you to Khun Thon Thamrongnawasawat, ชัยสมรภูมิ MONSOONGARBAGE THAILAND, Marat Marine Biologist to always inspire and enlighten. Thank you กรมทรัพยากรทางทะเลและชายฝั่ง to do your job to help marine life!

"I wish dear two dugongs (and more and more) will find a safe space with delicious seagrass and live long and happy... As a mermaid and instructor I will also try to do my best to enlighten people and spread love to underwater life," Ms Demidova said.

"My arms are trembling from happiness to watch with my own eyes and wish we can save more nature as a part of our wonderful and unique planet Earth," she added.

The sighting of the dugongs at Rawai inspired much enthusiasm among local Thais following the DMCR posting a stream of reports and videos of a baby dugong rescued from being stranded at Koh Poda, in Ao Nang District, Krabi, on Aug 10. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

THE PAVILIONS  
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## Complaints over illegal Chinese bus services

THAI BUS OPERATORS face intense competition from Chinese bus operators using nominees and offering lower prices, while more foreigners are illegally working as van drivers serving tourists, according to the Thai Transportation Operators Association.

Wasuchet Sophonsathien, the association president, said illegal foreign operators continue to compete with licensed bus companies, which have not fully recovered from the pandemic.

As more independent tourists and high-end tour groups arrive, particularly Chinese tourists, illegal foreign firms have pivoted from operating big buses to vans or minivans catering to these groups, he said.

Mr Wasuchet said some long-stay foreigners apply for a personal driver's licence or use an international driver's permit to work as drivers serving a small group of tourists, which is illegal. Driving is an occupation restricted for Thais.

Some foreign operators offer both van and bus services by using Thai nominees to register their businesses, he said.

These companies cut



Photo: Bangkok Post

service prices to gain large customer volume and market share, said Mr Wasuchet.

For instance, Thai operators typically offer a bus service from Suvarnabhumi airport to Pattaya priced at B7,000, including fuel cost, but he said Chinese nominees serve the same route by slashing the price in half.

Many of these operators cooperate with foreign agents and operators in their networks, such as hotels and restaurants, to organise tour groups, said Mr Wasuchet.

He said allowing 60-day visa-free stays for 93 nationalities also led to more foreigners working illegally in bus and van businesses to earn income.

Tourists pay for their services through foreign payment applications, making it difficult for Thai authorities to track down their financial transactions for tax purposes, he said. *Bangkok Post*

## Hoteliers oppose B280mn package for online agents

Bangkok Post

Thai hoteliers are opposed to the Cabinet's approval of B280 million to support tourism packages provided by online travel agents (OTAs), fearing most of the income would flow out to foreign platforms, while local operators cannot reap benefits.

Earlier this month, the Cabinet approved an additional budget for the Tourism and Sports Ministry, allocated to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

The budget was prepared for co-operation with nine OTAs, offering promotional packages between August and September.

Thienprasit Chaiyapatranun, president of the Thai Hotels Association (THA), said the projects could not be evaluated based on generating significant tourism income within the country, as the TAT has not disclosed details about the subsidy amounts to each OTA nor their key performance indicators.

Mr Thienprasit said it is unclear how the scheme would attract more tourists to Thailand instead of visiting other countries and the impact in terms of hotel bookings.

Many OTAs in this sector pay taxes abroad as they are overseas listed companies. To earn income, they typically collect 17-30% fees from local hotels.

He pointed out that another government stimulus project that allowed



Photo: Bangkok Post / file

tax deductions for meeting groups in secondary cities in the low season was also unsuccessful.

Many hotels in second-tier cities under the THA reported a revenue increase of less than 5%.

Mr Thienprasit said the government should consider other schemes to boost foreign and domestic tourism instead.

These include providing a cash voucher for tourists, similar to Taiwan's NT\$5,000 handout, which can be used at eligible local operators.

He said the government should consider reviving the 'We Travel Together' co-payment scheme adopted during the pandemic, but limit it to hotels in non-major cities or only on weekdays.

Given the new prime minister and

Cabinet, he said the related ministries should continue strengthening the tourism industry, such as maintaining the visa-free policy and the aviation hub.

He hoped the new Cabinet would consider cancelling the real estate policy to increase the land lease period to 99 years, and extend foreign ownership of condos from 49%.

These measures, announced earlier by former premier Srettha Thavisin, posed a risk of increasing daily room hotels illegally being rented out to tourists, competing with licensed hotels.

Besides raising the minimum wage, the government should increase the meeting and incentive subsidy amount for the public sector, which has remained low for more than 15 years.

## Tourism firms jittery over mpox impact

TOURISM OPERATORS have expressed concerns over monkeypox (now also being called 'mpox') as the first suspected case of a more transmissible strain of the virus was detected in Thailand.

Operators urged the government to extend preventive measures and communicate with private operators and related industries.

Last week, Thailand reported a European patient who travelled to Africa might be infected with the more serious Clade 1b strain of mpox.

The World Health Organisation has declared mpox a global health emergency, but noted it is not "a new COVID" as authorities know how to control its spread.

Adith Chairattananon, honorary secretary-general of the Association of Thai Travel Agents, said tourism operators are demanding clear preventive guidelines and possible scenarios to tackle mpox in Thailand.

"We don't want to face a worst-case scenario, which is a spike of infections and eventually a lockdown, as



Tourists pictured at the Suvarnabhumi airport passenger terminal on April 11. Photo: Varuth Hirunyatheb / Bangkok Post

happened with COVID-19," said Mr Adith. "Preventive measures typically require lower budgets than trying to control an outbreak when it's too late."

He said preparing appropriate measures for the possible spread in the early stages is not an overreaction because the private sector and tourists should be informed of the facts.

Related authorities should also discuss guidelines for tour guides or tour operators who regularly accommodate groups of African tourists.

Thienprasit Chaiyapatranun, president of the Thai Hotels Association, said hotel operators have learned from COVID-19 that any new

virus outbreak is harmful for the industry.

The issue should be taken more seriously because, compared to a few decades ago, the spread of particular diseases might not be a critical matter for people at this level, he said.

Mr Thienprasit said during the administration of former premier Srettha Thavisin, the immigration process at airports had been improved to be faster, but airports should now reintroduce screening measures to prevent importing more cases.

For instance, airports could manage specific gates and areas for flights from Africa and other risk areas, along with screening the travel history of passengers and setting up a disease control point.

Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, deputy governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas at the Tourism Authority of Thailand, said the agency so far had not rated mpox as a critical risk factor for tourism.

*Bangkok Post*

## AoT revenue hits B50bn

AOT HAS REPORTED A SIGNIFICANT financial upturn for the first nine months of the 2024 fiscal year, spanning October 2023 to June 2024.

AoT, which manages six major airports – Suvarnabhumi (BKK), Don Mueang (DMK), Chiang Mai (CNX), Mae Fah Luang Chiang Rai (CEI), Phuket (HKT) and Hat Yai (HDY) – achieved a net profit of B14.91 billion, marking an increase of B9.551bn, or 178.23%, compared with the same period last year.

During the nine months, AoT's total revenue soared to B50.764bn, reflecting a 53.32% increase, AoT reported.

The growth was driven primarily by a 53.59% rise in income from sales and services, totaling B17.567bn. Aviation-related revenue reached B23.268bn, up by B7.31bn (+45.81%), compared with the previous year.

Non-aviation revenue also saw a substantial increase, amounting to B27.078bn (+60.98%), adding B10.257bn more than the same period last year. Total expenses for AoT reached B29.58bn, up by B5.651bn (+23.62%).

AoT President Dr Kerati attributed the strong financial results to the robust recovery in foreign tourism to Thailand and various government measures aimed at stimulating the economy.

Over the nine months, AoT recorded a total of 548,514 flights, an increase of 15.51% from the same period last year, including 308,500 international flights and 240,014 domestic flights. Passenger numbers reached 90.14 million, up by 21.17%, with 54.6mn international passengers and 35.54mn domestic passengers.

Dr Kerati highlighted that AoT had implemented advanced technology and innova-



Photo: AoT

tive passenger service systems across its six airports to improve service efficiency. The improvements significantly reduced passenger processing times, with the average international arrival process now taking just 26 minutes per person, down from the original target of 40 minutes. Similarly, the international departure process has been reduced to 37 minutes per person from a target of 55 minutes, while domestic arrivals and departures have been streamlined to 15 minutes and 25 minutes per person, respectively, from their original targets of 35 and 40 minutes.

AoT also launched a campaign to boost Thailand's tourism market through initiatives aimed at encouraging airlines to establish new flight routes at all six AoT-managed airports, including offering incentives such as discounts on aircraft take-off and landing fees, aircraft storage service fees, and service fees for using the airplane bridge.

"These measures are designed to expand aviation networks and stimulate airlines to introduce new routes, further enhancing Thailand's position as a key travel destination," said the AoT report.

*The Phuket News*



# B6trn flood project revisited

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

A water management project initiated by Yingluck Shinawatra may be revived at a cost of B6 trillion in a bid to combat persistent flooding and drought, Caretaker Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai said last Sunday (Aug 25).

He said the issue is a national priority, so a major investment is required to tackle the problem.

"The matter was first raised by the Yingluck government. In 2011, a budget of B2-3 trillion was set aside for the project. Now, it will cost about B5-6trn to carry out the project," Mr Phumtham said.

"It is a substantial sum of money, but it will be worth it in the long term."

He made the remarks during a visit to the northern province of Nan, where he inspected flood relief operations and provided supplies for flood victims.

Once the new government assumes office, the water management project will be presented for consideration, he said.

Heavy floods impacted five provinces in the North last weekend, namely Chiang Rai, Nan, Phayao, Phetchabun and Phrae, according to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM).

Between Aug 16 and 22, floods claimed the lives of 22 people, 13 of whom were killed in Phuket. The inundation has affected 22 provinces, displacing 30,807 families across the country.

Former prime minister Thaksin



Heavy floods in Sukhothai last Sunday (Aug 25) saw the Yom River overflow parts of the floodwalls. Photo: Sukhothai Municipality

Shinawatra confirmed on Monday (Aug 27) he was set to inspect flooding in Chiang Rai on Tuesday in what will be his first visit upcountry since his daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra was approved as prime minister.

His one-day visit includes a trip to Theung district to give them relief bags and talk to local community leaders. "I will be visiting villagers," he said when asked about the planned trip.

Chiang Rai, severely damaged by flooding, was once one of Pheu Thai's strongest political bases, but in the last two elections it lost some seats to candidates of the Move Forward Party, the predecessor of the People's Party.

Thaksin's visit takes place after a poll carried out by the National Insti-

tute of Development Administration issued on Sunday showed most people did not believe PM Paetongtarn could emerge from the shadow of her father in administering the country.

Meanwhile, heavy rain was forecast to continue for northern, northeastern, central and southern provinces this week, with Sukhothai in the North at risk of major flooding from the rain-swollen Yom River.

The Meteorological Department issued a warning on Monday morning.

It said heavy rain was expected in North, upper Northeast and Central regions, including Bangkok, and most parts of the southern region. It warned of possibly flash flooding from overflowing watercourses and runoff.

## Small airlines urged to follow safety rules following crash

### CHACHOENGSAO

THE TRANSPORT MINISTRY has directed the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) to investigate the cause of a small aircraft crash in Chachoengsao.

Caretaker Minister Suriya Jungrunreangkit ordered the CAAT to probe the cause of the crash of the TFT209 flight on Aug 22 that killed nine people, including its pilot and co-pilot, as the aircraft did not have a black box fitted to provide evidence.

Flight TFT209, operated by the Thai Flying Service Company, crashed in Chachoengsao's Bang Pakong district about 10 minutes after taking off from Suvarnabhumi Airport to fly to Koh Mai Si in Trat province.

Five Chinese nationals travelling as passengers and four Thai crew were confirmed as the victims in the crash.

Mr Suriya also ordered CAAT to impose stricter safety standards on small air carrier operations, es-



The site of the crash. Photo: Bangkok Post

pecially those with older aircraft offering similar charter services to the Thai Flying Service Company.

Suttipong Kongpool, CAAT director, said that the CAAT had acknowledged the ministry's concerns and policy instructions.

At the same time, it has ordered experts to inspect the Thai Flying Service Company's aircraft to find the cause of the incident and emphasised the importance of the observing the highest safety of all sizes of transport aircraft according to international standards.

Although the CAAT already conducts annual airline and ramp inspections, he said additional measures will be taken to emphasise the importance of safety management systems for all operators. *Bangkok Post*

## New Cabinet imminent, says deputy PM

### BANGKOK

THE LINE-UP OF THE NEW CABINET was expected to be finalised by the end of this week, Caretaker Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai said on Monday (Aug 26).

Mr Phumtham, who became acting prime minister following Srettha Thavisin's dismissal by the Constitutional Court on Aug 14, added that the government will immediately get to work after announcing its policy statement before parliament next month.

When the line-up is finalised, it will be submitted to His Majesty the King for royal endorsement. Once approved, the new ministers will be required to take an oath of office before His Majesty the King before they can convene to discuss and announce the policy statement, hopefully in the second week of September, Mr Phumtham said.

Mr Phumtham, a key figure within the ruling party, said the number of candidates submitted by its allies in the coalition exceeds the number of posts available in the Cabinet, which is limited to 35 by the constitution.

"This is because each party is preparing for the possibility of one or more of their candidates being declared ineligible to assume a cabinet post," he said.

He said the Constitutional Court has set a high bar in terms of ethical standards for those who wish to become Cabinet ministers, following its dismissal of ex-PM Srettha for



Phumtham Wechayachai (right) with PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra (centre left) in Bangkok on Aug 22. Photo: Bangkok Post

appointing former convict Pichit Chuenban as a PM's Office minister.

While Mr Phumtham was optimistic that the line-up would be completed by the end of the week, he refused to comment on reports that the Democrat Party, Pheu Thai's long-standing rival, might be invited to join the new coalition government. "I cannot comment on the matter. It will become clear once the new ministers are royally endorsed," he said.

Some reports suggest the Democrat Party stands to receive two ministerial positions, with party leader Chalermchai Sri-on slated to become the Natural Resources and Environment Minister, while secretary-general Det-it Khaothong set to receive a deputy minister position, assuming the party joins.

These posts were supposed to go to the deeply divided Palang Pracharath Party (PPRP), under the leadership of Gen Prawit Wongsuwan, whom sources say is likely to be excluded from the new Pheu Thai-led administration. *Bangkok Post*



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# Throwing youths a lifeline

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

**B**y year's end, the Phuket Veterans, formally known as the International Veterans Association (or IVA), will be looking to hold special courses for young adult volunteers to improve their life skills.

Steve Pearce, founder of the Phuket Veterans, explained that the aim is to empower young adults to complete a series of courses that will teach a variety of survival skills and broaden young volunteers' experiences.

"Young volunteers, of ages 16-19, will be taught basic emergency medical first aid along with a host of skills, including self-reliance in the wilderness," Steve said.

Other skills to be learned through the courses include swift water rescue, rope work and abseiling, river crossing, emergency ground signalling and radio communications, among others.

"The range of skills to be learned encourages and develops problem-solving skills, and to learn how to be an effective member of a team, all of which develops a style of thinking that will serve them well through life," Steve explained.

"It will also be good for their resume with more and more colleges and universities, and employers, around the world now looking for students and graduates who have more than just the



academic credentials," he added.

Phuket Veterans are a group of military veterans and former emergency services professionals from around the world, and who now live, or spend most of their time on Phuket.

"They are primarily a social group, but they are committed to offering assistance to the Phuket community in times of need. They have completed several successful community projects already. Part of the Phuket Veterans group, is a volunteer team named the 'Crisis Response Team' or CRT," Steve noted.

"The CRT would be the volunteers if Phuket was hit by another natural disaster or a major incident involving mass casualties. Revising and updating skills learned during their service, the CRT often train in medical first aid, emergency ground to air signalling,

ropework, communications and self reliance in the wilderness. But you don't need to be a veteran to join this group or attend the training," he said.

When the Tsunami hit Phuket in 2004, many expats volunteered to help and assist those who had been stricken by the wave and the damage it caused. It is difficult for the authorities such as the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) to employ volunteers if their skills and ability to deal with dangerous situations are unknown.

"Phuket Veterans CRT are as much about the safety of their own team, as they are about offering assistance to others," said Steve, who now serves as the CRT Coordinator. "It's an important balancing act, in which there can be no compromise when it comes to our team's safety... Even with the best intentions,

it would be disastrous if we stepped up to assist, and then become a burden or a liability to the authorities."

The CRT in Chalong on Aug 18 trained 12 more volunteers in Swift Water Rescue (SWR) techniques. SWR is a safe way to recover victims and casualties from deep, fast-flowing water. Using newly donated equipment, the six-person teams were put through their paces. Those attending were from England, Scotland, Switzerland, the US, New Zealand and Australia.

The Phuket Veterans also gain support from overseas. Aussie Wayne Scanlan, the President of the Phuket Veterans, explained, "We are incredibly lucky to have the support of overseas veterans groups such as 'Live, Play, Work' veterans support group from Australia. They have supported not only our Crisis Response Teams by donating thousands of dollars of safety and technical equipment, but also with our mental health support program."

*The next training session held by the CRT will be on Sept 15. If you are a military Veterans or former member of the emergency services community and are interested in becoming part of Phuket Veterans as a full member or as an associate, or if you are not a veteran but you would like to volunteer for training with the CRT, simply send an SMS to 089-5870819 and you will be called back. For more information about Phuket Veterans, PhuketVeterans.com*



## The October/November 2024 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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# The magic of good health

## WELLTHWISE

Libby Heath

**T**here will never be a magic pill. Sorry to dash your hopes, but there is good news: We all have the power to improve our wellbeing in measurable ways.

A healthy lifestyle wrapped in science, served with a large scoop of common sense, yields remarkable results. The accumulation of good habits over a prolonged period coupled with scientifically validated enhancements propels your best self forward. It's like compounded interest for the body. The brilliant physicist Albert Einstein said, "Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world. He who understands it, earns it. He who doesn't, pays it." To achieve the highest level of wellbeing, one must wisely invest in themselves. Fortunately, for the human body, as opposed to retirement plans, it's never too late.

Imagine a three-legged stool. It cannot stand upright with only two legs and is wobbly if the legs are uneven. Stability is created by connecting the legs into a seat, which provides a surface on which to sit. The legs of my wellness stool represent what all humans must do: Eat, Move, Sleep. Your behaviours in these three areas affect the balance. The seat represents your State of Mind. Your knowledge, experience and mindset affect the steadiness

and comfort of the seat.

Why should my thoughts matter? They may not, but if you're like me and enjoy learning about actionable concepts related to health and wellbeing, then please read on. I'm thrilled to have a forum where I can share experiential knowledge, invite discovery and empower change.

I am an American in my sixties. I'm excited about life. I have an insatiable curiosity about people, places and ideas. I want to see it, experience it, touch it, but not eat it. Six years ago, with our US careers concluded, my husband David and I ran away from home. Part of our vagabond life included 26 exciting months in Bangkok. It was a wish fulfilled to return to Thailand in January 2023, first to Bangkok, then to Phuket in September 2023. The plan is to be here for a while.

I have spent my adulthood as a wellness enthusiast. I never played sports as a child, but a yoga class in 1978, two semesters of weightlifting at university and the advent of aerobics in the '80s – leg warmers and all – introduced me to athleticism. Nutrition and other lifestyle components were natural complements. If sleep were an Olympic event, I could win medals. I am a certified Personal Trainer, RYT 200 Kripalu Yoga Instructor, ISSA Nutrition Coach and Mayo Clinic Health & Wellness Coach. My approaches have evolved with insight, evidence and age.

With an Economics undergraduate degree and an MBA, it is through

an analytical lens that I interpret meaning. I wanted to save the world by espousing good nutrition, productive movement, restorative rest and emotional equanimity. Regrettably, the economic marketplace does not compensate well for such lofty aspirations; but it does for drugs! Legal ones, that is.

A career in the pharmaceutical industry taught me how to scrutinise scientific evidence. It gave me a deeper understanding of how the human body works. Regrettably, many people take better care of their cars or pets than their own bodies.

The typical healthcare paradigm does not include lifestyle modifications as a trackable protocol. Health care providers quickly offer pharmaceuticals to solve problems that a behaviour change might alleviate. To the patient, a pill may be the "easy" way. At the other end of the spectrum, some patients stubbornly refuse to accept that the addition of a rigorously tested, evidence-based medication may significantly reduce some disease state risks. Somewhere in the middle feels right.

Lifespan vs Healthspan? Lifespan is a measure of how long you live. Healthspan is a measure of how long you live in good health. My guiding vision of healthspan is being 90 years old and putting my own suitcase in the overhead compartment of a plane. That vision is packed with meaning; I am independently traveling and have the strength and mobility to heave my suitcase. That vision fuels me. What is your vision?



Libby Heath, making the most of a healthy life. Photo: Supplied

Wellness is a personal journey and there is no one way to approach it. It involves experimentation to determine what works for you. No one knows YOU like you do. We all possess a wise inner voice that tells us what we need to believe or do, and yet many ignore or doubt it. Honour that voice. Listen to its whispers, do not make it scream.

*Libby will be sharing her insights and advice through her new column 'Wellthwise' here in The Phuket News. Please note that if you have a condition that requires medical treatment, consult your doctor. Contact Libby at: BeWellthwise@gmail.com*



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POP QUIZ

1. What is the official colour for Phuket Province?

2. Besides Thailand, which two countries have coasts on the Gulf of Thailand?

3. Which Indian public holiday is also known as the ‘Festival of Lights’?

4. In which year did the global population reach 1 billion?

5. What is the capital of Luxembourg?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. \_\_\_ liquor

5. Fraternity letter

10. Good earth

14. Dwarf buffalo

15. Ne'er-do-well

16. Song for Carmen

17. Elusive creature

18. Indicated

19. Young salmon

20. Venus

23. Threshold

24. Down and out

25. Blotchy

28. Alter

31. Be of use to

32. Rich Little, e.g.

33. Spud bud

36. Pluto

40. Commercials

41. Put out

42. Bell sounds

43. Stumbled in speech

45. Senility

46. Bay window

49. Emanation

50. Mercury

57. Kuwaiti ruler

58. Great Lakes

Down

1. Poet Angelou

2. Again

3. French novelist

4. Serious agitation

5. Comparison

6. Model

7. \_\_\_ rock

8. Department store

9. Song and dance

10. Ran out

11. Electioneer

12. Put on

13. Get a wife

21. City in northern France

22. Lodge

25. Arp's art

26. Dedicated

salmon

59. Certain raptors

60. Let

61. Hodgepodes

62. Boys

63. Duds

64. Retreats

65. Eyelid problem

27. Bridge call

28. Plant sucker

29. Butcher's stock

30. Go astray

32. Culmination

33. Pennsylvania city

34. Safecracker

35. Irish offshoot

37. Fine-grained wood

38. Be gaga over

39. Fortresses

43. Card game

44. Totality

45. Pressure

46. Manifest

47. Rival of Paris

48. Cake topper

49. In progress

51. Symbol

52. Exclusive

53. "\_\_\_ Is It," Jackson film

54. "Doggone it!"

55. May event, for short

56. Latin infinitive

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
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60					61						62			
63					64						65			

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

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

single mouthful of krill consumed by a blue whale has as many calories as an average person consumes in roughly 180 days.

70

percent of millionaires in the US don't consider themselves 'wealthy'.

600

places in Australia are named after the emu.

1,500

miles per hour (2,414km/h) is how fast gusts of wind on Neptune can blow, faster than the speed of sound.

3.6 billion

US dollars is how much K-pop boy band BTS contributed to the South Korean economy in 2019.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW

Storm approaches Bang Tao. Lineke van Nederpelt

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This week in history

Aug 30, 1918

Fanni Kaplan shoots and seriously injures Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin, prompting the decree for Red Terror.

Aug 31, 1997

Diana, Princess of Wales, her companion Dodi Fayed and driver Henri Paul die in a car crash in Paris.

Sept 1, 1974

The SR-71 Blackbird sets (and holds) the record for flying from New York to London in 1 hour, 54 minutes and 56.4 seconds at a speed of 1,435.587 miles per hour

(2,310.353 km/h).

Sept 2, 1666

The Great Fire of London breaks out and burns for three days, destroying 10,000 buildings including St Paul's Cathedral.

Sept 3, 1878

Over 640 die when the crowded pleasure boat *Princess Alice* collides with the cargo ship *Bywell Castle* on the River Thames.

Sept 4, 1781

Los Angeles is founded as El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora La Reina de los Ángeles de Porciúncula (The Village of Our Lady, the Queen of the Angels of Porziuncola) by 44 Spanish settlers.

Sept 5, 1698

In an effort to Westernise his nobility, Tsar Peter I of Russia imposes a tax on beards for all men except the clergy and peasantry. Source: Wikipedia

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**FRI** 6 SEP

**THU** 19 SEP

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### Grow Boating Evening - September 2024

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### Skål International Phuket Dinner - September

We are delighted to invite you to our Skål monthly dinner, as host of the month for September, Ajay Sampige, extends a warm invitation to all Skalleagues for an exquisite evening at the Thai Thai Restaurant. Experience an idyllic beach getaway at the stunning Pullman Phuket Karon Beach Resort. Nestled within 75 acres of lush tropical gardens, this resort offers breathtaking views of the Andaman Sea and the serene, Karon Beach. Registration 6pm. Members THB 1,200. Non-Members THB 1,600. To find out more visit - facebook.com/SkalPhuket

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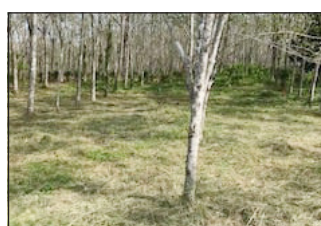
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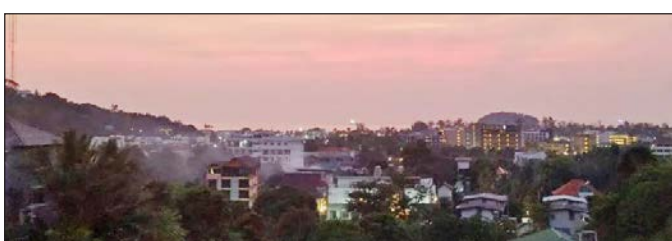
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## AUSTCHAM JOINT CHAMBERS PHUKET MEMBERS BRIEFING AND SUNDOWNERS - AUG 2024

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce, TICC and Thai-Swedish Chamber, hosted the Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners on Aug 23. Starting with an informative members briefing entitled 'Drivers of change in Phuket,' members and guests then headed pool side at nH Boat Lagoon for a wonderful evening of networking.







Chang International Circuit in Buriram. Photo: MotoGP

## MotoGP 2025/26 seasons to kick-off in Thailand

### MOTO GP

THE 2025 AND 2026 MotoGP seasons will begin in Thailand, marking the first time in over 25 years the championship starts in Southeast Asia, organisers announced on Aug 21.

The Buriram circuit is due to host the season-opening race on Mar 2 next year, moving up from its current slot in late October.

It first staged a MotoGP event in 1988 but did not host races in 2020 or 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The season has traditionally kicked off in Qatar in recent times, although last year Portugal held the opening race of the campaign.

"Southeast Asia is one of our most important markets," said Carmelo Ezpeleta, CEO of MotoGP

rights holder Dorna Sports.

"Thailand plays a leading role in that, and the passion is clear to see in the huge crowds we enjoy at Buriram year on year. We know they will create an incredible atmosphere for the first event of the season.

"As soon as Buriram joined the calendar, it became an instant favourite. It is a fantastic place to enjoy MotoGP, with a layout crafted to showcase the best of our close racing – very much proven by the incredible show we enjoyed at the track last season.

"We're looking forward to coming back later this year and then to return in 2025 for a history-making season opener."

Organisers said the dates are still to be confirmed and the full 2025 calendar will be published later this year. *AFP*

# Norris spoils Max's home party at Dutch Grand Prix

## FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato  
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Lando Norris dominated the Dutch Grand Prix in an imperious performance to upstage title leader Max Verstappen in front of his home crowd last Sunday (Aug 25).

A slow start, gifting Verstappen the lead at the first turn, was the only time at which Norris's authority in Zandvoort was questioned, but in less than 10 laps it was clear the McLaren had the pace to easily match with the Red Bull Racing car ahead.

By lap 15 he was shadowing Verstappen through the circuit's undulating bends, and by lap 18 he was easily back into top spot.

From there the rest of the race was a cruise. Verstappen attempted to reel him back in with an early pit stop, but the McLaren was completely untroubled by the strategy, covering it on the following lap and retaining its lead.

Norris wasn't challenged again. He took the chequered flag 22.896 seconds ahead of Verstappen to claim the biggest victory margin of the season so far, setting the fastest lap of the race on the final lap in an emphatic flourish that underscored his iron grip on the grand prix.

With no cards left to play after his pit



Lando Norris celebrates his win at the Dutch F1 Grand Prix last Sunday (Aug 25). Photo: AFP

stop, Verstappen focused on consolidating second place, which he managed by only 2.5 secs ahead of Charles Leclerc.

The result brought Norris to 70 points off the championship lead, while McLaren is now just 30 points behind Red Bull Racing on the constructors title with nine rounds remaining.

Oscar Piastri finished fourth ahead of a fast-finishing Carlos Sainz, who rose five places from 10<sup>th</sup> on the grid after a long duel with Sergio Pérez that required some ambitious deep braking in the first corner to overcome.

Pérez secured sixth in a decent performance by the Mexican, though he was lucky to have been handed the place by an oddly off-colour performance from Mercedes.

George Russell had led Pérez for much

of the second half of the race, but high tyre wear for the Briton prompted a late pit stop for new rubber, dropping him to seventh. The team had hoped he would have the pace to recover the place from Pérez, but he quickly ran out of grip.

His teammate, Lewis Hamilton, rose from a penalised 14<sup>th</sup> to eighth in an aggressive drive comprising two stints on the qualifying soft tyre.

Pierre Gasly scored two points for Alpine in ninth ahead of Fernando Alonso in 10<sup>th</sup>, winning a battle with Nico Hülkenberg, Daniel Ricciardo and Lance Stroll for the final point.

Thai driver Alex Albon finished 14<sup>th</sup> ahead of Esteban Ocon, Logan Sargeant, Yuki Tsunoda, Kevin Magnussen, Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu at the back of the field.

## Thai Tennis Open dates confirmed

### TENNIS

THE THAILAND OPEN tennis tournament has been confirmed to take place at Arena Hua Hin between Sept 16-22, with the qualifying round being held over two days on Sept 14 and 15.

A press conference to announce more details of the WTA 250 tournament will take place on Tuesday (Sept 3), Suwat Liptapanlop, honorary president of the Lawn Tennis Association of Thailand (LTAT) explained on Aug 22.

Russian teenager Diana Shnaider won the tournament in February, defeating defending champion Zhu Lin of China to claim her maiden title.

"Diana Shnaider, who won the Thailand open in February, was ranked 108<sup>th</sup> at the time and she has now moved up to No.18 in the world. So a lot of tennis fans have asked Arena Hua Hin, the tournament organisers, whether they will host the tournament again because they want to see more rising stars,"



Diana Shnaider. Photo: Supplied

said Mr Suwat.

"Therefore Proud Group and Arena Hua Hin contacted the WTA about hosting the event again this year and an agreement has been reached recently and the tournament will be held next month.

"There were other players who were up-and-coming players when they played in Hua Hin and went on to become top

players such as Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska, who won the trophy in 2019, she is currently No.33 in the world ranking," he added.

"Having these talented players here will hopefully motivate the young Thais to play more tennis and give them dream to become successful like these players."

*Bangkok Post*

## Paris Paralympics aiming high

### PARALYMPICS

THE PARALYMPICS GOT UNDERWAY in Paris on Wednesday (Aug 28), aiming to showcase the talents of remarkable athletes in a city still riding the wave of the highly successful Olympics.

A new generation of Paralympians will be joined by seasoned veterans competing in many of the same sensational venues in the centre of the French capital that hosted Olympic sports from July 26 to Aug 11.

A total of 18 of the 35 Olympic venues will be used for the Paralympics from Aug 28 to Sept 8, including the Grand Palais which scored rave reviews for its hosting of the fencing and taekwondo at the Olympics.

The La Defense Arena is back as well, hosting the 141 gold-medal events in para-swimming, as is the Stade de France which hosts track and field.

Every Games creates new stars, and this edition will be no exception, with 19-year-old American above-the-knee amputee sprinter/high jumper Ezra Frech already attracting a burst of publicity about his journey to Paris.

More familiar names return too such as British amputee sprinter Jonnie Peacock, who dusted off his running blade last year to make a comeback in his bid to win a medal at a fourth consecutive Paralympics.

Paralympic powerhouse China have sent a strong squad – the Chinese dominated the medals table in Tokyo three years ago winning 96 golds. Britain were second with 41 golds.

Riding the wave of its Olympic team's success, host nation France will be aiming for a substantial upgrade on the 11 golds it won in 2021.



British sprinter Jonnie Peacock (right) will be competing at a fourth Paralympics. Photo: AFP

Ukraine, traditionally one of the top medal-winning nations at the Paralympics, have sent a team of 140 athletes spread over 17 sports despite the challenges they face in preparing as the war against Russian forces rages.

Athletes from Russia and Belarus will compete under a neutral banner, without team colours, but will not be permitted to take part in the opening or closing ceremonies after their federations were both suspended following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The Paralympics have always had a far wider message than simply sport and International Paralympic Committee president Andrew Parsons said earlier this year he hopes the Paris edition will restore the issues facing disabled people to the top of the list of global priorities, saying the Games "will have a big impact in how people with disability are perceived around the world".

"This is one of the key expectations we have around Paris 2024; we believe that we need people with disability to be put back on the global agenda," he said, arguing that disability had fallen behind sexual and gender identity in recent years.

"We do believe people with disability have been left behind. There is very little debate about persons with disability." *AFP*

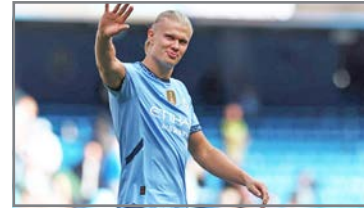






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# Sport



**Haaland hits 10<sup>th</sup> hat-trick for City > p15**

## SCALING THE HEIGHTS



Alexis (left) and the team from Dojo at Blue Tree Phuket in Thimphu, Bhutan. Photo: Supplied

## Team Dojo peak at world's highest judo comp

### MARTIAL ARTS

**Ben Tirebuck**

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

The school summer holidays are traditionally a time to kick back, relax and take a time out. However, this summer has been anything but a rest period for the students at The Dojo at Blue Tree in Phuket as they continue to fly the flag in national and international competition.

Most recently the team were in Thimphu in the Himalayan mountains on Aug 17 for the inaugural Bhutan International Children's Judo Tournament, a competition which is officially the highest staged from sea level judo competition for youngsters in the world.

Suggesting that the sky isn't the limit in such lofty environs, the team shone. Team captain Gabin led the way, as he often does, winning all his matches to secure a gold medal, while Oliver was similarly dominant in his four contests to also secure gold.

Oscar demonstrated terrific heart to fight through the pain

barrier after suffering a sprained wrist to secure a third bronze for the team, his courageous display also winning him the best fighter of the tournament accolade.

David secured silver and was desperately unfortunate not to win his final against a tough French opponent, while Timur won bronze after he defeated four of the five opponents in the under-15 age class despite only being 12 years old himself.

"It was a fantastic experience that everyone thoroughly enjoyed," Dojo head coach Alexis Plantard told *The Phuket News*.

"Aside from the actual competition, which lasted around two hours each day, there were other pursuits such as daily six-hour hikes into the mountains, weight training, gym sessions and football, which were all great fun.

"We all also had the opportunity to learn more about the culture in Bhutan, which was thoroughly enriching for all the team. We felt truly blessed to be there," he added.

### STATESIDE SUCCESS

Prior to this, the team participated

at the US Judo Open Championships, officially the biggest judo tournament in the world.

The three-day tournament took place in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on July 26-28 and saw over 3,000 athletes from 50 different countries taking part.

Despite only having six athletes participating, Dojo Phuket finished a hugely impressive 27<sup>th</sup> rank overall out of 173 teams, with four of the team making the podium.

Gabin fought an exhausting 21 matches across six divisions to secure a gold and a silver medal, while Oscar competed in 15 contests across six divisions to win a gold and bronze.

Fast becoming one of the top athletes at the Dojo, Timur fought 15 contests across five different divisions to win silver and two bronze medals, while coach Alexis continued to serve as the perfect role model to his students after he battled through 12 matches in four separate divisions to take home two gold medals.

"This championship is without doubt one of the hardest in the world where you can fight across

many divisions to gain invaluable experience," Alexis explained.

"I had some extremely tough opponents personally, some of whom were much, much younger than me but I am proud to say I dug deep and called upon all my experience to fight as hard as I possibly could. To do this in front of my students, I believe, is extremely important as it sets the standard and demonstrates the levels of mentality that are required. Believe in yourself and always strive to do your best is my message. It is important to lead by example, I think."

### 'LITTLE LION'

Before their exploits in the sunshine state of Florida, the team were slightly closer to home as they took part in the Hong Kong National Judo Championships on July 15.

Contesting a 16-team format with five players per team, Dojo Phuket finished an admirable third place after falling short due to injuries against Kuma Judo club, one of Hong Kong's finest who boast several athletes who have represented the national team.

The following week, on July

22, the team took part in the Jiu Jitsu Provincial Championships at Saphan Hin in Phuket, winning an impressive 14-medal haul.

Among the winners was 42-year-old student Paul who, having recently secured his blue belt status, landed two gold medals.

Young Damir continued his progression by also winning two gold medals, while David battled heroically against tough opponents, including teammate Gabin, to land a gold and bronze.

Max won gold in his first championship with team Dojo, which should provide confidence to improve furthermore, while the 'Little Lion' Meera and Karim both picked up a silver and a bronze, Mayel won silver and Ray landed two bronze.

The team will be returning to Hong Kong to contest the Hong Kong Junior Asian Cup 2024 on Sept 15, with Sota, Kiichi, Oscar, Oliver and Janis in the under-11 age group and Mayel, Tomo, Timur, Gabin and David in the under-14s. Then a 15-strong squad will head off to Bangkok on Oct 5 for the Decathlon Judo Cup.