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# IT'S OVER

## COVID DECLARED ENDEMIC, TOURISTS NO LONGER NEED PROOF OF VACCINATION AND TESTS TO ARRIVE

CCSA Spokesperson Dr Taweelap Visanuyothin announced the end of the COVID-19 entry measures, the end of the emergency decree and the end of the CCSA itself. Screenshot: CCSA

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Starting tomorrow (Oct 1), tourists no longer need to present proof of vaccination against COVID-19 or take an ATK test in order to arrive in Thailand. The emergency decree will also expire the same day while COVID-19 will be removed from the Ministry of Public Health's list of "dangerous diseases".

The COVID-prevention measures finally tumbled quickly last week, first through announcements by Dr Taweelap Visanuyothin, spokesman for the Centre for COVID-19 Situa-

tion Administration (CCSA), then by Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who also serves as Public Health Minister.

Anutin announced the changes to the press on Sept 21 after a meeting of the National Communicable Disease Committee.

People infected with COVID-19 who had no or mild symptoms would not be isolated, but would be advised to strictly follow measures, including the use of face masks, social distancing and regular use of hand sanitiser, for five days to help prevent any potential spread of the disease, he said.

Moving quickly, Cabinet had the changes ratified by publication in the Government Gazette the next day, Sept 22.

"People and businesses have returned to their normal activities and the Ministry of Public Health is classifying COVID-19 as a communicable disease under surveillance, instead of a dangerous communicable disease," Dr Taweelap said.

From Oct 1, provincial governors will be empowered to respond to COVID-19 situations as they see fit, but still under Ministry of Public Health guidelines. As of Monday (Sept 26), with just five days before

the Oct 1 deadline, Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw had yet to announce any changes to COVID-prevention requirements in Phuket.

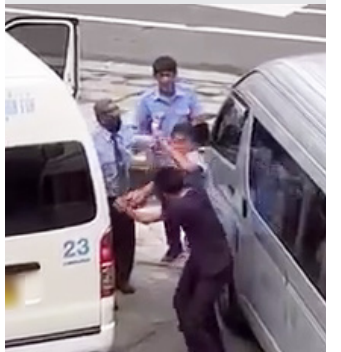
Under provincial regulations before Oct 1, many businesses in Phuket were still required to observe anti-COVID measures, including regular sanitising of common-touch areas, ensuring staff were vaccinated and the wearing of face masks where large groups of people were close together or other situations where it was deemed appropriate.

Face masks no longer need to be worn in public areas as long as social distancing is being observed.

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Van driver brawl ends with suspension



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Veg Fest returns with spirits of the gods



### SPORT PAGE 16

North meets South in ACG rugby clash



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# News



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get capacity  
boost > p4

## Veg Fest processions hit the streets

Eakkapop Thongtub  
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Devotees and Mah Song spirit mediums from the Naka Shrine in Wichit took to the streets Tuesday morning (Sept 27), marking the first day of the street processions to be held as part of the Phuket Vegetarian Festival.

The procession began at the Naka Shrine, at the western end of Wirat Hongyok Rd, near the intersection with Chao Fa West Rd, and continued east into Phuket Town.

At the 'Yee Teng Intersection' (Pattana Rd and Chao Fa Rd), the procession proceeded to the Bang Neow Intersection, turned right onto Phuket Rd made its way to the tip of Saphan Hin before turning around and making its way back to the Naka Shrine in Wichit.

Leading the procession were Mah Song spirit mediums complete with traditional face piercings of blessed weapons, and others sporting non-traditional piercings, such as swords, knives, fishing rod handles, iron claws and spikes.

Despite rain along nearly the entire route, people lined the streets to watch them pass, along with scores of devotees and those dedicated to assisting the Mah Song.

The street processions continued on Wednesday with the Guan Tae Gun Shrine procession in Sapam beginning at 5:45am, the Bang Koo Shrine at 6:30am, the Hai Yian Geng Shrine in Baan Mai Khao at 7am and the Seng Leng Tong Shrine in Muang Mai at 7:30am.

The processions ramped up yesterday (Thursday, Sept 29) with devotees from six shrines



A Mah Song spirit medium takes part in the Naka Shrine street procession on Tuesday (Sept 27). Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

taking to the streets: Lim Hu Tai Su (Samkong) at 6:45am; Sam Sian Tong shrine at 7am; Guan Yu Shrine (Bana Nabon) at 7am; Tee Gong Tua Shrine at 7am; Tai Houd Tong Shrine (Surin Beach) at 7:45am and Bu Seng Tong Shrine (Baan Kian) at 8:30am.

Officials have advised motorists to be ready for the street processions to be held as part of this year's Vegetarian Festival. The affected streets will be partially or entirely closed to traffic while the street processions pass by. The processions will affect people living in nearly all parts of the island, and will continue through to next Tuesday (Oct 4).

While most of the processions

take place in the early morning, some local shrines will be holding their street processions in the afternoon or even in the evening.

The official programme of events published by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) gives route maps for only four of the main processions, to be held from Oct 1-4. Highlighted by the programme are the 'fire walking' purification ceremonies to be held Sept 30-Oct 4 and the 'bridge crossing' ceremonies to be held Oct 3-4. (Visit ThePhuketNews.com for details).

The street processions that remain to be held, according to the official schedule of events, are as follows:

### FRIDAY, SEPT 30

- Baan Tha Reu Shrine (Tha Reua, near Heroines Monument) - 6:09am
- Jeng Ong Shrine (near Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town) - 6:30am
- Tai Seng Pud Jor Shrine (Chalong) - 7am
- Tae Gun Tai Tae Shrine (Baan Pasak) - 7:15am
- Hok Ong Tong Shrine (Chalong) - 7:30am
- Bang Jo Shrine (Srisoonthorn) - 7:30am
- Seng Leng Tong Shrine (Muang Mai) - 3pm
- Sapam Shrine - 6:45pm

### SATURDAY, OCT 1

- Gim Su Ong Shrine (Baan

- Don) - 6:30am
- Bang Liao Shrine (Bang Neow, Phuket Town) - 7am
- Cherng Talay Shrine - 7am
- Guan Tae Gun Shrine (Baan Pon) - 7:30am
- Tai Houd Tong Shrine (Surin Beach) - 3pm
- Ngore Choon Gend Baanya Shrine (Baan Ya) - 4:45pm

### SUNDAY, OCT 2

- Gim Su Ong Shrine (Baan Don) - 6:30am
- Jui Tui Shrine - 8am
- Lee Sian Tong Shrine - 8pm

### MONDAY, OCT 3

- Yok Kae Keng Shrine (Soi Paniang - Samkong/Ratsada) - 6am
- Kathu Shrine - 6:45am
- Guan Yu Shrine (Baan Nabon) - 7am
- Hai Yian Geng Shrine (Baan Mai Khao) - 7am
- Jong Nghi Tong Shrine (near Tonsai Waterfall, Pa Khlok) - 8am
- Lee Ong Tong Shrine (Tha Chatchai) - 3pm

### TUESDAY, OCT 4

- Ngor Hian Tai Tae Shrine (Baan Kian) - 7:45am
  - Sui Boon Tong Shrine (Lorong shrine, Phuket Town) - 8am
  - Bang Koo Shrine - 8am
- On the final night of the festival on Oct 4 all participating shrines will make their way through the streets of Phuket, especially Thalang Rd and Phuket Rd, leading to Saphan Hin, where the final rites ceremonies will be held.

See also 'Vegetarian Festival gets underway' on page 8.

## As COVID measures benched, visa stays extended to lure tourists

Continued from page 1

### COVID RULE ENDS

Dr Taweasilp last Friday (Sept 23) also announced that the CCSA had resolved to end the continuation of the COVID-19 Emergency Decree. The decree, declaring a state of emergency, had been extended 18 times since it was first implemented on March 25, 2020.

The CCSA will also dissolve, as the local and global COVID-19 situation was improving, with new cases and fatalities declining, he added.

The government would continue to provide people with free COVID-19 vac-



inations, but the response to COVID-19 would be under the jurisdiction of the public health minister, Dr Taweasilp added, reported the Bangkok Post.

### TOURISM BOOST

As the COVID-prevention walls came tumbling down, the Cabinet also approved extending the period of stay

for tourists from countries/territories entitled for visa exemption from 30 days to 45 days, and for those eligible for a Visa on Arrival (VOA) from 15 days to 30 days.

The extended periods of stay will remain in effect until March 31, 2023.

Deputy government spokeswoman Traisulee Taisaranakul said the move followed a ministerial announcement drafted by the Interior Ministry to boost tourist arrivals and spending, help revive the economy and reduce the impact of the pandemic.

"The government is working on a plan to come up with measures to promote tourism

to accommodate more tourists during the [upcoming] peak season," she said,

Dr Taweasilp said the number of visitors to Thailand rose from 427,869 last year to 5.2 million visitors this year, with the arrivals spending B211.97 billion in the country.

During the same period this year Thais made 98.7mn domestic trips and spent B432.89bn, he noted.

Government Spokesperson Anucha Burapachaisri on Monday said the government expects Thailand to earn B2.38 trillion (US\$64.5 billion) in tourism revenue in 2023.

The government wants tourism next year to reach

80% of its 2019, pre-pandemic level, as the key growth sector begins to see a recovery, he added.

Mr Anucha said foreign tourists are projected to bring in between B970bn to B1.5tn next year.

Thailand expects 1.5mn arrivals each month in the last quarter of 2022, Mr Anucha said, adding that September had seen more than a million tourists so far.

The government is targeting 10mn visitors for the full year, he noted.

In 2019, Thailand welcomed nearly 40mn visitors, who spent B1.91tn in total.



# Suspended over brawl

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Three passenger van drivers have each had their licences suspended for six months after being involved in a brawl in the car park at the Khun Mae Ju tourist souvenir store on Thepkrasattri Rd that saw one of the drivers hit on the head with an axe.

Kornphithak Asanasuwan of the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) confirmed the suspension on Sept 21. "It is a punishment to deter other drivers from such bad behavior, which negatively affects the image of Phuket as a tourist destination, especially in light of the people who drive public transport services in Phuket," he said.

The fight broke out at the popular Khun Mae Ju store on Sept 20. A video of the incident was posted online that afternoon.

Security guard Prasit Jai-in, 54, said that by the time he intervened the fight was between two Phuket van drivers – Nattapon Chaibutr, 43, from Sakhu, and Piya Limthareekul, 46, from Pa Khlok – against Chanon Pengthep, who only later was confirmed to be a passenger van driver also.

One of the drivers, Nattapon



A video clip showing the men brawling in the car park at the Khun Mae Ju tourist souvenir store in Thalung was posted online. Image: Supplied

or Piya, pulled a small axe out of his van and struck Chanon, leaving him with a bleeding wound on his head, Mr Prasit said.

It was not confirmed which part of the axe was used to hit Chanon.

While the fight was taking place between two passenger vans, two tourists, both Thai, were sitting in one of the vans, Mr Prasit said.

After the men were separated the axe was tossed back into the van by the van driver who wielded it, he added.

Chanon was taken to Thalung Hospital for his injury, and later transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town.

Nattapon and Piya presented

themselves at Thalung Police Station that evening (Sept 20), confirmed Lt Col Kornphumphot Pongpaiboon, Chief of Investigation at Thalung Police Station.

The axe used in the fight was also presented, he added.

Nattapon and Piya said they had never seen Chanon before the incident, Lt Col Kornphumphot said. The fight started over "someone staring at each other's faces", he added.

Traditionally, fights between Phuket taxi drivers, including van drivers, usually occur over passengers and where specific drivers are allowed to pick up passengers, including tourists.

Police are continuing their investigation into the incident. Lt

Col Kornphumphot later called in staff from the store to give their witness statements.

However, no police or PLTO officials have confirmed exactly which driver, Nattapon or Piya, wielded the axe that struck Chanon on the head.

The suspension of the drivers came as a surprise as Mr Kornphithak had previously confirmed that the PLTO was reviewing the incident only in light of the public transport driver regulations, specifically concerning the use of impolite language, whether the drivers were dressed appropriately and whether the drivers are properly licensed.

The PLTO would not be taking any action over any actual assault as that remained under the purview of criminal law, Mr Kornphithak said.

Using "impolite speech" can incur a fine of up to B5,000 and not being "dressed politely" can incur a fine of up to B5,000. A public transport driver not carrying the correct licence can incur a fine of up to B40,000 or up to two years in jail, or both, Mr Kornphithak explained.

"From watching the clip [posted online], it is not a competition for passengers in any way. It is a private quarrel," he said.



Three female tourists were saved from dangerous surf last Friday evening (Sept 23). Photo: Patong Surf Life Saving Facebook

## Tourists rescued from night swim

THE PATONG SURF Life Saving Club has called for Patong beach to be supervised by qualified lifeguards all day and night after three foreign female tourists got in trouble when swimming after dark.

The three unnamed female tourists got in trouble in the waves at about 8pm last Friday (Sept 23), the Patong Surf Life Saving Club reported.

According to the publication, the women were not aware that it is strongly not recom-

mended to swim after dark when there are no lifeguards on duty on the beach.

The women's calls for help were heard by a group of parasailing operators who were still sitting on the beach having their leisure time opposite Banana Walk.

The operators used their jet skis to reach the women in trouble and safely take them back to the beach.

The names and nationalities of the rescued were not revealed.

The Phuket News

## Officials silent on police review

PHUKET GOVERNOR Narong Woonciew met with top-ranking police on the island last week as part of the Phuket Provincial Police Administration and Monitoring Committee, yet details of the meeting have yet to become public.

The meeting, held at the Phuket Provincial Police headquarters in Phuket Town on Sept 21, was joined by Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong.

According to official reports, the meeting discussed the efforts by police in providing security during the recent APEC 2022 Conference and the 28<sup>th</sup> IMT-GT Ministerial Meeting held in Phuket.

Also discussed were preparations for the bid for Phuket to host Expo 2028 as well as the new law on marijuana and the new Traffic Act.

"The committee has expressed opinions on various matters in order to make the work of the police officers to be more proactive in order to build confidence among the people and tourists in the



Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

measures to maintain safety," one official report said.

However, no mention was made of recent incidents in Phuket directly affecting the safety of local residents and tourists, including the brawl involving three passenger van drivers at a popular tourist souvenir store on Tuesday that resulted in one of the drivers being struck on the head with an axe.

Road safety was not mentioned, despite a Russian man dying on Tuesday after slamming head-on into a passenger van after he was reportedly unable to control the motorbike he was riding while descending the hill into Karon. The man marked the 71<sup>st</sup> road fatality

in Phuket so far this year, equalling the tally for all of last year despite 2022 still having three months to go.

Also not mentioned was Maj Gen Sermphan himself ordering Patong Police Chief Col Sujin Nilabadee to take action against a man reported by the public as openly selling drugs on Bangla Rd, Patong, as reported only days earlier (Sept 18).

The man had already been taken into custody by Patong Police in April for intimidating foreign tourists on Bangla Rd with a gun loaded with blanks.

No legal action against the man was ever confirmed by Patong Police.

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 11 m/s

SAT OCTOBER 1



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Wind 11 m/s

SUN OCTOBER 2



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON OCTOBER 3



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE OCTOBER 4



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED OCTOBER 5



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU OCTOBER 6



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Water reserves get a boost

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Sarawut Chevapraser, Deputy Secretary-General of the Office of National Water Resources (ONWR) was in Phuket last week to officiate the launch of three projects that will expand the total capacity at Phuket's three main reservoirs by a total of 850,000 cubic metres of water.

At the Klong Kata reservoir in Chalong, Mr Sarawut on Sept 19 also unveiled a project that saw new pipes laid from the reservoir to the water production facility on site, operated by the Phuket office of the Provincial Waterworks Authority, in order to increase supply to the mains water network from the reservoir.

He also inspected the Cherg Talay Municipality 'water supply pond' and the 'Baan



Photo: PR Phuket

Khoktanode Monkey Cheek Project" at the Bang Neow Dum reservoir in Srisoonthorn.

Joining Mr Sarwut for his inspection tour were Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew, Phuket Provincial Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Somprat Prabsonkram, Phuket PWA Chief Graison Mahamad and other officials.

According to a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR

Phuket), the visit was also for Mr Sarawut as the Deputy Secretary-General of the ONWR to monitor progress and plans to bolster water reserves during the rainy season to prepare for any forthcoming periods of drought.

"Phuket uses about 80.9 million cubic metres of water a year," Mr Sarawut noted.

Of that number, only 21.53mn cubic meters is supplied by the island's three main

reservoirs, while small water resource development projects supply 1.49mn cubic metres, Mr Sarawut said.

Water wells and mines supply about 21.02mn cubic metres, and other small water resources supply about 9.75mn cubic metres of water a year, he added.

But groundwater sources supplied about 27.11mn cubic metres a year, Mr Sarawut said.

"Total water demand [in Phuket] is expected to reach 87.67mn cubic metres by the year 2027, and by 2040 it is expected to reach 104.93mn cubic metres," Mr Sarawut noted.

"Therefore, there is not enough reserves capacity to meet the demand for water, especially the need for water for tourism," he admitted.

"Increasing the potential for water reserves of Phuket during the rainy season to support the

need for water during the dry season is important for water management, for consumption of water by residents and industries, especially the tourism industry, which drives the main economy of Phuket and the country," he continued.

The three projects overseen were only part of the current 20-year plan to expand Phuket's water-supply capacity, Mr Sarawut said.

Of note, the official report by PR Phuket made no mention of the 'Phang Nga pipeline' that is supposed to be undergoing construction to help bolster the island's water-supply capability.

The project was approved by Cabinet in 2019. However, the project soon stalled, mired by bureaucracy, prompting Phuket Governor Narong to travel to Bangkok to raise the issue with headlining officials in the capital as one of his first acts as Governor on the island.



Photo: Khao Phuket / file

## Weather warning over 'Noru' fallout

THE MARINE DEPARTMENT issued a weather warning earlier this week as the fallout from Typhoon Noru coupled with the southwest monsoon prevailing over the Andaman Sea was expected to intensify adverse weather in the region.

Heavy weather was expected to hit Phuket's shores from Wednesday this week through to Saturday (Sept 28 - Oct 1), said Atirat Ratanaset, Deputy Minister of Transport, noting at the time that Typhoon Noru was expected to make landfall in central Vietnam on Wednesday (Sept 28).

While nearly the entire country was expected to be affected by the fallout, wind

waves in the Andaman Sea were expected to reach two to three metres high, and more than three metres in thunderstorm areas

Operators of vessels less than 12 metres in length were advised against leaving shore, while operators of vessels longer than 12m "should exercise caution during this period".

Vessel operators and Marine Department officers are to check the readiness of boats engines and equipment, and to ensure life-saving apparatus are readily available for use.

Passengers are required to wear life jackets at all times while on board, the warning read. *The Phuket News*



# Officials targeted in road safety, helmet campaign

The Phuket News  
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Local officials have launched yet another road safety campaign, this one called 'Safe crosswalks, good discipline' and is coupled with a campaign to encourage people to observe "100%" helmet use.

As part of the campaign launch on Sept 21, helmets were handed out to local members of the community, and students, and the finishing touches of paint were applied to a pedestrian crossing across Chao Fa West Rd in Wichit, in front of Dibuk Hospital.

The campaign is being organised by the Phuket Provincial office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket), and the launch event was presided over by Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkwan Yodrabam.

Joining the event to present a united front for the campaign were heads of local government agencies and senior-ranking police officers on the island.

DDPM-Phuket Deputy



Photo: PR Phuket

Chief Pornthep Prekham explained that the campaign is a nationwide effort by the DDPM head office in Bangkok, which together with the Road Safety Administration Center is coordinating identical activities in every province throughout the country.

Provincial DDPM offices are to carry out their campaign efforts in their respective provinces, he said.

Mr Pornthep noted that the campaign is aimed at "all government agencies, educational institutions, medical institutions and local administrative organisations as well as child

development centres and industrial estates" enforcing the 'helmet use' law.

He also warned that the use of technology was to be implemented in enforcing the 'helmet use' law, which requires people to wear a helmet while operating a motorbike and even when riding as a passenger on a motorbike.

"These are '100% helmet-wearing areas', and technology will be used to support rigorous law enforcement against those who do not wear helmets while driving," he said.

"The campaign aims to have all government officials,

employees, officers from all departments, organisation leaders and community leaders act as role models for observing traffic rules, especially wearing a helmet every time you drive a motorcycle," he said.

Officials are to ramp up public relations campaigns to inform people that the requirement will be enforced, he added.

Results of the campaign will be reported each month to the Provincial Road Safety Administration Center, Mr Pornthep said.

Vice Governor Anupap highlighted the "loss of life and property" resulting from road accidents in Phuket.

"In particular, by people driving without discipline and not obeying traffic rules, and a lack of consciousness and awareness of the loss and the large number of deaths and injuries," Vice Governor Anupap said..

"Most of the accidents are caused by driving behaviour and from motorbikes hitting pedestrians crossing the road, causing deaths at crossings," he added.

## Man dies after motorbike slams into parked truck

POLICE HAVE YET TO confirm the identity of a motorcyclist who died when he crashed into the back of a parked trailer truck last week.

Lt Col Kiatjorn Amloy, Deputy Chief of Investigation at Phuket City Police was notified of the accident, which occurred on the bypass road northbound in Rassada, at around 2:20am on Sept 22.

Having arrived at the scene some 20 metres before the PTT gas station, police officers and Kusoldharm Foundation rescue workers found a Krabi-registered UD Quester truck with a trailer and a badly damaged Honda Wave motorcycle with Trang license plates right behind it. The motorbike's front was nearly destroyed by the impact.

The trailer truck was parked on the side of the road. Police noted that the cabin of the truck had a logo of '786 Transport Company'.

The motorcyclist was found on the road nearby. The man had a wound on his head and was unresponsive. Kusoldharm rescue workers performed CPR at the scene but were unable to revive the man. The body was then taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital.



The motorbike crashed into the back of the parked truck. The rider did not survive. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Police could not immediately identify the motorcyclist as he did not have any documents neither in his pockets nor in his grey backpack. A mobile phone (presumably belonging to the rider) was found at the scene but the device turned out to be broken.

According to the police, there were two people in the cabin of the UD Quester at the time of the accident – Sina Pairote, 37, and his girlfriend. Both gave statements to the police, though officers did not reveal what exactly they said.

An eyewitness told the officers that the motorcycle was moving northbound at high speed and just crashed into the back of the truck which was parked with its taillights off. The investigation is ongoing.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Russian killed in head-on collision with van

A 22-YEAR-OLD RUSSIAN MAN died after the motorbike he was riding crashed head-on into a passenger van at the northern end of Karon on Sept 20.

Lt Pirawat Yodta of the Karon Police reported that police were called to the scene, on the steep hill on Patak Rd just north of the Karon Beach area, at 12:45pm.

At the scene officers found the Russian man on the northbound side of the road, as was the Honda Click motorbike he was riding and a large amount of debris scattered across the road.

The Russian man, unconscious and unresponsive, was rushed to Patong Hospital but later pronounced dead.

Stopped on the northbound side of the road was a white Foton passenger van registered in Surat Thani. The driver of the van, Amnuay Kaewnak, 57, a resident of Surat Thani province, was waiting at the scene. The van was registered as a commercial passenger vehicle, police noted.

From their initial investigation, officers determined that the Russian man was at fault in the accident.

He was riding southbound down the steep hill when he lost control of the motorbike and drove head-on into the passenger van. The van driver, Mr Amnuay, had no way of avoiding the collision, police surmised.

In order to settle the matter of B65,000 in damages to the vehicles, police were prepared to posthumously charge the Russian man with reckless driving causing damage to property.

That procedure was avoided by the



The remains of the front end of the Russian man's motorbike scattered across the road. Photo: Supplied

relatives of the Russian man confirming they were willing to pay the amount in full, Karon Police reported.

Of the total damages claimed, B40,000 was for the motorbike.

The death of the Russian man on Tuesday marked Phuket already recording the same number of road deaths as recognised by officials for all of last year: 71.

Also according to the Thailand Road Safety Committee (ThaiRSC), as of Sept 21 so far this year 11,984 people in Phuket have suffered injuries requiring hospital treatment.

Last year, 13,076 people were injured in road accidents on the island.

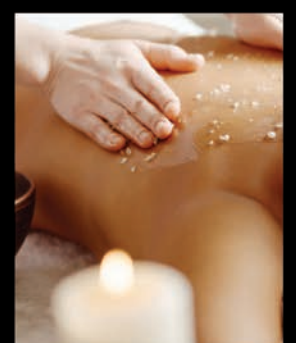
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## Baht depreciation 'nothing serious'

THE BANK OF THAILAND (BoT) is closely monitoring the baht currency's weakness but there has been no big concern yet, Finance Minister Arkhom Termpitayapaisith said on Monday (Sept 26), as the currency hit its lowest in 16 years against the dollar.

"On baht weakness, the central bank is always taking care of what we've assigned. There isn't much of anything right now. Nothing serious still," Mr Arkhom told reporters.

The baht was trading at 37.78 per dollar at 2:03pm, a 16-year low against the dollar.

So far this year it has depreciated about 11.5% against the greenback, which also hit a record high against the British pound on Monday.

Despite headline inflation breaching the BoT's target range of 1% to 3%, the government still has no plans to adjust the range for 2023, Mr Arkhom said. The inflation target is reviewed every year.

Headline inflation was



Finance Minister Arkhom Termpitayapaisith. Photo: Ministry of Finance

7.86% in August, a 14-year high.

The finance ministry is tackling inflation with measures on goods and energy prices while the BoT is using monetary policy.

The central bank is expected to raise its key interest rate again on Wednesday (Sept 28) after hiking the rate in August for the first time in nearly four years to contain inflation.

Earlier on Monday, BoT Governor Sethaput Suthiwartnarueput told a forum that the economy is improving and expanding but its recovery remains uneven between each sector.

He also said Thailand's household debt to GDP ratio was about 88% as of the end of June. *Bangkok Post*

## Hoteliers hope weak baht attracts foreign visitors

Bangkok Post

The weak baht could benefit the tourism industry as foreign purchasing power gains value, though it might not be enough to offset high airfares, according to the Thai Hotels Association (THA).

Marisa Sukosol Nunbhakdi, President of THA, said currency depreciation is just one of many factors helping to make the Thai tourism industry more attractive in the post-pandemic period.

"The weak baht definitely affected the industrial sector as it imports raw materials for production, but it could support the tourism industry as foreign tourists can spend more in the country," she said.

The baht has continued to plunge as the US Federal Reserve hiked interest rates by 0.75 percentage points this week to battle inflation.

"But whether a weak baht can help offset high transport costs, such as airfares, I'm not quite sure," said Ms Marisa.

She said the soaring price of air transport has affected the number of international



Tourists arrive at Suvarnabhumi airport. Mrs Marisa says currency depreciation makes the Thai tourism industry more attractive in the post-pandemic period. Photo: Wichan Charoenkiatpakul / Bangkok Post

tourists travelling by plane, as this market remains lower than expected the past few months.

Ms Marisa said positive momentum has built up from borders reopening without the requirement of Thailand Pass registration and the removal of RT-PCR testing.

The latest announcement from the Public Health Ministry, which downgraded COVID-19 to an endemic disease starting from Oct 1, should mark a milestone

for the country's tourism, she said.

Compared with other countries in Asia, Thailand's relatively fast removal of COVID protocols should accelerate the recovery pace for tourism, said Mrs Marisa.

Unlike the Tom Yum Kung crisis in 1997, when the baht tumbled to more than B50 to the dollar, the scenario this year is different in terms of the stakeholders who have been impacted, she said.

"COVID-19 has affected

all stakeholders in the tourism sector, from hotel employees to those in the supply chains," she added.

Tourism demand during the 1997 crisis remained strong until the supply of rooms was insufficient to cater to all guests, whereas during COVID-19 tourists vanished, she noted.

Acting Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan insisted the government will not intervene in the Bank of Thailand's monetary policy.

## Industry chiefs applaud staged return to business as usual

BUSINESS OPERATORS have welcomed the government's further relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, particularly the downgrading of the virus' status, saying they will attract more tourists and help boost the economy.

Sanan Angubolkul, Chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC), said the number of tourists is expected to rise to 10-12 million by the end of this year, as a result of the new easing of virus curbs. This is expected to spur GDP growth to 2.75-3.50%.

Mr Sanan said the weakening of the baht has also benefited the tourism sector and more arrivals are expected during the last quarter of the year for the high tourism season, particularly visitors escaping cold winters in Europe.

Also, if the Chinese government eases travel restrictions to allow their citizens to go abroad by the end of this year, Chinese arrivals will give the Thai tourism sector an added boost, Mr Sanan said.



Sanan Angubolkul. Photo: Bangkok Post

He also urged the government to take the current opportunity to attract foreign investment to spur competitiveness, promote technology transfers and create more jobs.

Sa-nga Ruangwattanakul, president of the Khao San Road Business Association, said the downgrading of COVID-19's status will boost tourist confidence and spending in the backpacker haven during the remaining months of the year by 20-30%.

Businesses on Khao San

Rd are surging back to life as more foreign and Thai visitors are returning, following the relaxations of restrictions, he said.

Meanwhile, Bangkok Governor Chadchart Sittipunt said he will chair a meeting of the Bangkok communicable disease committee to plan for the lifting of the state of emergency and the downgrading of COVID-19. He said Bangkok is now ready to fully reopen to foreign visitors.

*Bangkok Post*

## Brand protection for 'Buffalo Orange'

PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS are moving to have the 'Som Kwai Phuket', or 'Phuket Buffalo Orange', registered with the Department of Intellectual Property as a product under Geographical Indication (GI) protection.

Official recognition of the fruit will give Phuket Buffalo Orange vendors similar protection to that enjoyed by purveyors of Champagne under the 'Appellation of Origin' status in the European Union.

The move was discussed at a meeting chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong on Sept 19.

Having the fruit recognised as such "will create added value and upgrade product standards, increase competitiveness for entrepreneurs to manage and control the quality of product identity standards to meet market demands", Vice Governor Pichet said.

Overseeing the procedure to have the fruit rights-protected is Woranit Aphirattirawong, Chief of the Phuket Commerce Office.

Ms Woranit explained that the focus of the procedure was to ensure that the registration complied with the regulations and laws of the Department of Intellectual Property under



Photo: PR Phuket

the Ministry of Commerce.

At the meeting were representatives from Best Wisdom Consulting 2014 Co Ltd, which was hired to conduct research into having the fruit registered under GI protection.

Among the important criteria for registering the fruit under GI protection were factors including the name of geographical indication; the unique characteristics of the product and the scope of production area, the representatives said.

There are currently 872 buffalo orange trees planted in Phuket, with 136 farmers cultivating buffalo orange trees, the representatives added.

The benefits of GI includ-

ing protecting against others from falsely claiming the name or mark indicating the origin of the product in order to increase their prices, the Best wisdom team explained.

"PGI registration will also support local industries by helping to distribute income to rural people, and it will also strengthen the community and preserve local wisdom as well as to protect consumers," one of the representatives said.

Many localised versions of fresh produce are already under GI protection in Thailand, including the "Samut Songkram Big White Grapefruit", which even under promotion can fetch as much as B359 per "bag" of two to three fruits.

*The Phuket News*



# Confusion after general election date confirmed

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Election Commission (EC) last Wednesday (Sept 21) set May 7, 2023 as the tentative date for the next general election, assuming the House of Representatives completes its term on March 23.

The EC also published a detailed timetable of key dates leading up to polling day, including opening of candidacy applications and announcements of polling stations and the list of eligible voters.

In the event Parliament is dissolved, the EC must set the election date at least 45 but not more than 65 days later, according to Section 103 of the charter.

However, politicians have been left scratching their heads about what they can and can't do in the run-up, with a senior opposition figure calling the new rules announced by the EC vague and confusing.

Sutin Klungsang, opposition whip and deputy leader



The House of Representatives. Photo: Bangkok Post / File

of the Pheu Thai Party, said on Saturday (Sept 24) that the regulations published in the Royal Gazette on restricted campaign activities were lacking in detail, open to conflicting interpretations and could cause uncertainty when put into practice.

Unlike in past elections when 30 to 40 days were given over to campaigning, the new election law stipulates a 180-day pre-election period during which numerous regulations apply. These govern everything from flood relief donations to campaign posters.

Mr Sutin said it was un-

clear how the rules would apply in the event Parliament is dissolved before its term is up. He also pointed out that no definite dimensions were set for campaign posters, leaving an opening for interference between candidates.

Potential candidates who previously put up their posters in public spaces are now being advised to take them down and make sure they conform to the new election regulations in terms of size, number and the locations where they are placed.

Other related activities, such as organising general

assemblies, raising funds or introducing election candidates to the public will also have to conform to the new election law.

All MPs want to comply with the rules, but ambiguity may create opportunities for self-serving action, said Mr Sutin.

The Pheu Thai member suggested the commission organise a seminar for political parties where it could explain the election rules and field any questions.

Democrat Party leader Jurin Laksanawisit voiced similar concerns, saying many parties have already started taking down their campaign posters for fear of violating the regulations.

Although the EC has the authority to enforce election rules, clarity is needed so that parties intent on compliance can act accordingly, he said.

Mr Jurin, who is also deputy prime minister and commerce minister, said he has instructed his party members to study the new regulations and ensure appropriate conduct.



The anticipated course of Typhoon Noru. Photo: ThaiGov

## War room to monitor typhoon

### BANGKOK

THE GOVERNMENT HAS set up a "war room" to closely monitor the impact of Typhoon Noru, which was due to hit the northeastern provinces as a tropical storm yesterday (Sept 29).

Government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said on Monday (Sept 26) that the war room, chaired by Digital Economy and Society Minister Chaiwit Thanakamanusorn, will gather information about the storm, assess its severity and take actions to mitigate its impact.

"Those residing in low-lying areas should watch out for flash flooding and run-off from higher ground. Local agencies have been ordered to mobilise their resources to ensure they can provide timely assistance to those affected,"

the spokesman said.

Together with the strengthening southwesterly monsoon in the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, the storm is expected to bring around 100 millimetres of rain to most parts of the country, including Bangkok and its surrounding provinces between Sept 28-Oct 1.

Mr Chaiwit warned of possible floods and landslides and urged local authorities to provide constant updates on the flood situation so local residents can prepare.

Companies should consider allowing their employees to take a couple of days off to help alleviate traffic congestion caused by flooding across the city, he added.

Another storm system is expected to form in the middle of October, but it is still too early to forecast its path, Mr Chaiwit said. *Bangkok Post*

## Cannabis farmers ask for help as value of crop prices drop

### NAKHON PHANOM

FARMERS IN THE PROVINCE OF Nakhon Phanom are asking the government to help regulate the prices of cannabis after the industry began seeing a drop in value due to an oversupply of the crop.

Jirawat Rungsri, 56, president of the Medicinal Herbs Community Enterprise of Na Kham in Sri Songkhram district, said on Sunday (Sept 25) the prices dropped dramatically after the government began allowing the public to grow the plant.

Before cannabis was delisted as a narcotics earlier this year, only farmers with permission from hospitals, medical centres and universities were able to grow cannabis.

Mr Jirawat said he started the group to grow cannabis for medical purposes in 2020 in collaboration with Tambon Na Kham Health Promotion Hospital.

He said the group had 30 members growing about 30,000 cannabis plants when it first started.

During the group's first harvest, members were able to earn B50,000-100,000 a month selling parts of the cannabis plant, including buds, leaves and roots, he said.

However, prices of cannabis have dropped sharply since.

"As anyone can grow cannabis today, they do not have to get permission to grow the plant, so we have more competitors



A cannabis farm in Nakhon Ratchasima province. Photo: Prasit Tangprasert

who drive cannabis prices down," he said.

He said the price of fresh cannabis leaves has declined from the previous B15,000 per kilogramme to B3,000. Fresh stems were priced at B10,000/kg in the past but today they are worth only B1,000, he said.

He said cannabis farmers in Nakhon Phanom have asked the government to help by announcing set prices farmers and customers can follow.

He said about 20 community enterprises in Nakhon Phanom plan to set up a cannabis cooperative to have more bargaining power when negotiating prices with middlemen.

*Bangkok Post*



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# Vegetarian Festival gets underway

The Phuket News  
editor1@classactmedia.co.th

**T**he Phuket Vegetarian Festival got underway with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health Anutin Charnvirakul joining the traditional raising of the Go Teng poles at the Jui Tui Shrine in Phuket Town last Sunday (Sept 25).

The traditional ceremony was observed at every Chinese shrine taking part in the festival, with the raising of the Go Teng poles welcoming the Jade Emperor and the Nine Emperor Gods to descend from the heavens.

The poles, tall slender trees gilded with gold-coloured paper, were raised at the auspicious time of 5:09pm, indicating that the nine-day festival was underway.

The prayers, rituals and blessing ceremonies all began while the surroundings of the participating Chinese shrines turned into open-air markets with various vegetarian foods on sale.

Joining the festivities at Jui Tui Shrine was Phuket Vice-Governor Pichet Panapong and a host of leading Phuket business people and tourism figures.

The street processions began on Tuesday (Sept 27) with devotees from the Koor Su Gong Naka Shrine in Wichit being the first to take to the streets. Processions organised by other shrines will be held across the island



The Vegetarian Festival got underway in Phuket with Go Teng poles raised on Sept 25. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

every day through to Tuesday (Oct 4)

All streets and main roads along the procession routes will be closed to traffic while the procession is taking place. Motorists are urged to avoid the areas while street processions are taking place, or expect delays.

On the final night of the festival on Oct 4 all participating shrines will make their way through the streets of Phuket Town to Saphan Hin, where the final rites ceremonies will be held.

The festival will conclude with the traditional ceremony of lowering the Go Teng poles at the shrines at sunset the following day, Oct 5.

Despite all the easing of COVID-19

restrictions, the Phuket Vegetarian Festival this year is being held under the same DMHTTA protection measures as last year, including social distancing, wearing of masks at all times and body temperature checks.

All people taking part in ceremonies at the shrines must be fully vaccinated, described as at least two injections of COVID-19 vaccine, and must be tested by antigen test kit (ATK).

In the run-up to the festival, Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob announced that more than 19,000 ATK test kits have been supplied to all shrines taking part in the festival to ensure they comply with COVID-prevention measures.

The PPAO had also campaigned for people looking to join or take in the festival to receive their third, fourth or even fifth vaccination jabs, he added.

Also last year Ma Song spirit mediums taking part in the street processions were traveling by vehicle, instead of walking in the crowd. The rule is also expected to be enforced this year.

## TOURISM BOOST

Nanthasiri Ronnasiri, Chief of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket office, said at a press conference staged by Phuket officials at Jui Tui shrine on Sept 20 that said an estimated 100,000 Thais and about 80,000 foreigners were expected to join the festival over the nine days, from Sept 26-Oct 4.

In total 900 domestic flights and over 500 international flights will arrive during that time, she said.

The festival was estimated to help generate B3.4 billion for the island economy, Ms Nanthasiri predicted.

At the press conference on Sept 20, the Phuket Tourist Association, the Phuket chapter of the Thai Federation of Industries, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) and Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew presented a united front in promoting this year's festival.

Governor Narong specifically welcomed the move for the TCEB to provide its support for the annual event.

"Phuket is an important global destination and the MICE industry is one of the province's pillar strategies in driving the economy. By organizing meetings and tourism Each year we have the opportunity to welcome many travelers," he said.

"The festival is a diverse event in all dimensions, in terms of beliefs and old traditions and practices of the ancient Chinese community. The festival encourages interest from those looking to discover more about it and learning about people from all over the world," he added.

Governor Narong highlighted that Phuket has been recognised by UNESCO as a Creative Cities of Gastronomy since 2015, becoming the first such city in the Asean region to do so.

"Many of the dishes available here during the festival are local specialties created especially for this traditional event," he said.

Pattanachai Singhavara, Director of the TCEB Southern Regional Office, explained that the TCEB's aim was to target "a new generation of travellers that have changed travel behaviour and lifestyle".

"The TCEB aims to enhance the potential of Phuket as a MICE City by elevating the outstanding events to become a 'Flagship Event', an international event, in line with the drive to develop the 'Festival Economy'," he said.

"This is to create economic value, distribute income and spread prosperity, along with developing the quality of life in the city, which requires cooperation from the community," he added.

"Therefore, the TCEB is looking for ways to communicate and conduct public relations through content development based on branded customer experience principles to create an experience for the target audience.

"When they experience traditional events that are contemporary and different, it makes the decision to come much easier," Mr Pattanachai said.

Among the 'target audience' the focus is on Faith Wanderers, City Hoppers, Food Lovers and Health Addicts, he said.

During the festival, the TCEB will support an event called the "Gastronomy Chef's Table" in order to "disseminate the identity and distinctiveness of the Phuket Vegetarian Festival in an interesting new perspective through healthy food", he added.

Thaneth Tantipiriyakij, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, explained that the "Gastronomy Chef's Table" is to specifically promote restaurant operators in the MICE industry, and provide them with an opportunity to improve on the quality of services they offer.

"It will give MICE travelers the opportunity to experience new traditions and dishes created by famous chefs in Phuket," he added.

"In this first year will create awareness and the following years will provide opportunities for those who are interested to participate in such activities," he said.

The event was initially held at Kathu Municipality offices last Sunday (Sept 25), and held again at the Dragon Statue area in Queen Sirikit Park in Phuket Town on Tuesday (Sept 27).

Mr Rewat added that the PPAO was to host a ceremony to offer blessings to His Majesty King Vajiralongkorn at the Saphan Hin Center Stage also on Tuesday (Sept 27).

The blessing ceremony was followed by the traditional special street procession held throughout Phuket Town.

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# Bridging the comedy divide

Andy Tong Dee

**W**estern comedians today just love identity politics, their jokes reflecting what they identify as – black, gay, transexual, feminist and so on. They also seem almost invariably left wing politically, with Boris Johnson, Tony Abbott and Donald Trump preferred targets.

But have such Western comedians today retreated into something of an inward-looking bubble as a result? It could happen all too easily – they crack a joke, some people laugh, and the comedian quickly assumes there is universal agreement with their views when there is not. Comedy in the UK is now so politically biased and identity obsessed that many there now avoid it. I am sure others do too in the US, Canada and Australia. They would rather not sit and be constantly preached at, the sole target of such one-sided humour. Comedy is just not fun anymore for many.

Asian comedians working in English refreshingly don't do this, a fine example being the ever-energetic Harvey Walden, who opened Junkyard's show on Sept 22. His jokes are fast, clever and backed up by a manic, hilarious physicality, a little like Mr Bean on LSD. It's as if his whole face and body are telling the joke. Not only that, his gags are all about Asian culture and society which we expats, Thais and tourists together can easily identify with. Harvey is just perfect for Phuket being locally-focused with broad appeal.

Next up was the main act, Dana Alexander. Junkyard did well to get such a well-known UK-based comedian who has performed on the BBC a few times. The night's MC, Chris Wegoda, tempted her over as part of a Bangkok Comedy Club tour with gigs in Bangkok, Hua Hin, Singapore and Vietnam.

Dana was born in Canada, but moved to the UK



Dana Alexander on stage at the Junkyard Theatre. Photo: Andy Tong Dee

in 2011. Witty, self-effacing and polite, she is building a reputation as a political and social commentator on the UK right-wing GB News Channel and elsewhere. Presenting an alternative viewpoint calmly and with perfect manners, a warm smile and appealing charm, Dana is just right for that – we Brits far prefer polite, intelligent and balanced debate to the angry, shouting matches we sometimes see on Fox.

Dana's act was slick and engaging, as you would expect of a star veteran of the UK's Edinburgh Festival. She too soon had me and my wife laughing our socks off with her mostly non-political and non-woke jokes. I wondered, however, what women in the audience might feel about her deriding those who do not support gender neutral toilets? Only 4% of UK women want them. And how about jokes teasing those unhappy about mass migration to the UK? 64% of Brits want to see illegal economic migrants crossing the English Channel sent straight back, and they cannot

all be white racists. And France is actually a very nice place to live, believe it or not.

I well remember when the Brexit Referendum vote result was announced. It came as a huge shock to UK comedians. They had spent years portraying pro-Brexiteers as stupid, racist and xenophobic. How could 51% of Brits vote to leave? Well, we did. Now UK comedians have to come to terms with the fact that people like me, with three degrees, a Thai wife and gay, trans, black and French friends, voted to leave. I wonder if they ever will.

I could easily see the bubble, a bubble preventing UK comedy from appealing to this large part of the population which it presently prefers to ignore or ridicule. If we see more Western comedians here, we may see something similar happening in Phuket. That might be bad for business. "Go woke, go broke," as the saying goes.

I loved Dana's performance and I would definitely go to see her again should she return, and the new Junkyard Theatre is the perfect setting for such comedy. She was candid enough to tell me afterwards that she wanted to be a voice for those who have none. While this is a noble ambition, she may want to step outside the bubble I see most Western comedians as now trapped in. For, in reality, it is the voices of those outside this bubble that are now all-too often excluded, absent or most often ridiculed.

I believe that it is time that voice is heard and respected more online, in the media and in Western comedy.

And cheer up! Comedy will be all the richer and better for it!

Andy Tong Dee is a local expat, musician and singer. Visit his website and read his blog at [www.phuketmusicscene.com](http://www.phuketmusicscene.com). Find out more about Junkyard Theatre events at [www.junkyardtheatre.com](http://www.junkyardtheatre.com).



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# POP QUIZ

1. In which year did the first Rugby World Cup take place?
2. On April 18, 1930, BBC Radio reported, "There is no news." What did they broadcast instead?
3. How many films make up the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, so far?
4. What is the name for the spirit mediums participating in Thailand's Vegetarian Festival?
5. Has Beyoncé released more albums or perfumes?

Answers below, centre

## SUDOKU

Easy

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

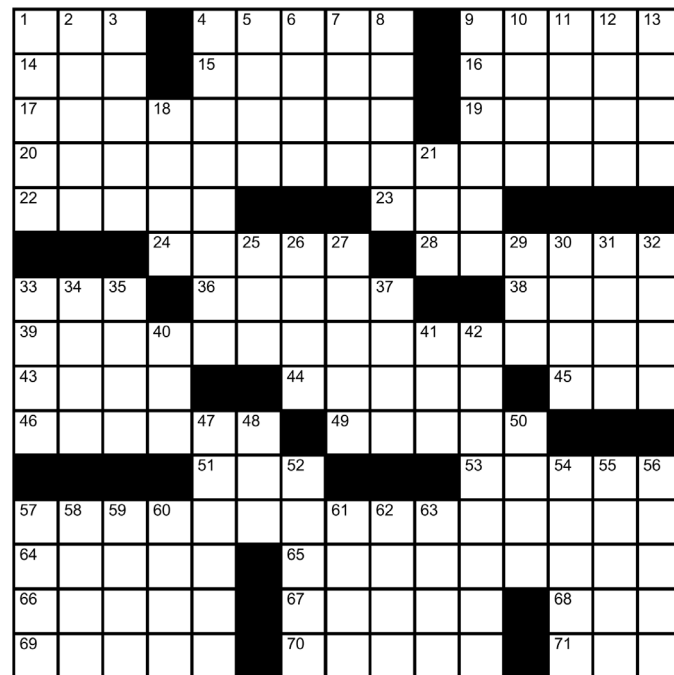
Across

1. End
4. Drops
9. Jollified
14. Baptist leader?
15. Poisonous to one's soul
16. Split to unite
17. Baked dish
19. Pea family plant
20. Certain contract
22. Early years in a century
23. Musical instrument, in Vietnam
24. Bake, as eggs
28. White mineral
33. Humanities degs.
36. "Glass \_\_\_" (Beatles tune)
38. Variety of 17-Across
39. Seller's guarantee
43. More than tickle
44. Mirliton
45. Schmaltz
46. Lover of Dido, in myth
49. Sheer fabric
51. Spout
53. Billiards move
57. 1944 Wilder flick
64. Any Time
65. Persian prophet

Down

1. Silent
2. Fatuous
3. Out of style
4. Rubber, e.g.
5. Red giant in Cetus
6. Smooth
7. Locker room supply
8. Built for speed
9. Extortion, for one
10. Jewish month
11. Pith helmet
12. Kind of proportions
13. Just say no
18. Phoenix \_\_\_
21. Identify
25. Connections
26. Insurer's calculation
27. Small tree
29. Elhi org.
30. Vocalized
31. "\_\_\_ the Fourth Generation" (Asimov story)

32. Waldorf salad ingredient
33. Arizona city
34. Spindle
35. Cross
37. Fascist
40. Ham holder
41. Palillo of "Welcome Back, Kotter"
42. Flat sharer
47. Shining
48. Freelancer's enc.
50. Family members, in the U.K.
52. "Carmen" composer
54. "Norwegian Wood" instrument
55. Gregg grad
56. High nest: Var.
57. Likes
58. Kon-Tiki Museum site
59. Like some bookstores
60. Lymph node swelling
61. Bagel topper
62. A Barrymore
63. Donkey's years



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

## Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) 1987; 2) Piano music; 3) Five; 4) Mah Song; 5) Perfumes

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

0.3

percent of solar energy from the Sahara would be enough to power the whole of Europe.

20

miles is how far most Britons live from where they were born, according to the UK Government.

6,000

is how many calories an elite chess player burns a day while playing in a tournament.

110,000

kilometres per hour is the speed at which the Earth moves around the Sun.

80 million

bacteria are transferred between mouths during a 10-second kiss.

Source: *Uberfacts*

## ISLAND VIEW



Robinson Lifestyle Thalang. Photo by Geoff Morris

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

## This week in history

### September 30, 2016

Two paintings with a combined value of US\$100 million are recovered after having been stolen from the Van Gogh Museum in 2002.

### October 1, 1946

12 high-ranking Nazis are sentenced to death in the Nuremberg Trials. Seven others receive prison sentences. Three are acquitted.

### October 2, 2018

Saudi journalist and dissident

Jamal Khashoggi is killed in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The CIA concludes he was assassinated.

### October 3, 1952

The United Kingdom successfully tests a nuclear weapon for the first time and becomes the third nuclear power after the United States and the Soviet Union.

### October 4, 1582

The Gregorian Calendar, the most widely used calendar in



Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Photo: April Brady / POMED

the world today, is introduced by Pope Gregory XIII.

### October 5, 1945

A six-month strike by Hollywood set decorators turns into a bloody riot at the gates of the Warner Brothers studio.

### October 6, 1976

Dozens of student protesters are killed by Thai state forces and far-right paramilitaries in the Thammasat University massacre. An online archive of the uprising and its quelling has been launched at doct6.com.

Source: *Wikipedia*



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# LIV makes Asian debut in Bangkok

## Thailand prepares to host Asia's richest ever golf tournament

### GOLF

AFP

The eyes of the golfing world are turning to Thailand as it gears up to host the richest tournament ever to be held on Asian soil – the Saudi Arabia-backed US\$25 million (B944mn) LIV Golf Invitational Bangkok.

Forty-eight golfers are Bangkok-bound to battle it out for individual and team glory as the circuit breaks new ground with Asia's inaugural LIV Golf Invitational event at Stonehill from Oct 7-9.

A stellar field including British Open champion Cameron Smith, big-hitting Bryson DeChambeau and multiple-major winners Dustin Johnson, Phil Mickelson and Brooks Koepka will compete in the tournament.

In addition, two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson will make on-air contributions to the broadcast coverage and serve as a non-playing captain at the course.

They will be joined by home heroes Sodom Kaewkanjana and Phachara Khongwatmai, plus a host of Ryder Cup- and major-winning stars including Henrik Stenson, Lee Westwood, Ian Poulter, Sergio

Garcia, Louis Oosthuizen and Patrick Reed.

The sixth of eight events in LIV's inaugural year, the LIV Golf Invitational Bangkok will hold the distinction of becoming the first

international tournament to be staged at the all-new Stonehill in Pathum Thani.

LIV Golf CEO and commissioner Greg Norman said: "Everyone at LIV Golf is enormously excited to bring

our innovative format and elite competition to Thailand and the people of Asia. Thailand is our first Asian stop as we continue our launch, and the LIV Golf Invitational Bangkok promises to be a truly incredible



Local hero Phachara Khongwatmai will be part of a strong field at the LIV Golf Invitational Bangkok. Photo: AFP

week for players and fans alike."

The revolutionary tournament format of LIV Golf aims to supercharge the sport of golf.

Each event sees a 48-man field compete in 12 teams of four, with a shotgun start, on-course music and entertainment that creates an electric atmosphere.

After three rounds of golf, both an individual and team champion is crowned and a prize of \$25mn shared.

An incredibly strong field for Bangkok features no less than 12 major champions and four former world No.1s set to be on the hunt for individual and team glory.

Thai star Phachara has featured in all five of this year's LIV Golf Invitationals, earning his spot through some top performances in the Asian Tour's new marquee International Series events, which are supported by LIV Golf.

"To be playing in an event of this scale at home in Thailand is something I could only have dreamed of growing up," he said.

Sodom, a two-time Asian Tour winner, has also played in all LIV Golf events so far this season.

Tickets for the LIV Golf Invitational Bangkok, starting at B800, are available at [thaiticketmajor.com](http://thaiticketmajor.com).

## Atthaya edges Kang for second LPGA title

### GOLF

ATTHAYA THITIKUL rolled in a birdie putt at the second playoff hole on Sunday (Sept 25) to edge Danielle Kang and capture her second LPGA title at the NW Arkansas Championship.

Atthaya, 19, started the day with a one-shot lead over Japan's Yuka Saso and had four birdies in a final-round 68 for a 17-under par total of 196 at Pinnacle Country Club.

Meanwhile, Kang, playing her third tournament since June after treatment for a tumor on her spine, surged up the leaderboard with a seven-under-par 64, capped by a hole-out eagle at the 18th.

Both parred the opening playoff hole, the par-three 15th.

Atthaya found the fairway at the next, the par-four 16th, while Kang was just right of the fairway.

Atthaya landed her second shot some 12 feet from the pin while Kang's approach bounced through the putting surface.



Atthaya with the trophy. Photo: AFP

The American's putt from the short greenside rough raced past the hole and Atthaya calmly stepped up to drain the winning putt.

Atthaya, who won the Ladies European Thailand Championship in 2017 as a 14-year-old amateur, rose from fifth to fourth in the world rankings on Monday.

Since winning her first

LPGA title in March she had top-10 finishes in the Women's PGA Championship, the Evian Championship and the Women's British Open.

She's also the fourth player from Thailand to earn multiple wins on the LPGA tour, a list led by Ariya Jutanugarn with 12 titles. AFP

## Asia Long Drive a big hit at Laguna Phuket

### GOLF

PHUKET HOSTED THE latest round of the Asia Long Drive Championship 2022 at Laguna Phuket Golf Club on Sept 16-18.

The three-day competition welcomed over 60 participants from an array of countries across the Asia region, including Japan, Korea, Thailand, China, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia.

Competitors were divided into three separate groups: Open Division (18 years of age and older for men and women), Women's Division and Master Division (45 years of age and above) with a total prize pool of US\$35,000 (B1.3 million) on offer across the three groups.

The rules are simple: the winner is the person who completes the longest drive. A "Qualified Drive" must be a minimum of 280 yards for the Open Division, 260 yards for the Masters Division and 240 yards for the Women's Division.

In the final round, played on Sept 18, Steffan Scutti of Australia won the Open Division, Phillis Meti of New Zealand won the Women's Division and Akihiro Hotta from



Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

Japan won the Master Division. All were awarded their trophy and winners' cheque by Thammawat Wongcharoenyot, president of the Phuket Sports Association.

The tournament was originally planned to take place in China but the zero-COVID-19 policy implemented by the Chinese government meant it had to switch and Phuket was chosen due to its accessibility and standing as a major regional tourism and sports activity hub.

Asia Long Drive Championship was founded in October 2021 by Asia Long Drive Association (ALDA), which is the governing body

of Long Drive sports in Asia.

The first competition was supported by Long Drive Japan, Korea Long Drive Association, New Zealand Long Drive and Long Drive China and is continuing to grow, with Phuket the latest tour venue.

As an initiative of actively competing Asian Long Drive professionals, the Asia Long Drive Championship aims to promote the game of the long drive sport in Asia and is open to players across the region. For eligibility and more information visit: <https://www.asialongdrive.com/about/>

The Phuket News



# Surakul upgrade in bid to co-host 2025 SEA Games

## SEA GAMES

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Authorities in Phuket are prepaing to upgrade Surakul Stadium after it was announced Thailand's Andaman provinces are getting ready to make a joint bid to host the 33<sup>rd</sup> Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) in 2025.

The announcement was made at a meeting held at Phuket Provincial Hall last Thursday (Sept 22) chaired by Lertsak Pattanachaikul, Chairman of the Sports Subcommittee of the House of Representatives.

Local authorities were represented by Governor Narong Woonciew, Vice-Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan, Director of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) office in Phuket Damrong Chaisena and other officials.

Also among those invited was Thanet Tantipiriyakit, the President of the Phuket Tourist Association.

It was announced at the



The capacity at Phuket's Surakul Stadium would increase to 20,000 spectators, should the bid be successful. Photo: Sartra Kanganok / Facebook

meeting that the Sports Committee of the House of Representatives had suggested Phuket joining forces with other Andaman provinces to jointly host the 2025 SEA Games. Thus local officials are now tasked with compiling "clear information on the zoning of the event", which means allocating specific areas and venues within provinces for particular sports.

Officials are urged to "expedite preparation of an overview of the readiness of the Andaman provinces and a central presentation to be

made in November 2022."

The idea is for "every province to be a host for some type of sports". Authorities also have to choose a stadium for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2025 SEA Games. The venue should have at least 20,000 seats, and to meet the requirement Phuket is ready to upgrade its 17,000-seat Surakul Stadium, said Thiwat Sidokbub, Vice President of Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO, or OrBorJor).

During the previous 31<sup>st</sup> SEA Games in Vietnam, held

earlier in May this year in Hanoi, over 5,400 athletes competed in 40 different sports. All 11 Asean nations participated. Originally planned to take place in November and December 2021, it was eventually rescheduled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> SEA Games will be held in Cambodia next year.

If Phuket and the Andaman provinces are selected to host the Games, it will be a great opportunity for Phuket in the future, reported PR Phuket.

The event will act as a rehearsal for hosting even larger sporting events. It will help to develop the sports industry and make Phuket a Sport City in full, as well as strengthen the pillars of provincial development with the aim to make Phuket a more complete Sport City.

The 2025 SEA Games should also support overall economic recovery after the COVID-19 crisis and create new opportunities for all six Andaman provinces, attracting public and private investment and encouraging further development and growth.



## F1 adds Las Vegas as 2023 calendar grows to 24 races

### FORMULA ONE

A FIRST RACE IN LAS Vegas has been provisionally added to the 2023 Formula One schedule, taking the total to a record 24.

The season will start in Bahrain on March 5 and finish in Abu Dhabi on Nov 26.

Las Vegas will be the penultimate round as F1 quickly adds a third race in the United States after Miami joined the schedule this season.

The Las Vegas race is subject to "homologation", or official approval of the circuit by FIA, the motor sports governing body.

The Chinese Grand Prix, last raced in 2019, returns as does the Qatar Grand Prix at Losail, which made its debut in 2021 but is not being raced this year.

The French Grand Prix, first raced in 1906, making it the oldest Grand Prix, is dropped. It was previously dropped between 2009 and 2017 before returning at Le Castellet.

The Sochi Grand Prix, scratched this year following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, does not return.

Two races considered under threat – Belgium and Monaco – are retained.

The global distribution of races continues to shift. There are nine in Europe, eight in Asia, four in North America and one each in South America and Australia.

"The presence of 24 races on the 2023 FIA Formula One World Championship calendar is further evidence of the growth and appeal of the sport on a global scale," said FIA President Mohammed Ben Sulayem. AFP

## War Elephants settle for third place

### FOOTBALL

THAILAND MADE UP FOR THEIR shock defeat to Malaysia by claiming third place in the King's Cup after securing a 2-1 upset victory over higher-ranked Trinidad and Tobago last Sunday (Sept 25).

Before the kick-off at Chiang Mai's 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Stadium, Thailand team manager Nualphan Lamsam announced a cash reward of B2 million for the squad for claiming third place in the prestigious tournament.

Nualphan told the players that she wanted them to win the game and claim some FIFA ranking points.

The promise of cash reward proved a big motivation for the War Elephants, who lost to regional foes Malaysia 5-3 in a penalty shoot-out on Thursday (Sept 22) following a 1-1 stalemate at the end of 90 minutes.

Trinidad and Tobago, who at No.101 were the highest-ranked team in the tournament, were edged 2-1 by Tajikistan, also on Thursday.

The hosts were without injured skipper Chanathip Songkrasin as coach Mano Polking gave starts to Suphanat Mueanta and Jakkaphan Kaewprom.

Thailand took the lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> minute after Trinidad and Tobago goalkeeper Marvin Phillip's effort to ward off a shot by Suphanat went straight to an unmarked Channarong Promsrikaew who rolled in his first goal for the national team.

Suphanat nearly added the second goal



Thai players celebrate after scoring in the win against Trinidad and Tobago. Photo: Bangkok Post

to the Thai tally before the break but was denied by Phillip. The young striker was then wasteful with another opportunity, firing the ball wide over the bar.

Trinidad and Tobago were relentless in their attacks in the second half and were rewarded with the leveller at the 60-minute mark when a Kareem Moses header off a corner was deflected into the goal by Thai defender Kritsada Kaman.

Thailand picked up the match-winning goal after 72 minutes when Channarong set up Supachok Sarachat, who finished off the move with spectacular curler to seal third place for the War Elephants.

Bangkok Post



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# Sport



**Thailand hosts LIV Golf Asia debut > p14**

## SOUTH DOWN NORTH

### North-South divide showdown at ACG



Kyle Addison carries the ball in the Northern versus Southern hemisphere Sevens game at the ACG last Saturday (Sept 24). Photo: Thanawat Phumipraphat

#### RUGBY

Neil Quail

On the back of a recent successful touch tournament, the Phuket Vagabonds arranged an internal match on Saturday (Sept 24) at the ACG, pitting teammates against each other in an eagerly anticipated Northern versus Southern hemisphere Sevens challenge, with the South eventually claiming victory following a vigorously contested encounter.

The Vagabonds junior academy started the day's proceedings when they lined out against Patong's Ban Sainamyen School, who were playing in their very first match day experience. While the All

Blacks impressed against Australia on television, this new generation of Phuket rugby players enthralled parents and supporters alike with an exhibition of fearless tackling and determined running.

Soon, the big screen was abandoned altogether in favour of cheering on both junior teams as they traded tries up until the last five minutes of the game. Having given their all, Vagabonds eventually succumbed to a very rapid Patong attack, conceding two late tries to give the visitors a 5-3 win.

Next up were the seniors, with both teams hitting their lines at pace from the outset. However, it was the Southerners who made the first impact as a weighted chip from the boot of Merrick Fairall found

Craig Morgan to crash through for a try under the posts.

South's captain Nic Bruno calmly converted but almost immediately he would see his side's advantage evaporate as a hopeful punt downfield from the Northerners gave rise to a foot race between speedsters Kyle Addison and Angus Hamilton, with the latter capitalising on a fumble to score. However, North's captain Paul Rothwell uncharacteristically skewed his conversion attempt to allow the South to maintain a two-point advantage.

Addison then notched a further four tries, the opposition finding his turn of pace difficult to counteract when he found room to roam. Additional tries from Fairall, Huko Benham, and Tashy Amien in response

to a Rothwell try took the game away from the North.

While it was a one-sided score line, the game was not so, remaining highly competitive up to the final whistle, which marked a well-earned victory for the Southerners.

"Today was an opportunity to try out certain combinations and put into effect what we've been practising," commented Vagabonds coach Dave Walker, who was delighted at the standard of rugby played throughout the day.

"This was a Sevens game made up of players from the Northern and Southern hemispheres, which added a nice touch of competitive banter, pride and bragging rights.

"It was a great game of rugby, the standard was very

high, and made for some great moments and tries," he added.

Victorious captain Nic Bruno was enthused at the event's success, despite grimacing through the pain of a dislocated finger. "It's always a cracking day to play rugby with the boys, and it was an extra special moment to see the Vagabonds academy team have their first contact match against Sainamyen School," he said.

"The seniors' game was a very competitive affair, with the Northerners putting up a good fight the whole way through. We knew it wouldn't be easy, and the physicality they brought was immense and constant throughout both halves. Thank you to everyone who made this event possible."

Northerners' captain, Paul Rothwell also voiced his appreciation. "Big thanks to all those involved in another fantastic day of rugby. It was great to see the Vagabonds academy players open the proceedings with their first competitive match. The skills and bravery of the young players was excellent and they certainly took a lot from the match," said Paul.

"The seniors' game was hard fought and competitive. The rugby was of a very high standard and it was clear to see the progression the teams have made in creating opportunities with the ball and having good organisation in defence.

"It was a pleasure to be part of it and I'm already looking forward to more fixtures later in the year," he added.

## Young Thai makes karting history

#### KARTING

NONG ENZO TARNVANICHKUL has made Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) Karting history after he became the first ever Thai champion in the sport.

The 13-year-old Thai, who is now based in Italy, was competing in the OK Junior class (12-14 years) at the 2022 FIA Karting World Championship at the Circuito Internazionale Napoli in Sarno, Italy on Sept 15-18.

More than 110 drivers from 40 countries were competing at the three-day competition, which is

held annually and considered the world's largest go-kart event.

Despite some inclement weather, Nong Enzo, driving for TONY Kart Racing team in car number 105, managed to successfully navigate the seven qualifying heats on the first two days, winning five to place him in pole position going into Sunday morning's (Sept 18) Super Heat.

However, there was to be a dramatic turn of events in this final session as Nong Enzo got into a tangle with Switzerland's Kian Fardin, resulting in both drivers retiring early from the race.

Despite the disappointment,

however, Nong Enzo only ended up dropping five places on the grid, thus starting the final race from sixth spot.

It didn't take long for Nong Enzo to show his intentions as he powered around the 1,550-metre track with a stunning drive. He demonstrated great poise and composure to finally pass all his opponents and take back the lead on the 10<sup>th</sup> lap of the 17-lap race before storming to victory at the chequered flag.

Hungary's Adam Hideg came in second place with Poland's Jan Przyrowski in third.

After learning of his success,

Acting Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan extended his congratulations to the youngster.

"General Prawit congratulates Nong Enzo for his dedication and determination and for training so hard in his sport," said Miss Traisuli Traisoronkul, deputy spokesperson of the Prime Minister's Office.

"He has brought great pride to Thailand with his victory," she added.

"Gen Prawit says he has every confidence Nong Enzo has the ability to step up and fulfil his dreams by becoming a professional racer in time. Gen Prawit added that Nong



Nong Enzo kisses the winner's trophy post race. Photo: Enzo Tarnvanichkul / Facebook

Enzo should serve as an example to all Thai people in how perseverance and hard work can help you achieve great results." Ben Tirebuck