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# POLL TIME



Main contenders: Rewat Areerob, Lersak Leenanitikul and Srithep Udomlap. Photos: Supplied

## HEAVYWEIGHTS WEIGH IN AS PHUKET GOES TO THE POLLS

**The Phuket News**  
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A nationwide ban on the sale of alcohol will go into effect from 6pm tonight (Jan 31) as the country goes to the polls for the Provincial Administration Organisation (PAO) elections tomorrow (Feb 1).

In accordance with election law in Thailand, the alcohol ban will be for 24 hours, leaving Phuket tourists without a drink until 6pm Saturday.

The ban applies to all people in

the country. Those caught violating the ban can face a fine of up to B10,000 or even up to six months in jail, or both, officials warned heavily in the run-up to the election.

As a last chance for voters to hear firsthand from the three confirmed candidates contesting the seat of President of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO), a debate was held at Phuket Rajabhat University last Sunday (Jan 26).

Present for the occasion were Lersak Leenanitikul, the

48-year-old candidate for the People's Party (formerly the Move Forward Party); former PPAO President Rewat Areerob; and Srithep Udomlap, 48, a resident of Moo 5, Kathu, representing the Thai Pakdee party.

Yet all eyes were on Mr Lersak and Mr Rewat as the most viable candidates, both strongly supported across the island.

The pair both reiterated their key policies, as announced at separate major rallies held earlier this month.

The People's Party held their

major campaign rally at Saphan Hin on Jan 19 to garner support for Mr Lersak, a medical doctor who served as Deputy Director of Vachira Phuket Hospital from 2015 to 2024. Mr Lersak has been assigned No.2 on the ballot.

The rally was attended by important figures from the People's Party (or 'Prachachon' Party), including Pita Limjaroenrat, former leader of the Move Forward Party, joined by outspoken anti-corruption MP Rangsiman Rome and MP Chutima Klaphan.

More than 1,000 people joined...

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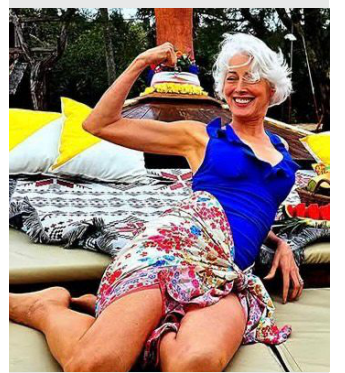
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# News



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## Talks held on new construction rules

THE PHUKET CHAMBER of Commerce held its seminar 'Unlocking the Phuket Environment: Crisis or Opportunity?' at the Royal Phuket City Hotel in Phuket Town last week, aimed at addressing the recent Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) announcement regarding environmental protection areas and measures in Phuket under the revised 2024 regulations.

Presided over by Chamber President Kongsak Khoopongsakorn, the seminar on Jan 23 drew a large audience of entrepreneurs, business leaders and investors. The event featured an in-depth discussion and analysis of the impacts of the new environmental regulations, which officials have said are designed to balance development with sustainability in the province.

The key change is the Cabinet resolution that now allows construction above



Photo: PR Phuket

the 80-metre limit in Phuket, which is likely to see a surge in single-building development in the hills across the island, with a windfall for owners of land on high ground.

Leading experts also delivered presentations, highlighted by an in-depth lecture from town planner Rakkiat Deetphin, who is also the head of the Phuket City Development Support Group.

During his opening remarks, Mr Kongsak "This announcement is a critical step towards preserving Phuket's natural beauty and ensuring sustainable development. It is essential to control land use and reduce pollution while promoting eco-friendly tourism and economic growth."

*The Phuket News*

## Phuket Old Town steps up for Chinese New Year

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Phuket City Municipality has officially announced its readiness to host its 'Phuket Chinese New Year Festival 2025', also being promoted as 'Phuket Festival 2025', which will take place from next Monday (Feb 3-5) in the heart of Phuket Old Town.

Phuket City Mayor Saroj Angkanapilas unveiled the event at a press conference held at the Chartered Bank intersection on Monday (Jan 27), alongside representatives from the Phuket Provincial Culture Office, the Tourism Authority of Thailand Phuket office and other key partners.

The festival aims to celebrate and preserve Phuket's cultural heritage while promoting tourism and stimulating the local economy. By showcasing the city's rich traditions and creative flair, the event



Photo: Phuket City Municipality

supports the government's policy of leveraging 'soft power' to enhance Thailand's cultural prominence and aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, Mayor Saroj said.

Mayor Saroj emphasised that the festival bridges Phuket's past and present, highlighting the connection between generations while fostering community pride. The event reflects a shared commitment to preserving the city's cultural identity and promoting unity among residents and visitors alike, he noted.

This year's festival, themed 'Phuket Festival

2025: The Charm of Culture, The Relationship of Phuket City,' promises a blend of traditional and modern activities:

- Grand Parade: Over 300 participants will take part in a procession showcasing Phuket's unique arts, culture and local lifestyle.

- Phuket Old Town Charm Discovery Challenge: Visitors can explore the area, participate in a fun scavenger hunt and win prizes.

- Interactive Experiences: Activities include auspicious word writing, plaster painting for kids, glow-in-the-dark cloth bag

painting and creative projects promoting environmental conservation.

- Digital Storytelling: Projector mapping will narrate Phuket's history and culture in a light-and-sound display.

A key attraction this year is the 'Dragon Lantern Tunnel', a 40-metre installation with three intricately designed sections spread across Krabi Rd, Thepkasattri Rd and Phuket Rd.

Cultural stage performances, featuring light and sound shows and youth showcases, will take place on the main stage opposite the Peranakan Museum and across five smaller stages at various iconic Old Town locations.

Food lovers can indulge in offerings from over 460 vendors, celebrating Phuket's designation as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy, with an array of local delicacies, Mayor Saroj said.

## Stalwart Rewat, contender Lersak ready for showdown in PPAO poll

*Continued from page 1*

...the rally, while police officers were on hand to ensure order.

Present for Phuket were People's Party candidates for the PPAO seats in all 23 constituencies across the island to be contested in the election.

Also present were all three Phuket MPs, who are all People's Party representatives: Somchart Techathavorncharoen, Chalermpong Saengdee and Thitikan Thitipruethikul.

All three Phuket MPs were elected to office by large margins under the Move Forward Party in the national election in 2023. Election law allowed them to keep their seats by joining the People's Party despite the Move Forward Party being dissolved by the Constitutional Court of Thailand on Aug 7 last year.

The court ruled that the Move Forward Party had violated the constitution by proposing an amendment of a law against insulting the monarchy known as Article 112 (lese majeste).

Mr Lersak shared his vision of making Phuket a livable and safe place that prioritises the well-being of both locals and visitors.

He explained that his policies are the result of over a year of fieldwork, focusing on addressing the real needs of the people of Phuket.

Key initiatives in Mr Lersak's plan include:

- Developing a better public transportation system.

- Establishing 'trilingual schools' and 'real-life schools' to improve education.

- Upgrading public health services, such as universal cancer screening and 24-hour community clinics.

- Tackling recurring flooding and wastewater issues.

- Ensuring clean water access for every household.

- Providing support for the elderly who need assistance.

Mr Lersak emphasised that creating a livable Phuket requires attention to the needs of both residents and tourists, proposing sustainable city development to improve the quality of life for all.

Mr Pita endorsed Mr Lersak as a candidate for PPAO President, calling him "the last piece of the jigsaw puzzle" needed to complete Phuket's transformation.

He highlighted pressing issues



The crowd ecstatic at the Phuket Yat Dai rally. Photo: Rewat Areerob

such as crime, accidents and health challenges faced by children. All key issues required immediate attention, he said.

Mr Pita also emphasised the critical role of the PPAO in improving education, public health and local infrastructure. He urged voters to select a capable team that can work effectively with various sectors to achieve meaningful progress for Phuket.

### REWAT RUNS

Meanwhile, also on Jan 19, Mr Rewat running for re-election took to the stage at the Phuket Merlin Hotel in Phuket Town in front of a crowd of over 1,000 people with a campaign speech at the Phuket Yat Dai Party's main campaign event.

Under the slogan, 'We do it for real, not selling dreams', Mr

Rewat emphasised his commitment to addressing Phuket's pressing issues and building a livable, sustainable and attractive city.

The campaign highlighted eight key policies designed to improve the quality of life for Phuket residents while driving economic and social development. Mr Rewat, candidate No.1 on the ballot, reflected on his achievements during his tenure from 2021 to 2024 and detailed his vision for the future.

Mr Rewat explained his key campaign policies as:

- Traffic Solutions: Expanding mass transit routes, developing secondary roads, and pushing forward the Thepkasattri parallel road project to make travel more efficient and environmentally friendly.

- Disaster Preparedness: Implementing an intelligent warning system (Phuket Alert), establishing district disaster prevention centers, and strengthening safety measures for residents and tourists.

- Healthcare: Expanding telemedicine across the province, upgrading emergency services,

adding dialysis centers, and enhancing the standard of traditional Thai medicine.

- Education: Promoting AI-focused learning, lifelong education, and practical skill development to prepare Phuket's youth for global challenges.

- Environmental Sustainability: Advancing waste management, marine conservation, and carbon neutrality efforts while fostering community involvement to create a balanced and livable city.

- Sports and Health: Developing standard sports facilities, promoting Phuket as a health destination, and encouraging participation in wellness and recreational activities.

- Economic Growth: Supporting international festivals, promoting cultural diversity, restoring tourist attractions, and pushing local products into global markets.

- Youth Empowerment: Launching the Next New Gen initiative, including the creation of TCDC Phuket and Charterbank House by late 2025, to foster creativity, skill development, and contemporary crafts.



# 'Love Wins' with equal marriage

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Phuket made history on Jan 23 as it hosted a grand celebration for equal marriage registrations, marking a monumental step forward for love and equality in Thailand.

"I am happy to see Thailand's progress regarding marriage equality for the LGBTQIA+ community. This not only demonstrates an understanding of the complexity of love but also sets a precedent for Thailand as the first country in South-east Asia to pass such a bill into law," said Khun Tony, an LGBTQIA+ resident living in Phuket.

"From my perspective as an expat living in Thailand for more than a decade, I've always viewed the country as very tolerant of the LGBTQIA+ community. It is wonderful to see the laws align with the ways of life that are openly supported and showcased in the Kingdom," he added.

The vibrant event, part of the nationwide 'DOPA-Day One: Beating the Gong



Photo: PR Phuket

to Win All Love' initiative, brought together 24 joyful couples at the Bay Arena in Jungceylon shopping mall in Patong amidst a sea of smiles, cheers and heartfelt moments.

The landmark occasion was the first day of equal marriage registration across Thailand, with the Kathu District Registration Office leading the charge. Among the 24 couples who tied the knot were seven male-male couples and 14 female-female couples, each stepping into a new chapter of life hand-in-hand.

Khun Ann and Khun Kaffy, a female-female couple, told *The Phuket*

*News*, "I couldn't even sleep – we were so excited for this day to come. When we heard the law had passed, we immediately started planning and booking the date for our registration."

Khun Panisara and Khun Plaisanit, a male-male couple, expressed, "We are very happy to have this day. We never thought Thailand would reach this level of openness. We've been waiting over four years for this moment, and it's such a positive sign of Thailand becoming more open and diverse regarding gender."

Khun Arm and Khun Aom, another male-male

couple who have been together for seven years, said, "This moment grants us the same rights as heterosexual couples. We're overjoyed to finally experience true freedom in love."

For Khun Nam and Khun Nok, one of the female-female couples, the occasion also marked the end of a long wait. "We've been together since graduating and have waited so long – 10 years, in fact. Initially, we planned to fly abroad to register. However, when Thailand announced this law – something that honestly should have been enacted long ago – we

decided to wait another year, and now the day has finally come."

"This is a basic right that Thailand should have implemented from the start for citizens who pay taxes," the couple noted.

Khun Zai and Khun Pui shared how they had taken pre-wedding photos even before the law was passed, holding on to the hope that this day would come.

"We took wedding photos as a testament to our love, finally making it official fills us with happiness," they said.

The venue at Jungceylon was transformed into a celebration of love, adorned with decorations that set the tone for a day to remember. Couples registered and posed for keepsake photos, radiating happiness as they were cheered on by friends, family and dignitaries.

The highlight of the ceremony was the symbolic procession of dowries, featuring a lively long drum parade. Many couples wore traditional 'kebaya' outfits, recognised by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity,

adding a touch of cultural pride to this historic moment.

The event was graced by prominent figures, including Chaiwat Junthiraphong, Director-General of the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA), Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong and other esteemed officials. Their presence underscored the significance of the milestone in Thailand's journey toward inclusivity and equality.

In addition to the celebrations in Patong, equal marriage registrations were also held at Mueang Phuket District Office and Thalung District Office. Four couples registered in Mueang Phuket, while three celebrated their unions in Thalung.

The event represents more than a legal milestone – it is a celebration of love, diversity and equality, resonating not only in Phuket but across all 878 districts in Thailand.

Finally, together, Thailand is beating the gong for love, loudly and proudly.

## Beached migrants found safe

A GROUP OF 48 IMMIGRANTS, comprising 19 men and 29 women, have been taken into safe custody after they were found walking along roads in northern Phuket and in Tha Noon, just north of Phuket in Phang Nga Province, early on Jan 21.

The immigrants are believed to have traveled by boat from Bangladesh or Myanmar.

Tha Chatchai Police at the northern tip of Phuket were informed of the group by concerned locals at about 6am. The residents reported seeing unusual groups of people walking through the area.

Officers arrived at the reported locations to find three separate groups of individuals walking about 10 minutes apart. Preliminary questioning revealed that the individuals were not Thai nationals but had reportedly been transported by boat to Tha Noon Pier, located in Tambon Khok Kloi, in Takua Pa District, Phang Nga.

After landing, the group split into two: one headed toward Phuket and the other deeper into Phang Nga Province.

Authorities quickly coordinated with multiple agencies, including Immigration and Social Development and Human Security officers.

Also informed of the groups were Marine Police, the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command (based



Photo: Wiwat Jindapon

in Phuket) and the Phuket branch of the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (Thai-MECC 3) to provide assistance and handle the situation according to legal and humanitarian standards.

Wiwat Jindapon, a former Vice-President of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO, or OrBorJor) Council who also serves as a member of the Working group of the Deputy Minister of Interior, stated that local villagers initially reported the sighting of strangers near Wat Mai Khao Beach.

When authorities arrived, they found a large group of people, though some fled upon approach. The individuals were later brought to the Phuket Check Point at Tha Chatchai for further inspection.

Through an interpreter, the group explained that they had left Bangladesh by fishing boat with the intention of reaching a third country, believed to be Malaysia.

However, due to issues during their journey, they were left on the coast near Myanmar. Fearing capture, the group reportedly traveled along the coastline on foot for over five days before reaching Tha Chatchai Beach.

Most of the individuals were found in a weak and malnourished state, having gone several days without food or water.

Authorities provided immediate assistance, including food, water and medical care for those who were ill. Villagers were also urged to report any further sightings of strangers in the area to authorities.

Thalang District Chief Siwat Rawangkun emphasised that the case is being handled under humanitarian principles.

Authorities are working to determine the nationalities and identities of the individuals with the assistance of the Immigration Bureau and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security," Mr Siwat said.

The investigation continues as officials coordinate efforts to provide care and assess the next steps for these individuals under Thai law, he added. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

## Police raid Chinese-run cafe for lion cub abuse, again

TWO CHINESE NATIONALS, a man and a woman, have been arrested for using lion cubs to lure visitors to The Glass House Cafe and Space on Ratsada-Anusorn Rd in Ratsada, and charge tourists to have their photos taken with them.

The Glass House Cafe and Space was at the centre of a wildlife abuse scandal last year for the same practice with now-rescued lion cub 'Nong Kiwi'. In that incident, a Chinese woman who remained unnamed by police was reportedly charged for doing exactly the same thing.

Armed with a search warrant, officers from Region 8 Police raided The Glass House Cafe and Space at 1:30pm on Jan 22.

Inside, the officers found a large number of customers using the café's services. The establishment had brought in three lion cubs for customers to photograph and touch.

The café charged B500 per person for five minutes with the larger cubs, and B1,000 per person for five minutes with the smaller ones.



Photo: Region 8 Police

An investigation revealed that the café's true owner is a Chinese national, who had hired another Chinese individual to act as an interpreter, catering specifically to Chinese and other foreign customers.

During the inspection, two Chinese nationals were found working at the café: Police identified the two as: Mr Bin Bin Cai, aged 42; and Ms Chen Hong, aged 38.

Police made no mention of whether Ms Chen Hong was the same Chinese woman arrested and charged last year.

*Eakkapop Thongtub*



The Phuket News

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 11 m/s

SAT FEBRUARY 1

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SUN FEBRUARY 2

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

MON FEBRUARY 3

High: +35°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE FEBRUARY 4

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED FEBRUARY 5

High: +37°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU FEBRUARY 6

High: +36°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Pedestrian killed as 10-wheeler hits pickup

A 10-WHEELED TRUCK collided with a pickup truck, triggering a chain of events that killed a pedestrian on Thepkasatri Rd last week.

Police were informed of the accident, near the entrance to the old road to the airport, in Moo 1, Mai Khao, at about 10:30am on Jan 22.

Tha Chatchai Police and rescue workers arrived to find a Phuket-registered Isuzu pickup with heavy damage to its front, a KIA 'Carnival' SUV registered in Bangkok with heavy damage to its rear, and a 10-wheel Hino closed-box truck registered in Phuket parked nearby.

The driver of the truck, 24-year-old Amornsak Ngoenngam from Ratchaburi was standing by waiting for police.

Rescue workers immediately attended to a man who was unconscious and unresponsive by the side of the road. The man, identified as Jakkarin Thongtub, 45, was rushed to Thalang Hospital, but later pronounced dead.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

The two people in the Isuzu pickup – driver Sommart Hlabmala, 42, from Maha Sarakham, and his passenger Kesakanok Kongrak, 36, from Nakhon Ratchasima – both suffered minor injuries and were taken to Thalang Hospital.

Police were told that the Hino truck driven by Mr Amornsak struck the Isuzu D-Max pickup, causing the Isuzu driver Mr Sommart to veer off the road.

In a state of panic Mr Sommart's vehicle struck Mr Jakkarin, who was walking alongside the road, inflicting the fatal injuries on him.

The Isuzu pickup then collided with the parked Kia SUV, causing additional damage.

At last report police said they were still investigating the accident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Girl, 14, rescued from attempted sex attack

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Police swiftly apprehended a man caught attempting to abduct a 14-year-old girl in Kamala last Friday (Jan 24).

The incident occurred early in the morning, when the victim narrowly escaped harm with the help of a hotel security guard and bystanders.

According to police, the girl, referred to as 'Ploy' (a pseudonym), was waiting for her school bus near the entrance of Soi Bluma in Kamala when a man approached her at about 5:50am.

The suspect reportedly asked if her bus had not arrived yet. When Ploy did not respond, the man grabbed her by the neck and threatened her with a knife, attempting to drag her into the alley.

Fortunately, a hotel security guard and nearby residents noticed the commotion and intervened, forcing the suspect to release the girl.

When her bus arrived, the driver found the girl crying near the hotel with several villagers standing



Photo: Kamala Police

nearby to comfort her. The driver later took her to school and reported the incident to her family and the Kamala Police.

Upon receiving the report at 10:30am, Kamala Police Chief Pol Col Somsak Thongkliang ordered an immediate investigation. With assistance from village leaders and security footage, authorities identified the suspect as Han Mo Aung, a 39-year-old Myanmar national residing at a nearby workers' camp.

Within 12 hours of the initial report, police arrested Han at the workers' camp and seized key evidence, including the knife allegedly used in the incident and the clothes he wore at the time.

Pol Col Somsak commended the cooperation

between local authorities, residents and community leaders, stating that their vigilance and prompt actions were instrumental in resolving the case quickly. "The involvement of the hotel security guard and residents in assisting the victim reflects the strong sense of community in Kamala," he said.

He also urged parents to accompany their children to bus stops, particularly in secluded areas, to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Han faces multiple charges, including staying in the country illegally, attempted abduction for indecent purposes and unlawful use of a weapon. At last report, he remained in custody at Kamala Police Station for further questioning and legal proceedings.

## Police probe 6kg heroin delivery

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING more than six kilogrammes of heroin delivered to a hotel room in Tambon Thepkasatri, in central Phuket.

Park Sukhee, a 65-year-old South Korean national, raised the alarm last Saturday night (Jan 25) by calling the Korean consulate representative in Phuket at around 11pm after suspecting a suitcase delivered to his room by an unidentified man contained illegal substances.

Thalang Police arrived to find two paper-wrapped packages, secured with Scotch tape, hidden inside the suitcase. The packages contained a white powder later confirmed to be heroin. One of the packages weighed 3.8kg, the other weighed 2.8kg. Preliminary tests indicated the substance was heroin, police reported.



Photo: Thalang Police

Mr Park told police he had been in contact with a British man through WeChat for two years. Despite frequent communication, the two had never met in person.

The British contact reportedly arranged Mr Park's flight and accommodations in Phuket, booking the room from Jan 24-26. The man instructed Mr Park to receive the suitcase, and Mr Park was to fly on to France, via Doha.

Police are working to identify the unknown man who delivered the suitcase and examining CCTV footage from the hotel to trace the suspect's movements.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Kamala Police to track down hoons

KAMALA POLICE ARE under pressure to crack down on reckless motorcyclists after a group of foreign tourists were captured on video speeding through a checkpoint without stopping.

The footage, which quickly went viral on local social media channels, including the Phuket Hod Jang Facebook page, has sparked widespread criticism from the local community.

The incident occurred on the Patong-Kamala Road, where traffic police had set up a checkpoint to monitor vehicles.

A 1-minute-and-17-second dashboard camera video shared online shows one tourist on a motorcycle ignoring the officers' attempts to stop him and racing toward Patong. The video further revealed others from the same group following suit, zipping past the checkpoint without hesitation.

Members of the same group are then speeding to catch up with their friends.



Screenshot: Yutthaphong Nalak / Facebook

"If you encounter this, it's a big deal. It causes trouble for drivers to the fullest extent," the post on the Phuket Hod Jang page said.

"Kamala Police Chief announced that today, he will check every bill and will not let anyone cause trouble for tourists and the people of Phuket," the post added.

Netizens were quick to share their frustrations in the comment section. Complaints ranged from the dangers posed by such reckless behaviour to calls for stricter enforcement against offenders.

Some of the comments posted in response to the video again cited the 'visa-free' policy as a major factor.

Meanwhile, locals are calling for a stronger police presence and more accountability. Eakkapop Thongtub



# Big Buddha construction listed as landslide 'factor'

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A report by the Department of Mineral Resources investigation into the landslide in Kata on Aug 23 last year that killed 13 people has listed the new parking lot and nearby restroom constructed at the Big Buddha Viewpoint as factors that contributed to the cause of the deadly landslide.

The news comes as Karon Police confirm that they are now investigating the deaths of the 13 killed in the landslide.

Pol Lt Col Ekkasak Kwanwan, Senior Inspector (Investigation) at Karon Police, who is handling the case, explained, "The police have accepted the complaint from the victims' representatives, accusing the foundation and its president of negligence, which led to the deaths and injuries."

However, he added, "I need to conduct further questioning from both sides,



Photo: Department of Mineral Resources

as the complaint was only filed on Dec 26.

"More evidence has been submitted by the victims' representatives, so before we call the Phra Phuttha Ming Mongkol Sattha Foundation 45 and its president, Suporn Wanichkul, we need to hear from them first and look at the evident that they submitted to us," he added.

Pol Lt Col Ekkasak did not explain why Karon Police were not already investigating the deaths of 13 people in the police station's area of jurisdiction, despite the same report being presented to the

Phuket Governor, Sophon Suwannarat, on Dec 20.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee has shared the Department of Mineral Resources' Landslide Inspection Report with the Governor of Phuket, providing an in-depth analysis of the landslide in Karon.

The document was received on Nov 28, under complaint 'No. 145' accepted by the Phuket Damrongdhama Centre (Phuket Provincial Ombudsman's Office).

The investigation report outlined several key factors that led to the landslide, with one of the main points

being the impact of development projects in the area.

The new parking lot and restroom constructed at the Big Buddha Viewpoint were listed among the contributing factors.

"These alterations could have compromised the area's stability, contributing to the disaster," the report said.

The Department of Mineral Resources Region 4 Office has submitted the report to the relevant authorities to address the issue and to take measures to mitigate the risks of future landslides, MP Chalermpong noted.

The document includes actions taken so far and recommends further steps to improve the area's safety, he said.

"We will continue to fight for justice for those affected by the loss. We are committed to gathering all possible evidence to bring about accountability for those responsible," MP Chalermpong stated.

## Elephant wanders Cherng Talay streets

A DRAMATIC SCENE unfolded in the Cherng Talay area last week when an elephant escaped from its camp, sending villagers into a panic and prompting swift action from police and local handlers.



Image: Cherng Talay Police

Pol Maj Kittipong Nupheng of the Cherng Talay Police was alerted by concerned residents at about 10am on Jan 23 that the elephant had broken free and was roaming from Soi Cherng Talay 3, heading toward Cherng Talay Witthayakom School.

Witnesses reported the elephant had a scaffolding pole tangled around its neck, which caused minor damage to a vehicle along its path. A car window had been damaged during the incident, though no injuries or fatalities were reported.

The escape caused further alarm when the elephant wandered onto school grounds, prompting officers to coordinate with a veterinarian and the animal's mahout (handler) to come up with a way to safely capture the pachyderm.

Witnesses reported that the elephant appeared agitated and unapproachable, likely due to the stress of the unfamiliar surroundings and noise.

The situation was eventually resolved when the elephant left the school premises and waded into a nearby canal. With the combined efforts of the mahout and authorities, the animal was safely returned to its camp, Elephant Care Park, without further incident.

Natthaphong Chuphak, 30, the manager of the camp, explained that the elephant had fled the camp after being startled by the sound of a car horn.

He expressed gratitude to the police and the community for their swift assistance in resolving the matter.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Kata, Karon get a cleanup

THE BEACHES AT KATA and Karon were the focus of a major cleanup last weekend, including the enforcement of beach rules on the sands.

Karon Mayor Jadet Wicharasorn led a sortie of council law enforcement officers to ensure the beach chair operators were staying within their zones.

The team also inspected local vendors on the beaches to ensure they were complying with restrictions, such as no alcohol to be sold to people on the beach.

While the 'cleanup was underway, officers came across one foreign tourist who had parked a rented camper van on the sand. The foreign tourist was promptly asked to move.

Also last Friday (Jan 24), the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), in collaboration with government agencies, private businesses and members of local communities, launched the 'Underwater Garbage Collection Project, Artificial Coral Reefs 2025' at Kata Beach.

The two-day event was aimed at promoting the conservation and restoration



Photo: Karon Municipality

of marine and coastal natural resources, and draw attention to the critical need for environmental protection in the region.

The event on Friday saw the beach cleanup underway, while the event continued last Saturday (Jan 25) with the underwater cleanup.

Presiding over the opening ceremony was Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai, who emphasised the significance of protecting artificial coral reefs.

"These reefs are not only vital habitats for marine animals but also key conservation tourist attractions and critical resources for Phuket's economy," he noted.

The project featured three main activities: Underwater

garbage collection in artificial coral reef areas; Beach garbage collection along Kata Beach; and Sorting and cleaning marine debris.

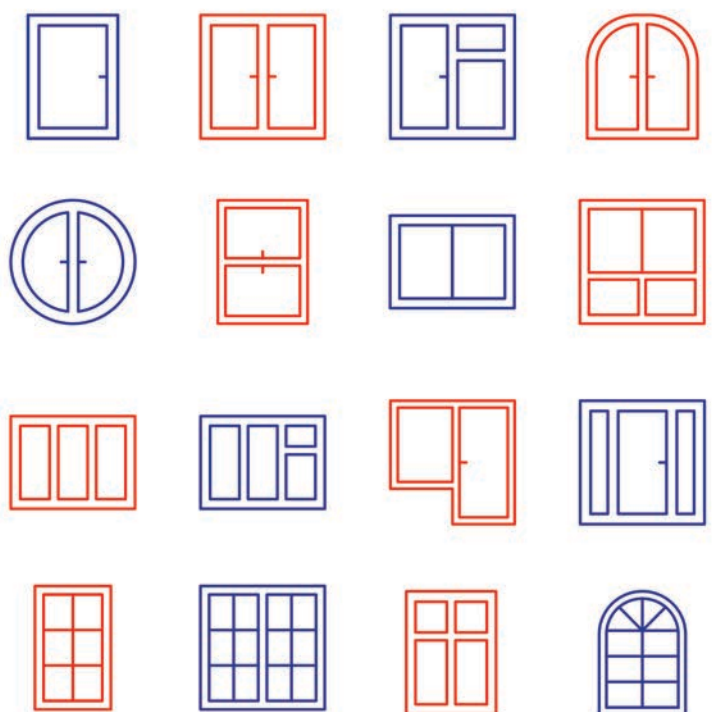
A total of 365 participants, representing various organisations – including Karon Municipality, the Volunteer Diving Club, local hotels, environmental volunteer networks and the general public – came together to support the initiative.

The event also aligned with 'LEV Week', a campaign under the Local Volunteer Environment Promotion Week organised by the Department of Local Administration (DOLA). The nationwide effort aims to promote sustainable environmental practices across Thailand.

The Phuket News



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# Phuket's New Lakeside Paradise: A Hidden Gem in Bangtao

## ADVERTORIAL

### Discover Serenity in the Heart of Phuket

Bangtao, a district well known for its vibrant lifestyle, has fallen victim of its own rapid growth. Everybody wants to live at the very heart of Phuket, with live events and exquisite restaurants at hand, yet, escape the hordes of people and exhausting traffic.

Finally, the solution has been found! Located 5 min drive from Porto de Phuket and Boat Avenue and only 12 min drive from Maya and Catch Beach clubs, this hidden gem, however, offers peace and tranquility. The name is Redwood Lakeside. Situated at the side of the beautiful lake, with tropical mountains next to it and the 4-lane drive to Bang Tao, this land manages the impossible: keeps you next to all the events, yet, at distance, so that you can enjoy the serenity of life.



### What else? The infrastructure includes:

- Community center in the village (featuring a gourmet restaurant, a fully-equipped fitness center and a rooftop bar with panoramic views)
- Brand-new HomePro (opened a month ago, with a new Villa market in it, 2 min drive from the villas)
- All the infrastructure around the lake, including a

space for activities and a jogging track.

### Sustainable Design, Modern Comfort

Over 1,700 trees and plants enhance the surroundings of the project, making this tropical paradise even greener. Villas are built with energy-efficient materials, featuring solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations. Double-wall

construction ensures cooler interiors and lower energy consumption, making eco-friendly living both practical and luxurious.

### California-Inspired Elegance

Redwood Lakeside's villas are designed to suit every taste, offering three- and four-bedroom options in single- or double-story layouts. The most inspiring

feature is the open-play layout: the transitions between indoor and outdoor is seamless, the windows are floor-to-ceiling, so, when standing in the living room you can see your terrace so well, as though there is no division.

### Your Invitation to Explore

Redwood Lakeside is more than a development—it's a lifestyle. Visit the sales

office at 8 Soi Cherrngtalay 1, Cherrngtalay, Thalang, Phuket, or call +66 80 180 8999 to learn more. Experience a place where nature meets luxury, right in the heart of Bangtao.

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## Crypto 'sandbox' to be launched in Phuket

A CRYPTOCURRENCY SANDBOX is expected to be launched in Phuket in October, says former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

In a discussion on ASEAN's economy, Thaksin said Thailand is more prepared than any other in the region to move ahead with cryptocurrency, especially after US president-elect Donald Trump's plan to adopt it.

He said other nations in the region are also keen to hold talks with Thailand about cryptocurrency, which he described as an opportunity to inject money into the economic system.

When asked about his recent remarks about inviting ASEAN countries to engage in talks on this matter, Thaksin said such discussions are underway.

He stressed that cryptocurrency should be adopted quickly as delays could lead to the best minds in the sector migrating to the US.

He pointed out that cryptocurrencies should not be confused with gambling, saying it is a new form of currency backed by assets, such as gold or government bonds.

He said these currencies are known as 'stablecoins' and they carry less risk than others. He said Thailand will not accept high-risk cryptocurrencies and a cryptocurrency sandbox is expected to be launched in October involving the private sector.

At a Pheu Thai seminar last month, Thaksin, said to be de facto leader of the



Photo: Bangkok Post / file

party, proposed using Phuket as a Bitcoin sandbox for tourism to encourage digital currency holders to spend their digital money in the country.

The idea was welcomed by Nirun Fuwattananukul, chief executive of Gulf Binance, who said the project would be a positive step to boost Thailand's competitiveness and attractiveness to tech-savvy visitors.

Mr Nirun said implementing a sandbox approach was a prudent strategy as it would provide a controlled environment allowing the regulator to closely monitor and assess the implications, while businesses and consumers would gain practical experience. *Bangkok Post*

## Online TM6 form coming May 1

THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND Sports is preparing to promote the online TM6 immigration form, which will be compulsory for all foreign arrivals entering Thailand as of May 1, though the government is reluctant to start collecting the B300 tourism fee this year.

TM6 immigration forms were temporarily suspended by the Cabinet on April 15, 2024.

When the suspension period ends on April 30 this year, a digital version of the TM6 will replace the paper-based one, said Natthriya Thaweevong, the ministry's permanent secretary.

She said the online form is expected to help track tourists while they are in Thailand, increasing confidence in safety as the country combats negative perceptions.

This week the ministry held an internal meeting and invited the Immigration Bureau to demonstrate the online system.

It will also hold a meeting on Jan 31 with all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, airlines, hotels and tour agencies, to learn more about the online form and help to publicise the process to foreigners.

Mongkon Wimonrat, the ministry's deputy permanent secretary, said the government would prioritise the digital TM6 before adopting other types of entry screening planned earlier to prevent confusion among tourists.

He said the online TM6 applies only to foreign arrivals. The free online form will be compulsory for all arrivals by air, land and sea, said Mr Mongkon.



Tourists walk through the arrivals hall at Suvarnabhumi airport. Photo: Somchai Poomlard / Bangkok Post

The Cabinet is expected to approve the scheme next month to allow related parties to prepare, he said.

A source at the ministry who requested anonymity said that with the online TM6 form coming soon, there is a greater likelihood the B300 tourism fee will be postponed.

The government wants the TM6 process to operate without any problems, and it could take months or even a year until the system runs smoothly, said the source.

As the country copes with news regarding illicit networks using Thailand as a transit hub to neighbouring countries, the government may believe now is an inappropriate time to start collecting the fee, added the source.

Implementing another pre-screening measure, such as an electronic travel authorisation, which some countries have used to enable visa-free travellers to gain approval prior to arriving in the country, would also be delayed to pave the way for the online TM6 process to operate smoothly, said the source.

*Bangkok Post*



# PM gets tough on haze

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra has raised the status of the PM2.5 problem from a national agenda item to an issue requiring ASEAN cooperation to solve.

The PM said on Monday (Jan 27) that the escalating crisis is no longer just a national concern and other countries in the region are also facing cross-border pollution problems.

Foreign Affairs Minister Maris Sangiampongsa has been asked to negotiate with ASEAN countries to address the issue under existing frameworks, the PM confirmed.

Collaborative efforts to mitigate agricultural burning in Thailand and neighbouring countries have been discussed and Thai authorities have rolled out preventive measures, including penalties for agricultural burning, since November last year, she explained.

"This is not just the responsibility of one person or one country. Everyone must contribute to creating great power [to help solve the PM2.5 problem]," the PM commented.

Immediate actions were being taken to alleviate pollution levels, while mid- and long-term strategies are in place, she said.

Free bus and electric train rides were introduced in Bangkok last



The Grand Palace seen through murky haze. Photo: Bangkok Post

weekend while the government also asked private companies to allow employees to work from home where possible to help to curb vehicle emissions, one of the sources of the PM2.5 pollutants. Implementing a work-from-home policy nationwide is a possibility, the PM confirmed.

The Digital Economy and Society Ministry has also set up an application for people to report incidents of agricultural waste burning so measures can be taken to deal with them swiftly.

"Of course, when the air is full of dust, we can't just snap our fingers to make it disappear. We've prepared as much as we can, putting in our full effort," the PM said.

The National Disaster Management Command Headquarters has also been instructed by Ms Paetongtarn to adopt the model deployed by the Operation Centre for Flood and Landslide Victims, which helped address flood problems late last year, to monitor air pollution and provide aid.

The committee to combat PM2.5 is overseen by Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, with daily meetings scheduled.

"Thailand is constantly facing annual natural disasters. It starts with haze, followed by drought, floods, and cold weather, and the cycle repeats every year. We can't continue to live like this," Anutin said on Monday.

Key agencies, including the Department of Pollution Control, the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (Gistda) and the Industry Ministry, will also report on their progress in combating the haze and improving air quality.

Unsafe levels of PM2.5 were detected in 58 out of 77 provinces on Monday, with the worst air pollution detected in the Central Plains.

According to the Public Health Ministry, face masks are being distributed to vulnerable groups in the areas where levels are deemed hazardous.

# Thai same-sex marriage law sees hundreds wed

## BANGKOK

SAME-SEX COUPLES across Thailand tied the knot at district offices and shopping malls amid smiles, tears and celebrations as the long-awaited Marriage Equality Act officially took effect on Jan 23.

A mass LGBTQ wedding in Bangkok and others across the country saw at least 1,000 couples marry on the first day.

Thailand ranks highly in surveys of LGBTQ legal and living conditions, and public attitudes, and the milestone act makes it the first Southeast Asian country to allow equal marriage.

The country's same-sex marriage bill was passed in a historic parliamentary vote last June, making it the third place in Asia to do so after Taiwan and Nepal, and was ratified by His Majesty the King in October.

The law on marriage now uses gender-neutral terms in place of "men", "women", "husbands" and "wives", and also grants adoption and inheritance rights to same-sex couples.



Photo: Bangkok Post

One couple, Rungtiwa Thangkanopast and Phanlavee Chongtangsat-tam, recalled their first attempt to register their marriage 12 years ago in Bangkok where they were welcomed by officials but then denied the right at the registrar's desk as marriage between two women, they were told, was not permitted.

Last week, they finally had the chance to wed.

"I am delighted and excited because we have been waiting for this day for a very long time," Rungtiwa said. "For 20 years, we have loved each other and have had to hide from society's disapproval. But now we can stand proudly."

Bangkok Post

# Thai investment agenda pushed at Davos

## BANGKOK

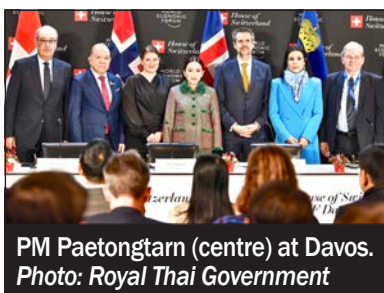
PRIME MINISTER PAETONGTARN Shinawatra highlighted Thailand's willingness to welcome foreign investment in the digital economy, agriculture, soft power and sustainable industries at the World Economic Forum (WEF) last week in Davos, Switzerland.

The premier outlined the government's vision and policies to top executives from various industries at the "Country Strategy Dialogue on Thailand" forum at the annual gathering of global leaders and businesspeople.

Ms Paetongtarn emphasised Thailand's economic potential including its strategic location and ranking as the second-largest economic hub in Southeast Asia with world-class infrastructure and industrial estates.

She said the country is moving towards tapping the digital industry and new technology to strengthen its potential in three key areas: agricultural industry, soft power activities and sustainable advanced industries.

Thailand has been promoting the use of AI and robots in the agriculture sector to improve the accuracy and efficiency of agricultural practices and production which will help sustain



PM Paetongtarn (centre) at Davos. Photo: Royal Thai Government

the country's capacity as a "kitchen of the world".

The government also gives high importance to the creative economy, including tourism, and is proud to rank among the world's most popular tourism destinations, she added.

She said Thailand is also looking to be a hub of the medical and health industry, which is expected to soon become another key driving force in the country's continuous economic growth.

Thailand also supports the green earth agenda by promoting bio-based industries and adopting the bio-circular-green (BCG) economic model including green investment and technology.

Turning to advanced industries that will shape the future of the country, the PM said development of an extensive ecosystem for electric vehicles was well under way and the digital economy is being promoted through the creation and operation of new data centres.

Thailand also aims to raise its capacity of using renewable energy, especially solar, wind and biomass, to generate electricity by at least 50% by 2040, she added.

In developing its digital economy, Thailand currently focuses on two key elements: digital infrastructure and human resources.

While facilitating the development of financial technology to provide more opportunities for local businesses to compete at the global level, the country also works to attract more investors from overseas to invest in advanced industries such as cloud services, data centres and semiconductor production in Thailand, she said.

The PM also expressed her belief in the benefits of multilateral efforts in supporting the free trade and investment environment, saying Thailand now aims to open negotiations with other countries and territories, including the European Union and South Korea.

She also emphasised the importance of all nations joining hands to build peace while striving for development and prosperity.

"Thailand is your partner who is ready and determined to invest for a better future," concluded the PM. Bangkok Post

# More charges laid in iCon Group scandal

## BANGKOK

THE DEPARTMENT OF Special Investigation (DSI) has filed additional charges of conspiring to launder money against the founder and CEO of The iCon Group, Warathaphon "Boss Paul" Waratyaworakul, politician Samart Janechaijitt-awanich and his mother Wilawan Phutthasamrit.

Mr Samart, a former deputy spokesman of the Palang Pracharath Party, became embroiled in the scandal following the release of an audio clip of a conversation between Warathaphon and a non-MP House committee member who offered to help clear a complaint in exchange for money.

The new accusation arose after a special investigative team discovered evidence of money transfers and receipts from fraudulent activity and loans which were linked to the alleged crimes of the direct-sales group, revealing a financial transaction route between Warathaphon and Samart using the account of the latter's mother, as well as that of another individual.



Warathaphon. Photo: Bangkok Post

Seventeen executives of The iCon Group have been indicted on criminal charges primarily related to alleged pyramid scheme activities, including fraud, money laundering and violations under the Computer Crime Act.

The 17 executives, who have been in custody since late November, also stand accused of using deceptive marketing tactics to recruit members and promising exorbitant returns on investments that were not delivered.

The alleged offences occurred between August 2020 and August 2024 in Bangkok and other provinces across the country, with losses to the complainants of at least B650 million, authorities have said.

Bangkok Post



# Strong Medicine

## WELLTHWISE

Libby Heath

**V**isible muscle is more than aesthetically pleasing – it is the engine that powers your body, fuels your metabolism and safeguards your future health. Whether you are climbing stairs, lugging heavy suitcases or simply standing tall, the strength beneath your skin is working tirelessly behind the scenes. But what happens when that system starts to weaken? Understanding the significance of skeletal muscle mass may hold the key to achieving a longer healthspan.

We all know that adequate muscle supports strength, balance and mobility, but in recent decades the understanding of muscle has expanded beyond its mechanical functions to emphasise its roles in metabolic regulation, endocrine function and overall health. This comprehensive perspective qualifies muscle to be classified as an organ, often referred to as the 'organ of longevity'.

Maintaining muscle mass and function is important for supporting various bodily processes that affect longevity. One of the most important is metabolism – the chemical process that converts food into energy and supports essential functions like growth, repair and maintenance. Have a slow metabol-

ism? Increase your muscle mass. It is like increasing the idling speed of an engine. Because muscle is a metabolically active tissue, the more you have the higher your Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) – the energy your body uses at rest. Rather than focusing on losing fat, think of gaining muscle – a positively directed, more efficient mechanism for getting lean.

Muscle tissue is a primary site for glucose storage and use. After a meal, muscles absorb glucose from the bloodstream where it is stored as glycogen for later energy usage. More muscle mass means better blood sugar regulation and more glycogen storage capacity. More muscle mass improves insulin response, lowering the risk of insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes, which can shorten lifespan.

Resistance training and high-quality protein consumption stimulate muscle growth. Engaging in strength training can boost the production of beneficial hormones like growth hormones and testosterone, both of which help sustain muscle mass, bone density and overall vitality. And yes, ladies, this includes you. The benefit of muscle mass is gender neutral. Only 5-10% of women have the genetic potential to develop noticeably large muscles, the rest simply appear firm.

Strong muscles enable better mobility and physical function. This means older adults can keep their independence; reducing the risk of falls, fractures and loss of function that often



Libby makes muscle mass count. Photo: Libby Heath

leads to disability and a diminished quality of life. Skeletal muscle activity also promotes better cardiovascular health. Regular physical activity, particularly strength training, can improve heart health, increase circulation and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, which is a leading cause of death globally.

Mother Nature grants us the ability to easily gain muscle mass well into our 20s and 30s. The younger you are when you deliberately focus on muscle mass, the longer you reap the benefits. It is like saving for retirement early in life – the longer time horizon offers greater returns. In mid-life the ground begins to shift. The ability to build muscle slows down with gradual hormonal declines, but gains can still be achieved. More physical effort is needed as well as higher protein intake, the fuel for muscle synthesis.

At a certain point, the goal of preserving mass counts as a win. The minute you stop strength training, atrophy begins at an alarming rate with life-changing consequences, so do not

stop. If resistance training is not part of your routine, add it starting today.

Body weight exercises, like pushups and air squats are a good start. If possible, find a trainer who can help you be effective, consistent and safe. You only need to strength train three times a week to be strong; too often is counter-productive, as your muscles need time for rest and recovery.

Luckily, I found strength training in my 20s, and it has served me well, but I have issued myself a challenge: Before I am 65 in August 2026, I want to be able to perform one unassisted pullup. I have never been able to do one, but I believe that I can. I now have a coach and 20 months to make it happen. I am channeling my inner, protein-consuming tortoise... I will keep you posted.

*Libby Heath shares her insights and advice through her 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*

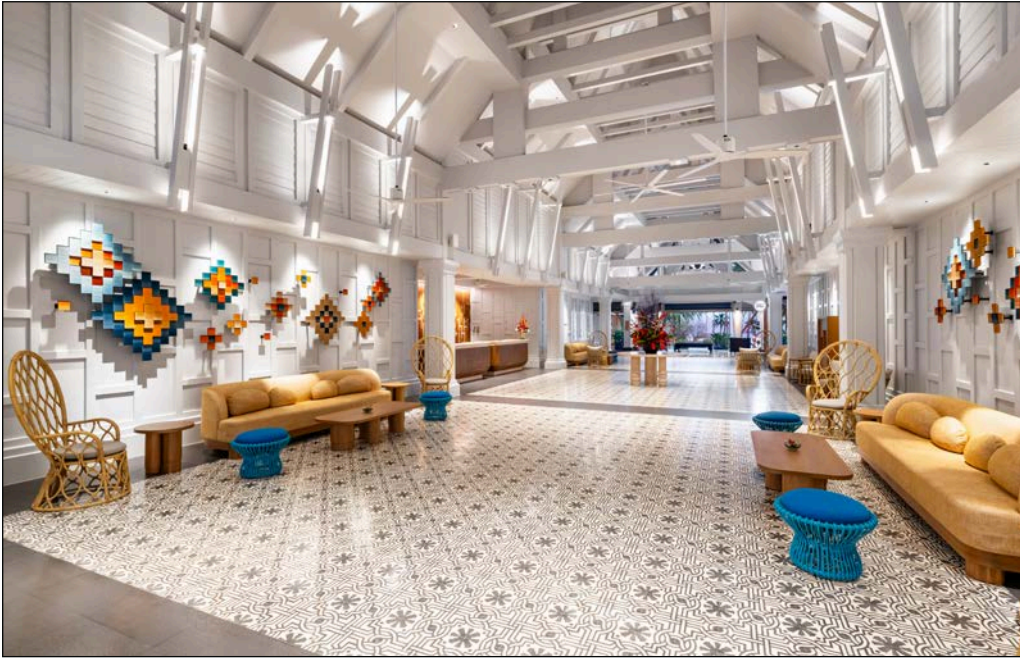
## The March/April 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

Distributed in resorts/hotels lobbies, in a high number of restaurants and coffee shops, plus inserted in one issue of *The Phuket News* each month, it is a great way to Talk to Phuket about your F & B outlet

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# A SAii of Luxury Relief

## ADVERTORIAL

**S**Aii Laguna Phuket has unveiled a remarkable transformation, blending traditional Thai design with modern innovation to elevate the guest experience. Situated along the pristine Bangtao Beach, this luxurious resort now offers refreshed accommodations and amenities, celebrating Thai culture while meeting the expectations of modern travelers.

The newly renovated accommoda-

tions reflect Thai heritage, featuring intricate wooden details, locally inspired artwork, and a soothing color palette that mirrors the natural surroundings. Spacious rooms and suites provide breathtaking views of the Andaman Sea, lagoons, or lush gardens, complemented by modern comforts such as high-speed Wi-Fi and plush bedding.

A highlight of the transformation is the new SAii Spa, offering a serene escape with treatments inspired by Phuket's natural beauty. Guests can enjoy therapeutic massages, revitalizing facials, and traditional Thai

therapies in a tranquil setting designed to rejuvenate mind and body.

Dining has reached new heights with the addition of Terra & Mar, a vibrant restaurant showcasing the best of land and sea. Highlighting premium cuts of meat, the freshest seafood, and locally sourced ingredients, Terra & Mar offers a dining experience that captures the essence of culinary artistry. This exceptional venue perfectly complements the resort's diverse culinary offerings.

Sustainability is at the heart of SAii Laguna Phuket's transformation. The

resort integrates eco-friendly practices such as energy-efficient lighting and waste reduction. As part of its commitment, it is EIC certified for meetings and recently recertified for Green Globe, reinforcing its dedication to sustainable luxury.

Whether it's a family vacation, romantic getaway, or business retreat, SAii Laguna Phuket delivers a seamless blend of tradition, modernity, and sustainability, ensuring every guest leaves with unforgettable memories. Discover more at the resort's official website - [saiiresorts.com/phuket/laguna](http://saiiresorts.com/phuket/laguna)

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POP QUIZ

1. Who wrote the book *The Invisible Man*?
2. The world's tallest arch, the 192-metre high Gateway Arch, is in which American city?
3. Which tree features on the flag of Lebanon?
4. Who is American actress Kate Capshaw married to?
5. What is a 'muntin'?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

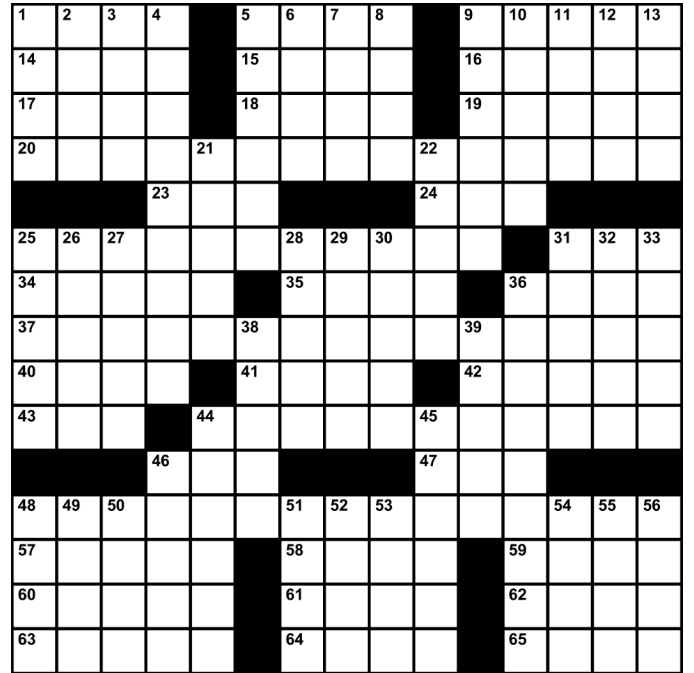
1. Old oath
5. Brood
9. Disorient
14. Expert
15. About
16. Hit a low note?
17. Egyptian fertility goddess
18. Navy commando
19. Change
20. Symbol of freedom
23. Bordeaux vineyard
24. Div. of Scotland Yard
25. \_\_\_ map
31. Witticism
34. Tequila source
35. Elation
36. "Goldberg Variations" composer
37. Turns over the controls
40. In charge of
41. Pb
42. Idol text messages
43. Aussie outlaw Kelly
44. Approximation
46. Beer belly
47. Abbreviation for wireless technology

48. Roger Miller hit
57. Takes it easy
58. Huge
59. Hubbub
60. Eyes
61. Greek salad ingredient
62. Head organs
63. Growth
64. Dribble
65. Schedule position

Down

1. Sponsorship, var.
2. Burst of wind
3. Horne solo
4. Type of jacket
5. Charlatan
6. After-lunch sandwich
7. Fighter plane grp.
8. Cost to cross
9. Protozoan
10. Vaulted
11. Active sort
12. Fast time
13. Water whirl
21. Pushes
22. Arctic to Greenland
25. Append

26. Nose cone
27. No longer dirt
28. Be of one mind
29. They're entered in court
30. Pays attention to
31. Kind of ray
32. Wedding band, maybe
33. "\_\_\_ Calloways" (Disney film)
36. Fuels
38. "Peter and the Wolf" bird
39. Rice/Lloyd Webber work
44. Dish
45. Work boot feature
46. Friendly
48. Raindrop sound
49. Bats
50. Jewish month
51. Court figures
52. Rapier
53. Dietary, in ads
54. Roster abbr.
55. Poet and Painter, Joan
56. Once, long ago



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

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

4

in 10 people are at least in part tone deaf.

7

times is how much the world's billionaires made in 2017 that it would cost to end extreme poverty worldwide.

40

percent of the world's land is in just six countries.

750,000

US dollars is how much Brazilian football star Ronaldinho lost in a deal with Coca-Cola because he took a sip from a Pepsi at a press conference in 2012.

220 million

is how many smell receptors Basset hounds have. The portion of their brains tied to sense of smell is 40 times that of a human.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Tawanron Beach, Chalong. Photo by Marco Capriz

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

This week in history

Jan 31, 2020

The United Kingdom's membership within the European Union ceases in accordance with Article 50, after 47 years of being a member state.

Feb 1, 1884

The first volume (A to Ant) of the Oxford English Dictionary is published.

Feb 2, 2021

The Burmese military establishes the State Admin-



Photo: Bullverton

istration Council, the military junta, after deposing the democratically elected government in the 2021 Myanmar coup d'état.

Feb 3, 1972

The first day of the seven-day 1972 Iran blizzard, which would kill at least 4,000 people, making it the deadliest snowstorm in history.

Feb 4, 2004

Facebook is founded by Mark Zuckerberg, along with fellow Harvard College students and roommates Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes.

Feb 5, 1958

A hydrogen bomb known as the Tybee Bomb is lost by the US Air Force off the coast of Savannah, Georgia, never to be recovered.

Feb 6, 1918

British women over the age of 30 who meet minimum property qualifications get the right to vote when Representation of the People Act 1918 is passed by Parliament.

Source: *Wikipedia*



# Trades & Services

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## CAR SERVICES



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**FRI**

**31**  
JAN



**Friday Mussels Night**

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**SUN**

**2**  
FEB



**Sunday Roast**

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

**MON**

**3**  
FEB



**Monday BBQ Night**

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**WED**

**5**  
FEB



**Wednesday BBQ Night**

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**FRI**

**7**  
FEB



**Grow Boating Evening - February 2025**

We look forward to seeing you at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm. Our drinks sponsor for the evening will be ASAP Marine Trading. Established in 2008, ASAP Marine Trading Co., Ltd. has been a reliable supplier of Yacht products for many years. See https://asap-marine.com/en/ There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. Find us at facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket

**SAT**

**8**  
FEB



**GLITTER CANCER BALL**

BRINGING THE THAI & EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO BEAT CANCER Help Us Build a new Cancer Radiology Center in Phuket Each year, Vachira Public Hospital cares for over 600 new cancer patients from Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi who need radiation therapy. Tragically, as there is no Government radiation facility in Phuket, patients are forced to travel long distances to Surat Thani and further, for life saving treatments. While therapy costs are covered, the travel and accommodation expenses place a heavy burden on families, often forcing them to sleep in cars or heartbreakingly, abandon therapy altogether. To change this, we are building Phuket's first dedicated Cancer Radiation Center. Our incredible Thai community have already raised THB 180 million of the THB 290 million needed. Now, we need your support to raise the final THB 110 million. Let's bring the Phuket community together to ease the suffering of families battling cancer. Join us at the Glitter Cancer Ball on Saturday, 8 February, at the Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town, with the Phuket Governor as our Guest of Honour. Entertainment: Lilly.V will be flying into Phuket to entertain as well as a Jazz Quartet and DJ Lada. Food: Phuket's top hotels will be sponsoring delicious live food stations. Drinks: Selected free flow beverages for 4 hours Proceeds from tickets and a special auction will go directly toward this vital project. Tables seat 10 and tickets are priced at B3,500 per person or B5,000 per person for a VIP front table with special amenities. Your support will make a life-changing difference Over 130 guests have already reserved their seats. BOOK NOW Chantal Fernandes, phuketcharity@gmail.com, 089 874 2942

**WED**

**15**  
OCT



**Thailand (Bangkok) Amusement & Attraction Parks Expo**

Thailand (Bangkok) Amusement & Attraction Parks Expo (TAAPE 2025) will make its appearance in IMPACT Exhibition Centre, Bangkok, Thailand on October 15-17, 2025! The exhibition aims to bring together global amusement equipment manufacturers, theme park operators, amusement service providers and industry experts to discuss the development trend of the amusement industry, display the latest amusement equipment and creative design. The exhibition jointly build a platform for exchange and cooperation, brand promotion and market expansion. Look forward to meeting you in Thailand and start a wonderful amusement trip together!

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## SKAL PHUKET JANUARY DINNER

Skål International Phuket held their January networking dinner on Thursday, January 23 at Courtyard Phuket Town by Marriott. Pre dinner drinks round the pool on the 7th floor was followed by a spectacular Japanese delights buffet. A wonderful evening of networking was had by over 30 members and guests. Thanks to Pamela Ong and her team for providing the perfect venue.



## AUSTCHAM JOINT CHAMBERS AUSTRALIA DAY PHUKET SUNDOWNERS

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Swedish Chamber, hosted the Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners at Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa on Friday, January 24. Over 120 members and guests enjoyed a night of making new connections and catching up with familiar faces in the Australian-Thai business community in Phuket. Thanks to The Australian Consulate-General Phuket, Australia's official diplomatic mission in Phuket for their support of this great evening.



## Increased support for Thai riders promised

### MOTO GP

AFTER ACHIEVING its goal of having a Thai rider in the MotoGP, Thai Honda has vowed to build on that success and continue their support for local motorsport talent this year.

Thai Honda, a motorcycle manufacturer and distributor, laid its three important plans this year, including the Honda Race to the Dream, the Honda Race to the Champion and the HRT Junior Talent Programme during their 2025 project launch at the Sports Authority of Thailand last Friday (Jan 24).

"Motorsport in the past year was full of excitement and challenge. We achieved our long-term goal that we announced many years ago to take a Thai racer to the MotoGP. But all of this is just the beginning," said Thai Honda president Yuichi Shimizu.

"What needs to be done next is to continu-



Somkiat Chantra. Photo: Bangkok Post

ally develop a new generation of talented riders, with a new training programme that is more intense than before to continue to fully build on their success."

The Honda Race to the Dream project is created to support Somkiat Chantra, who will make his debut in the MotoGP this year.

The 26-year-old signed a two-year contract with Idemitsu Honda LCR last August to become the first Thai rider in the sport's premier class.

Somkiat is set to make his MotoGP debut in the season-opening Grand Prix of Thailand next month at the Chang International Circuit in Buriram. *Bangkok Post*

# Sinner, Keys rule Down Under

### TENNIS

AFP

A clinical Jannik Sinner "emptied the tank" to sweep past Alexander Zverev and retain his Australian Open title last Sunday (Jan 26), cementing his status as the world's dominant player in men's tennis.

The 23-year-old Italian came through a tense final between the two highest-ranked players 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 on Rod Laver Arena, raising his arms in the air and looking to the sky in celebration.

In doing so he became the first Italian, man or woman, to win three Grand Slams, surpassing Nicola Pietrangeli.

The emphatic victory also thrust him alongside Andre Agassi, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic as the only men to successfully defend their Melbourne Park titles this century.

Sinner, who has a doping case hanging over his head, said he was fired up coming into the match despite his calm exterior.

"In your mind there is only one match left. You want to empty your tank a little bit. That was what I was trying to do," he said.

"I know how much work I put into this one and having this one twice it's amazing."

The win proved more misery for Germany's Zverev, who remains one of the world's best players never to



Sinner and Keys (inset) pose with their winner's trophies. Photos: AFP

taste Grand Slam glory, falling short once again in his third big final.

### UNDERDOG

In Saturday's women's singles final underdog Madison Keys upset Aryna Sabalenka 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 to win her first Grand Slam crown at the age of 29.

The American ended world number one Sabalenka's dream of becoming the first woman for 26 years to win a third successive Melbourne Park singles title.

Keys yelled in delight and wiped away tears on securing the title after withstanding a fierce fightback from the Belarusian two-time defending champion.

Sabalenka, the 2023 and 2024 champion, buried her head in a towel

after her 20-match win streak at Melbourne Park was ended.

For 19th seeded Keys it was the culmination of a 15-year journey from teenage prodigy to major winner.

"I have wanted this for so long. I didn't know if I was ever going to get back to this position to try to win a trophy again," said an emotional Keys, whose coach Bjorn Fratangelo is also her husband.

The American had been tipped as a future world number one after winning her maiden WTA Tour match at the age of 14.

She made her first major semi-final at Melbourne Park 10 years ago as a 19-year-old, but a decade on she can finally call herself a Grand Slam champion.

## SAT head wants independent Thailand Olympic president

### OLYMPICS

SPORTS AUTHORITY of Thailand (SAT) Governor Gongsak Yodmani wants the new president of the National Olympic Committee of Thailand (NOCT) to be someone who is recognised both domestically and internationally and be independent from politics.

Discussing the upcoming election for the president of the NOCT on Jan 20, Gongsak emphasised that the poll will be different from previous ones due to a diverse range of candidates and the sports community in the country is eagerly waiting for a change.

From the names currently in the spotlight, Gongsak said each candidate possesses significant potential to foster international co-operation, which will



Gongsak. Photo: Supplied

help elevate Thai sports to a global level.

The person must also be accepted by various sports associations and federations, with the ability to coordinate both nationally and internationally, he added.

He expects that each candidate would have his or her own unique strengths although he refrained from commenting on which candidate would be the most suited for the role.

The election for the new president of NOCT, replacing former deputy prime minister Gen Prawit Wongsuwon, is set for

March during a general meeting.

At least three candidates are expected to run: Pimol Srivikorn, president of the Taekwondo Association of Thailand, Suchai Pornchaisakudom, president of the Lawn Tennis Association of Thailand, and Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul, president of the Badminton Association of Thailand and a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) who has broad support from the Thai sports community. *Bangkok Post*

## Double joy for Thai shuttlers

### BADMINTON

RATCHANOK INTANON and Kunlavut Vitidsarn claimed their first titles of the year after winning the women's and men's single's finals at the US\$475,000 (approx B16,150,000) BWF Indonesia Masters in Jakarta last Sunday (Jan 26).

Ratchanok defeated South Korea's Sim Yu-Jin 21-18, 21-17 in the women's singles final to win the World Tour Super 500 event at the Istora Senayan Stadium in the Indonesian capital.

It was her third Indonesia Masters crown after her victories in 2010 and 2020 and her first since the Madrid Spain Masters in March last year.

Ratchanok was quick off the block as she opened up a 13-1 lead before Sim rallied to tie at 14-14 and 18-18. The Thai then won the three straight points to take the opening game.

Ratchanok again let slip of a 12-6 lead in the second as Sim pulled level at 12-12. The Thai star then steadied her game to take the second game 21-17.



Ratchanok (right) with Sim Yu-Jin. Photo: AFP

With the victory, the world No.13 Ratchanok returned to the top 10 in latest BWF rankings, which were released on Tuesday (Jan 28).

### TIMELY FIGHTBACK

World champion Kunlavut fought back to defeat Jonatan Christie of Indonesia in a three-game thriller in the men's singles decider at the same venue on Sunday.

After losing the opening game 18-21, the Olympic silver medallist took the second and third games 21-17, 21-18 in an hour and 17 minutes to seal the title.

The victory capped off Kunlavut's impressive run in the Indonesian capital which saw him knock out

Chinese top seed Shi Yuqi in the semi-finals.

Earlier, Japanese seventh seeds Hiroki Midorikawa and Natsu Saito claimed the mixed doubles crown after they defeated Chinese fifth seeds Guo Xinwa and Chen Fanghui 21-15, 21-17 in the final.

In the women's doubles event, Kim Hye-Jeong and Kong Hee-Yong of South Korea took the title after a three-game victory over Tan Pearly and Thinaah Muralitharan of Malaysia, 21-12, 17-21, 21-18.

Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto of Indonesia, who defeated Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Kittinupong Kedren in the semi-finals on Saturday, lost out to Man Wei Chong and Tee Kai Wun of Malaysia in the men's doubles final 21-11, 21-19.

Following their respective wins, Ratchanok and Kunlavut immediately returned to Bangkok where they were set to participate in the BWF Princess Sirivannavari Thailand Masters 2025. The US\$240,000 World Tour Super 300 event started on Tuesday at Nimibutr Stadium. *AFP*



# Cherries' ripe form continues

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Bournemouth continued their fine run of form in the Premier League by demolishing Nottingham Forest 5-0 last Saturday (Jan 25).

Dango Ouattara hit a hat-trick at the Vitality Stadium as The Cherries dented Forest's own top four charge, with further strikes from Justin Kluivert and Antoine Semenyo sealing the home side's biggest win of the season.

Andoni Iraola's side are undefeated in their last 11 league games and up to seventh place, one point outside European qualification, after ending third-placed Forest's own impressive run of eight top-flight matches without losing.

The impressive win came a week after The Cherries hammered Newcastle 4-1 at St James' Park and following big victories against the likes of Arsenal and Manchester City at home, proving they are on course to achieve their finest ever showing in the top flight.

Elsewhere, leaders Liverpool comfortably saw off Ipswich 4-1 at Anfield, thanks to a Coady Gapko brace and further goals from Mohamed Salah and Dominik Szoboszlai.

Salah's goal was his 23<sup>rd</sup> in all competitions this term and his 100<sup>th</sup> Premier League goal at Anfield.



Bournemouth's Justin Kluivert (left) and Tyler Adams celebrate the opening goal. Photo: AFP

Liverpool maintained their six-point lead over Arsenal, who survived Myles Lewis-Skelly's sending off to snatch a 1-0 win at Wolves courtesy of Riccardo Calafiori's 74<sup>th</sup> minute goal.

At the Etihad Stadium, new Manchester City signing Abdulkadir Khusanov made a woeful start when his miscued header allowed Noni Madueke to give Chelsea a second minute lead.

However, the defending champions roared back through Josko Gvardiol, Erling Haaland and Phil Foden to secure a 3-1 win and move one point above sixth-placed Chelsea in the table.

Fifth-placed Newcastle won 3-1 at bottom side Southampton, while Everton boss David Moyes celebrated becoming the third manager to reach 700 Premier League games with a 1-0 win at Brighton.

On Sunday, Leicester pushed Tottenham boss Ange Postecoglou

closer to the exit door with a 2-1 win that extended Spurs' dismal run to only one win in their last 11 top-flight matches. Postecoglou's side are languishing in 15<sup>th</sup> place, just eight points above the bottom three.

It was another woeful result for the beleaguered Australian, who has faced mounting calls for his dismissal throughout a turbulent second season in charge.

Any notion Manchester United could be dragged into a relegation battle now appears gone after Lisandro Martinez's deflected strike ground out a much-needed 1-0 victory at Fulham for the Red Devils, while Brentford won 2-1 at Brentford.

Aston Villa's hopes of Champions League qualification for a second consecutive season were dented as an under-strength West Ham battled back to earn a 1-1 draw in Birmingham. The result means Villa remain in eighth, four points off the top four, while West Ham sit 14<sup>th</sup>.

# Liverpool launch football youth academy in Thailand

## FOOTBALL

PREMIER LEAGUE giants Liverpool have officially launched a football academy in Thailand to help develop young talent.

Former Liverpool striker Emile Heskey, former Thailand coach Kiattisak Senamuang, Liverpool Thailand Academy executive Surasak Areesawangkit and the club's senior coaching manager Daniel Gavin attended the opening ceremony of the academy at DBS Denla British International School on Jan 22.

LFC International Academy is the global youth coaching arm of Liverpool. Delivering the same coaching curriculum and techniques that are used with the club's young players at the Academy in Liverpool, LFC International Academy teaches young participants how to play "The Liverpool Way" in countries across the world.

LFC International Academy Thailand is an official partner of the club that delivers coaching pro-



Photo: Bangkok Post

grammes under their guidance. Through daily communication with the technical and business teams in Liverpool, programmes are planned, delivered and administered to the high standards expected by Liverpool.

"It is very good to have the opportunity to convey a high-level football training programme to young people in Thailand. Learning the 'Liverpool Way' will allow children to develop skills in all aspects of football and learn the value of teamwork and professionalism," said Heskey at the launch.

Kiattisak added, "The focus is on the ambition of the players. Everyone must have ambition like Liverpool's big players. Everyone must learn and enjoy playing. Football is not just about scoring goals but also respecting and working with the team to create harmony in the team." Bangkok Post

# Pressure on 'Lobsters' reaching boiling point

## FOOTBALL

A 2-1 DEFEAT FOR PHUKET Andaman FC (PAFC) at the hands of Nara United last Saturday (Jan 25) serves as a stark warning that the "Lobsters" are in boiling water.

Coach Tum, once hailed as a progressive visionary, now appears a Luddite unable to translate his ideas onto the pitch, leaving many questioning his tactics and team selection.

The persistence with a 3-4-3 formation is baffling, especially given the current midfield options. PAFC are constantly overrun in the centre of the park, and the use of wingers rather than wing-backs leaves them exposed out wide.

Furthermore, the reluctance to play Kai Boham in defence, a player signed specifically to fill the void left by 'Mark' Rungsak, is a mystery.

There seems to be a stubborn insistence on forcing square pegs into round holes, epitomised by the continued deployment of striker David Danielsson on the flank instead of through the centre, where he surely offers a more potent threat than the out-of-sorts 'Bank' Sarod.

One positive was the debut of Luke Pavone in midfield, whose energy and range of passing provided a much-needed outlet in the first 20 minutes, as PAFC enjoyed a decent spell of possession and



Caic celebrates his goal for Nara United. Photo: Supplied

tested the Nara defence. However, a lack of clinical finishing, a recurring theme this season, proved costly.

Nara, roared on by an impressive crowd of 4,800, exploited the space afforded to them down the flanks and made the breakthrough in the 34<sup>th</sup> minute when Thannawut headed in from a corner.

Goalkeeper 'Bee' Rodthanon made some crucial saves before Nara doubled their lead in the 78<sup>th</sup> minute through Brazilian striker Caic.

Phuket finally stirred into life in the 87<sup>th</sup> minute when 'Boat' set up 'Bank' for a consolation goal, but it was too little, too late.

PAFC are in 11<sup>th</sup> place in the 12-team league and, unless things change quickly, a long season battling relegation alongside Yala FC beckons.

*Simon Causton is the host of 'A Thai Football Podcast' and writer of the 'Tee-Sen' (ทีเซ็น) - At the line' blog which covers all things Thai football.*



## The newly opened Supalai Judo Club Phuket,

which opened its doors for kids and adults just a month ago, has already participated in a competition in Bangkok (Thailand Judo Youth Championship 2025, 18 - 19 January, 2025)

Coach Thiti brought 5 athletes to compete: Gabin, Timur, Tomo, Kiichi and Sota

Out of five participants, three brought home gold medals by winning 4 matches each :

Gabin fought in 12-14 years old under 45 kg division  
Timur fought in 12-14 years old under 55 kg division  
Sota fought in 10-12 years old under 50 kg division

Additionally, Timur was awarded the Best Athlete trophy. It's a fantastic start for Supalai Judo Club Phuket.

For information please contact coach Thiti +66 95-420-2594





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