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BOUNDARIES



Screenshots: Supplied

TEMPERS FLARE IN LAND DISPUTE AT NOTORIOUS NUI BEACH

Eakkapop Thongtub
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Chalothorn 'Boy' Chotpanang, the man at the centre of the violent assault at Nui Beach on Thursday last week (May 23), has been charged, police have confirmed.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum confirmed the charge of physical assault against Chalothorn through a statement issued last Friday (May 24).

Chalothorn was called to Karon

Police Station at about 6pm, when he was informed of the charge of physical assault causing injury to others, Pol Maj Gen Sinlert explained.

The violent assault at Nui Beach began after a group of men arrived to allegedly claim land near the beach area on May 23.

Karon Police Chief Pol Col Khundet Na Nongkhai said he was informed of the incident at 5:16pm when Meekiat Phaisanworachai, 59, filed a formal complaint of the assault.

Mr Meekiat was the man seen

attacked in video clips of the incident shared widely on social media. The complaint was filed specifically against Chalothorn 'Boy' Chotpanang and others seen joining the assault.

Mr Meekiat was told at about 12:45pm that Chalothorn and about 17 others had arrived at the beach to forcibly claim the land. He explained to police that his younger brother had previously had several encounters with Chalothorn over land at Nui Beach, in Moo 2, Karon.

Mr Meekiat said he had arrived at

the beach to tell the men that the land was owned by the Forest Department and was part of the Nakkerd Hills Protected Forest area.

One of the videos shared online showed Chalothorn and his associates inspecting the land to determine where the boundaries were.

One of the men noticed they were being recorded on video and approached the person holding the phone. The man grabbed the phone to stop the recording but can be heard asking, "What are you doing?"

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Panipak claims third writers award in a row



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Phuket Senator selection underway

The Phuket News

editor@classactmedia.co.th

More than 240 people have registered their candidacy to be selected as the next senator representing Phuket.

Orapin Acheevasuk, Director of the Phuket office of the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT Phuket), confirmed the count during an inspection visit by Phuket Vice Governor Nirsak Suksomboon to one of the registration centres on May 22.

Although the rate of applications has fallen since acceptance of applications began on Monday, May 20, the number of applications continued to flow in steadily from all 20 society groups eligible to enter, Ms Orapin said.

Mr Norasak said that ensuring that the process was in accordance with the regulations, and ran smoothly, and with transparency, was of high importance. Police were on standby to respond to any incidents, he noted.

Registrations closed at all three registration centres – at Kathu District Office, Thalang District Office and Muang Phuket District Office – at 4:30pm last Friday (May 24).

ECT Phuket now has until May 29 to vet the applications and present a list of candidates eligible to enter the selection process.

After that, the District-level



ECT Phuket Director Orapin Acheevasuk (left) at the opening of candidate registration. Photo: PR Phuket

selection committee has until June 9 to finalise their lists of preferred candidates, with the provincial-level senator election committee, headed by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat, having until June 16 to announce its list of candidates to the national-level selection committee.

The “national senator election day” [sic] is to be observed on June

26, with all new senators in the country to be formally announced sometime in July ((date not yet specified).

ECT Phuket has issued a long list of what candidates can and cannot do while waiting for the selection process to be completed.

Candidates can announce their registration through any channels,

and formal registration can be done either on paper in person or submitted electronically.

Candidates are not permitted to canvas at registration centres, but can “introduce yourself through any online platform”.

However, any canvassing must comply with the following rules:

Do not involve the monarchy.

Do not allow other candidates, MPs, members of the local councils or local administrators, executive, directors, or people holding any position in a political party or person holding a political position, to endorse any candidate

Do not introduce yourself by arranging entertainment or festivities.

People who work in the media or the entertainment field are prohibited from using their own abilities or profession to benefit them in introducing themselves.

Do not distribute identification documents by placing, scattering or posting notices in public places.

Do not introduce yourself by using violent words or inciting to cause unrest in the area.

Do not introduce yourself on radio, television or printed media.

Do not give interviews to the media, journalists or advertising media published on various digital platforms.

People were advised to follow news about the selection of senators via the Smart Vote’ app.

Any tip-offs could be reported via the ‘Pineapple eyes’ community organisation.

Complaints could be reported directly via the Election Commission of Thailand hotline 1444 or via the Ombudsman’s Office (Damrongtham Center_ hotline 1567.

Police press charges for Nui Beach assault, deny complicity

Continued from page 1

An argument ensued, and as seen in the video clips shared online one man wearing a yellow shirt struck Mr Meekiat on the head with a piece of wood.

Another man, the main assailant, wearing a dark shirt, is seen punching Mr Meekiat in the face and kicking him in the stomach. Several others joined in the assault after Mr Meekiat had been knocked to the ground.

The man in the dark shirt can be seen kicking Mr Meekiat in the head while he was on the ground.

Mr Meekiat said he could not fully remember who attacked him, other than Chalothorn punching him in the face and kicking him.

One person in the group was holding a machete and used the handle of the ma-

chete to attack him, he said.

Mr Meekiat was able to extricate himself from the situation and was taken to Chalong Hospital for treatment of his injuries.

POLICE ACTION

Reviewing video footage recorded by a bystander, police plan to issue summonses for three additional suspects, bringing the total to four individuals facing charges of causing bodily harm, Pol Maj Gen Sinlert assured last Friday.

Although the formal complaint filed by Mr Meekiat was for attempted murder, based on the available evidence, injuries and medical examination results, the case did not support this charge, Pol Maj Gen Sinlert said.

The investigation revealed that one of the assailants used a machete handle in the assault, not the blade, he pointed out.



Screenshots: Supplied

During questioning last Friday, Chalothorn admitted that the altercation stemmed from a long-standing boundary dispute over 68 rai at Nui Beach.

As an initial step, the po-

lice aim to resolve the land boundary issues and facilitate discussions between the conflicting parties. A meeting with both parties is expected this week, Pol Maj Gen Sinlert said.

Addressing concerns about potential police bias in the case, Pol Maj Gen Sinlert said plainly that police have no vested interest in the matter and are committed to taking legal action against any criminal offenses from either side.

Chalothorn, who acknowledged his actions during the incident, was temporarily released after recognising the charges against him.

Phuket Provincial Police are handling the investigation with impartiality to ensure that justice is served for all involved parties, Maj Gen Sinlert said.

UNRESOLVED

Efforts by authorities over the years to curtail violence, thugery and extortion of tourists by entrance fees at Nui Beach have proved fruitless.

After years of negotiating, and repeated incidents of violence against tourists at the

beach, the Royal Thai Navy demolished all buildings at Nui Beach in 2020.

Yet more structures were built later, and business resumed.

In the latest effort by officials to claim they have any enforcement over the land, Bannaruk Sermthong, Deputy Director-General of the Royal Forest Department, arrived in Phuket in person on Mar 12 and led a contingent of no less than 100 officers to “inspect” the land in what was essentially a raid.

Mr Bannaruk announced to the country through the national media he brought with him that the illegal occupiers had 45 days to remove all illegal structures at Nui Beach.

That deadline expired on Apr 26.

Yet still the illegal structures still remain.

B5bn medical centre waiting

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket is still waiting for budget approval to move ahead with the much-touted 'International Andaman Health Center' to be built at Mai Khao.

The news came through an official report of a meeting of the 'Public-Private Joint Committee for Developing and Solving Economic Problems in Phuket Province' held on May 21 and chaired by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat.

There was a resolution to follow up and expedite projects that have been approved by the government but are still waiting for budget allocation, said the report.

Such projects were necessary for the continuing development of the area according to the goals set. Among such projects was the 'International Andaman Health Center', the report said. The budget amount is B5.116 billion. The duration of the project is five years.

"If the Andaman International Health Center [sic] project budget is allocated and the work completed, it will elevate Phuket to be a centre for health tourism, and [making the province] ready to drive Thailand to be a medical centre," the report noted.

EXPO FALLOUT

Much confusion has surrounded the



Governor Sophon. Photo: PR Phuket

future of the International Andaman Health Center following Phuket last year losing its bid to host the Specialised Expo 2027/28.

The theme of the bid was for Phuket to highlight and promote medical and wellness services.

The International Andaman Health Center was originally slated to be built at a 141-rai site in Mai Khao, with the government providing the land and B5.11bn in budget support – the same figure cited at the meeting yesterday.

Government Spokesperson at the

time Anucha Burapachaisri in June last year expressed on behalf of so-called "caretaker Prime Minister" at the time Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha that the B5.11bn project at Mai Khao will go ahead.

However, in his closing days as Governor of Phuket, Narong Woonchiew in July warned that Phuket failing its bid to host the Specialised Expo 2027/28 could see major delays in Phuket receiving support for what he called critical infrastructure projects.

The cornerstone of the 'International Andaman Health Center'

at Mai Khao was a brand-new international hospital, the Songklanagarind Hospital Phuket, to be built for B4,762,262,532, Mr Anucha said.

However, already by the time Mr Anucha was giving his assurances on behalf of the prime minister last year that the Mai Khao project would go ahead, Prince of Songkla University had already announced that it will be building its 500-bed 'Songklanagarind Phuket Hospital' in the heart of Kathu.

There have since been no clarifications of which project is to be

supported by the government, or any clarification on the dubious nature of the dual announcements that indicate that PSU is building its new B3.14bn hospital in both locations.

DRONES AND DRUGS

Other projects reviewed at the meeting as slated to go ahead but yet to receive budget funding were aerial drones for public safety.

Regarding policy development, the meeting resolved to continue with implementing guidelines for solving problems in tourist areas in Patong by controlling the use and sale of kratom and marijuana.

"The government is now proactively detecting groups that sell kratom and marijuana illegally and solving the problem of foreigners competing for occupations reserved for Thai people that must be expedited and strictly followed the law," the report said.

Also reported was that "a short-term, medium-term, and long-term solution to drought and water shortage problems has been put in place in order to solve the problem sustainably."

Such action "drives the implementation of various projects and the development and solution of economic and social problems for the well-being of the people to be well, happy, stable and sustainable", the report said.

Man arrested for stabbing abbot

POLICE HAVE ARRESTED the man wanted for stabbing the Abbot of Wat Phra Thong in Thalang after the senior monk was unable to give the man B20.

Officers moved in and arrested Thanakorn 'Bank' Arunrat, 38, at the Mae Sompong market in Moo 1, Srisoonthorn, on May 22.

Police had an arrest warrant issued after Phrakru Suwan Phutthaphiban was stabbed once in the chest at Wat Phra Thong on May 19 after being unable to hand over B20 as monks do not carry money on them.

Through CCTV, officers were able to track down Thanakorn's escape, and his return to his residence at the government housing authority in Moo 1, Srisoonthorn.

Thanakorn confessed to the stabbing, but denied any knowledge of asking Phrakru Suwan Phutthaphiban for B20, Thalang Police Chief Pol Col Nikorn Chuthong said.

On the night of the stabbing Thanakorn fled the temple on his motorbike. He was running out of pet-



Thanakorn 'Bank' Arunrat, 38, sits on a motorbike at Wat Phra Thong during the crime reenactment. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

rol by the time he reached Phuket airport, and so he parked the motorbike and stole another motorbike from near the cargo area. He then continued his escape to Phang Nga, north of Phuket.

Thanakorn then decided to return home, and boarded a bus to Phuket. He exited the bus at Tha Chatchai and took a minivan back to Srisoonthorn. After he changed his clothes, he went to the market, where he was arrested.

Thanakorn had previously served 11 years in jail for "jointly killing another person", Pol Col Nikorn said.

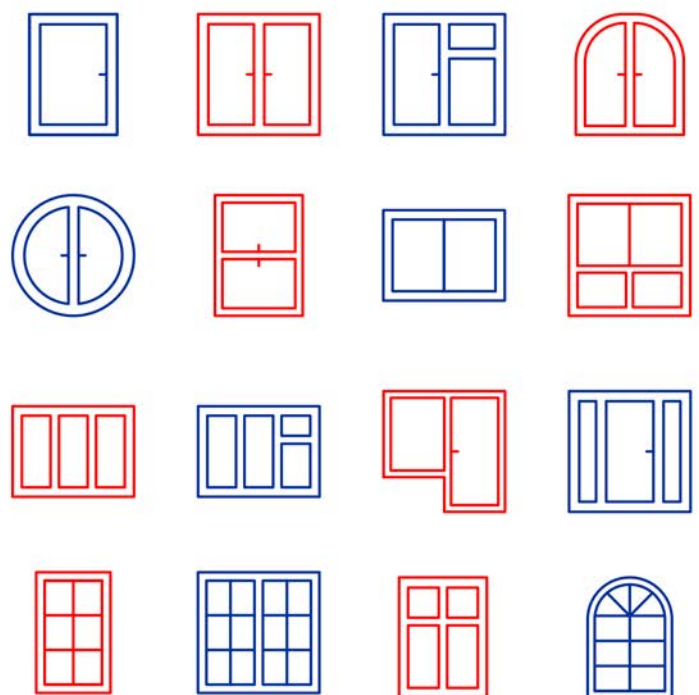
Thanakorn was released, but was later jailed for one year on a drug charge. He was released in February this year, he added.

"The initial charge is of attempted murder," Pol Col Nikorn said.

"As for Master Abbot, he can now communicate. The danger is now over," he added. Eakkapop Thongtub



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The Phuket News

CONTACT US

editor@classactmedia.co.th 076 612 550

PURIYA BEAVAN
Editor**CHRIS HUSTED**
Executive Editor
084 307 7408
execeditor@classactmedia.co.th**BEN TIREBUCK**
News / Sport Editor
061 806 8132
editor3@classactmedia.co.th**CHUTHARAT 'UM' PLERIN**
Thai Editor
088 766 1615
thai@classactmedia.co.th**JASON BEAVAN**
General Manager
086 479 7471
gm@classactmedia.co.th**SIRIPORN (NOK) SEANGMAS**
Sales Support
086 479 7470
sales@classactmedia.co.th**NIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITCHA**
THANAPONG 'OAK' KHAO-AMPHAIPHAN
Graphic designersThe Phuket News
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Swedish man arrested for almost 3 years of overstay

PHUKET TOURIST POLICE Bureau and Immigration officers arrested a Swedish national last Friday (May 24) following complaints from neighbours regarding violent behaviour, including threats and property damage.

Phuket Immigration announced the arrest of the Swedish man, named in a release only as 'Mr Udden', for an overstay of 972 days. No specific details such as the date, time or location of the arrest were disclosed.

According to the report, Mr Udden was arrested after complaints had been filed with the police by other residents regarding his threats and property damage.

Officers arrived at the area where the man lived and identified Mr Udden by his Nissan car. The man was approached and asked to present his passport, which he did not have with him.

The Swedish man was then escorted to the main Phuket Immigration office in Phuket Town for an identity check, which revealed that his permission to stay had expired almost three years

**Mr Udden, from Sweden, was arrested for almost three years of illegal stay in Thailand. Photo: Phuket Immigration**

ago. Additionally, police officers discovered that he was wanted in connection with a case involving property damage from a traffic accident.

Phuket Immigration reminded homeowners of the importance of registering foreign residents with the Immigration Bureau as stipulated in Sections 37 and 38 of the Immigration Act.

Phuket Immigration did not specify where Mr Udden had been residing for the past three years or if any steps would be taken against the people who had not reported him during this time.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Police track down loan shark and enforcers

Eakkapop Thongtub
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Police have arrested three men involved in loan shark activities who intimidated the owner of a small curry stall in Srisoonthorn.

The incident happened around 7am on May 23 when two loan shark enforcers pulled up on a motorbike outside the shop and one of the men proceeded to kick and damage items from the counter before the two sped off.

After police questioned the store owner it transpired she had taken out a loan and the two men were exerting intimidation for the loan to be repaid.

Police held a press conference last Saturday (May 25) to announce that they had not only tracked down the two men involved in the incident but also the person behind the act who was responsible for actioning the loan in the first place.

The two men on the bike involved with the incident were named as Sittiwat 'Joe' Chanchu and Nattapon Leelachawanon, while the loan shark was named only as 'Mr Narong'.

Police said the lead assail-



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

ant who dismounted the bike and caused the damage at the curry shop was Mr Sittiwat and that he had paid B2,000 to Nattapon to act as an accomplice by riding the bike.

Mr Sittiwat had been hired by Mr Narong, who had initially lent the money to the curry shop owner, Phonphat Jeejao, police said.

Mr Narong had contacted Ms Phonphat via numerous messages on his phone requesting payments be made but never received any response, which is why he hired Sittiwat to apply some physical

intimidation in the hope of receiving repayment, police explained.

Police confirmed they were able to track down all three based on witness reports and CCTV footage to an address in Chumphon province where they seized a green Kawasaki motorcycle and identical clothing and helmets worn during the attack. They also seized a phone used by Mr Narong.

All three men were taken to Thalang Police Station where they will be prosecuted in due course, police confirmed.

Soi Ta-iaad drug arrest lands kilos of crystal meth, cocaine

CHALONG POLICE ARRESTED a woman on Soi Ta-iaad in Chalong last week who was later found to be in possession of 1.12kg of crystal meth and nearly a kilo of cocaine.

The woman, named by police only as 'Ms Su', 25, from Chiang Rai, was taken into custody opposite the Mini Big C store at the east end of the street, at about 5:30pm on May 21.

A subsequent search of a home also in Moo 1, Chalong (Soi Ta-iaad is in Moo 1 Chalong), saw officers seize 1.12kg of crystal meth, 938.73g of cocaine, 63 ecstasy pills and some cash.

Officers had learned that Su had a habit of selling drugs, including crystal meth (ya ice), cocaine and ecstasy to foreigners in the Chalong area, leading to the investigation and plan to arrest her, Chalong



Photo: Chalong Police

Police noted.

Her boyfriend had fled earlier, Chalong Police added, explaining why he was not also arrested.

Su was taken to Chalong Police Station and charged with illegal possession of and jointly distributing both Category 1 and Category 2 narcotics, Chalong Police confirmed.

Eakkapop Thongtub

French duo killed in motorbike crash

TWO FRENCH NATIONALS were killed when the motorbike they were travelling on hit a road divider near the Heroines' Monument early last Friday (May 24).

The incident occurred in front of Ban Phak Chi health station in Pa Khlok at 4:30am, said Pol Lt Col Niwat Thimket of the Thalang Police.

Officers arrived at the scene to find a badly damaged black Yamaha TMAX motorbike lying on the road.

The body of one of the Frenchmen, later named by police as Michael Sebastien Ribert, whose left leg had been badly severed, was found on the road near the Monument. The 39-year-old man's passport was found at the scene and police confirmed he was wearing a crash helmet.

Nearby was the body of another Frenchman, named by police as Alexandre Robert Serge, 41, lying on the road near the entrance to the Monument. He was also declared dead at the scene.

Initial investigations revealed



Photo: Thalang Police

that Ribert was driving the bike with his compatriot riding pillion. Police surmised that the duo approached the curve leading up to the Heroines' Monument at high speed before the driver lost control and collided with the road divider which threw them both from the motorbike.

Officers said they would review CCTV footage from near the scene to understand exactly what happened.

Police also confirmed that both the men were employed at an office near Thepkasattri Rd and were heading home when the incident occurred.

The bodies of the men were taken to Vachira Hospital for further examination before they could be released to family members. Eakkapop Thongtub

Support rallies for BCIS boy

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Members of the BCIS parent community have appealed to fellow Phuket residents for support for the Butenko family, whose son is now recovering from critical brain surgery. While the surgery and initial treatment had been covered by insurance, the post-surgery recovery is solely on the family and the support group, who are doing their best to continue the medical miracle by Thai doctors.

Sergey Butenko, a Year 3 student at BCIS International School, was rushed to the hospital on Christmas Eve last year due to an acute headache. Prior to his hospitalisation on Dec 24, 2023, the 7-year-old suffered unexplained headaches, loss of energy, nausea, and vomiting. It was not until his hospital admission that doctors identified the reason as a brain cyst.

While at Bangkok Hospital Phuket and Vachira Phuket Hospital, Sergey experienced clinical death, but the doctors managed to restart his heart and bring him back to life. Sergey's ordeal unfolded while



Sergey Butenko, 7, was brought back to life in a man-made Christmas miracle and is now on his way to recovery. Photo: Elena Butenko

his friends were celebrating Christmas and New Year.

An urgent medevac flight took Sergey from Phuket to Bangkok, where he was admitted to Samitivej Hospital. After two surgeries, Sergey started to recover, amazing the Thai doctors with his progress, as his mother Elena now recalls.

Sergey was discharged from the hospital on May 19 to recover as an outpatient, which is no longer covered by the family's insurance.

The 7-year-old should be transported to Russia as soon as his condition allows a flight. Though raised in Phuket, the boy's Russian passport allows for treatment in his country of citizenship.

The Butenko family is waiting for the green light from Thai doctors and doing whatever they can to continue the medical miracle made by Thai doctors at Christmas and beyond.

"The doctors' plan as well as our plan is to prepare Ser-

gey for his flight to Russia as much as we can. He sees his doctors and receives outpatient treatment, and he is scheduled to have an MRI check in around two months," Elena Butenko told *Novosti Phuketa*, *The Phuket News'* sister-newspaper in the Russian language.

"After that [getting clearance from Thai doctors], we are planning to head to Moscow for Sergey's further rehabilitation. Currently, we are learning details from

several centers specialising in such conditions. As of now, all doctors are adamant that Sergey's current medication treatment cannot be paused or altered. We will take the Thai pills with us to Russia while the physiotherapy will be provided by local professionals," Ms Butenko explained.

During the five months of hospital treatment, only a few close friends had been aware of Sergey's ordeal. In mid-May, the family decided to publicly appeal to the BCIS community and fellow Phuketians. The mounting expenses threaten to interrupt Sergey's treatment and nullify what Thai medical professionals have achieved.

"At the early stage, the doctors could not expect such an improvement in Sergey's condition. Now, the leading doctor, a medical professor, greets Sergey with amazement. The boy can sit and hold his head straight unassisted. He can focus his eyes on objects and can slightly move his legs from the knees down. He has already started to move his hands, though it is still a challenge for him. Sergey's mother stays by his side 24/7, helping with medication and

treatments," Sergey Butenko's support group says.

Phuket families from the BCIS community and beyond have already responded to the family's appeal for much-needed donations. The public account will be provided soon; meanwhile, Elena Butenko warmly thanks fellow Phuketians for their support.

"My biggest 'Thank you' for all the donations, all the kind words, and all the efforts to spread the news. First, we all – the doctors and the family – were greatly impressed by Sergey's effort to return to life. Now we are equally amazed by the kindness of the Phuket community, all of you, Thai and foreign nationals alike. Thank you," Ms. Butenko said to *Novosti Phuket*.

Those willing to support Sergey Butenko's recovery can make a donation to the following bank account:

Bank Name: Kasikorn (KBank)
Account Name: Sergei Butenko
Account Number: 0561806020

For additional information and non-monetary support, please contact Kamilla Kunashir (Facebook.com/kamillaphuket) or Anastasia Dulatova (WhatsApp: +7 965 990-10-70).

Kusoldharm steps up with scholarships, rice donations

THE PHUKET KUSOLDHARM FOUNDATION held an event at their headquarters last Saturday (May 25) to distribute scholarships and donate rice to local schools.

The event, held at the foundation's headquarters in Phuket Town, saw 326 scholarships with a total value of more than B2 million awarded to students from more than 23 schools across the Island.

Present for the occasion were Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat and his wife Mrs Busadee, who serves as President of the Phuket branch of the Red Cross, along with Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) and Phuket Vice Governor Saththa Thongkham.

Lek Tantiwongpaisan, President of the Phuket Kusoldharm Foundation, led the main ceremony, held to honour the Chinese god Poi Sia Hud, alongside the foundation's committee and advisors.

Poi Sia Hud is venerated as a goddess of dawn, childbirth, and destiny, and is often invoked for protection and blessings. Her worship is widespread among the Chinese diaspora, particularly in communities that have maintained traditional Chinese religious practices.

Ceremonies and offerings in her honor are common, especially in events promoting education, well-being, and community support, which aligns with the scholarship award ceremony and rice donation event described.

In addition to the scholarships, Li Cheng Long, Head of the Phuket Provincial Consular Office and Deputy Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Songkhla



Province, presented an additional B50,000 in support of the foundation.

The Phuket Kusoldharm Foundation has been providing scholarships to academically promising yet financially disadvantaged students since 2011.

This year, the foundation awarded scholarships to students at various educational levels: 200 scholarships of B2,000 each to primary school students, 30 scholarships of B3,000 each to secondary school students, 48 scholarships of B5,000 each to vocational students, 30 scholarships of B5,000 each to university students, and 14 scholarships to employees of the foundation, bringing the total to 326 scholarships.

At the event the foundation also donated rice to support the lunch programs of 23 schools in Phuket. Each school received five sacks of rice, totaling 115 sacks, valued at B4,500 each. Additionally, 3,000 sets of household products were provided, bringing the total value of donations to B2,227,250.50.

The annual event highlights the foundation's ongoing commitment to supporting the educational needs and well-being of Phuket's students, ensuring they have the necessary resources to thrive academically and personally, Mr Lek said. *The Phuket News*

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Boat Show moves to Yacht Haven

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The 2025 edition of the 'Thailand International Boat Show A Luxury Lifestyle Event' will take place at Phuket Yacht Haven from Jan 9-12, organisers have confirmed

The island's largest marina with 332 berths, Phuket Yacht Haven can accommodate yachts of all sizes up to 100-plus metres, aligning with the organisers' plans to expand the show and welcome more boats, larger boats and superyachts, said a release announcing the show.

"As we look to expand the Thailand International Boat Show in 2025 and beyond, the move to Phuket Yacht Haven is a strategic one – it gives us more space and the capacity to grow in the water and onshore," said David Hayes, CEO of organisers JAND Events.

"Feedback from many global brands is that they see the show as one of the most important boat shows in this part of the world and the new venue will allow us to grow in stature regionally and internationally. Also, being closer to the airport and many five-star resorts makes the show even more convenient for off-island visitors," he added

Close to Phuket International Airport, the Phuket Yacht Haven is easily accessible for international



Yacht Haven Marina. Photo: Thailand International Boat Show

and Thai travellers, and the five-star resorts and luxury villas in the north of the island and neighbouring Phang Nga cater to the attending of visiting 'High Net Worth Individuals' and 'Ultra High Net Worth Individuals' (HNWIs and UHNWIs), the release explained.

A new Bumrungrad Hospital coming to the area and the planned Andaman International Airport nearby in Phang Nga province further underscore the importance of the island's north as an economic and lifestyle centre, the release added.

VISITOR NUMBERS TRACKING UPWARDS

An independent survey by the Thailand Convention and Exhibition

Bureau (TCEB) found that the total number of visitors to the 2024 show increased 62% on 2023, while international visitors increased 74%. Recognising the importance of the Thai market for exhibitors, Thailand International Boat Show organisers undertook an extensive in-country marketing campaign that drove 54% more Thai visitors to the show in 2024, the release noted.

The number of Russian visitors was up more than 100% on last year and the 2024 show saw strong growth in attendees from across Europe including Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Ireland and Denmark, to name a few. Visitors from the APAC region also increased considerably with Singapore, China,

India, Australia and New Zealand all showing double or triple digit growth in 2024.

CONFIRMED EXHIBITORS

Following the success of the 2024 event, exhibitors have been quick to confirm their places at the 2025 Thailand International Boat Show, JAND Events said in the release.

In the water, Simpson Marine has confirmed their participation and will be showcasing yachts from Sanlorenzo, Fairline and Bluegame whilst The Yacht Sales Co. (Thailand) will be showcasing models from Fountaine Pajot, Monte Carlo Yachts and Dufour. Sunseeker will also be returning in the water and

showcasing a number of yachts – others confirmed include Lee Marine, Northrop & Johnson, Derani Yachts, Asia Marine, Go Boating, Asia Yachting, Extreme Marine, Sea Yacht Sales and Motor Field (Thailand).

Onshore has also seen a flood of interest from past and new exhibitors. Current confirmations include AMI Marine International, Hull, Octopus Electrical Service, Seabob, Siam Legal, SITICO and The ASA Group, while Cessna & Beechcraft by Textron Aviation return as the VIP Lounge Presenting Sponsor.

"With an option for a long-term agreement with the venue, we aim to future-proof the show and provide certainty for the yachting industry. We are working closely with the team at Phuket Yacht Haven to build on this year's success and put on an even bigger and better show in 2025, while attracting more quality visitors and spotlighting Phuket as a tour de-force in the yachting industry," Mr Hayes said.

The Thailand International Boat Show A Luxury Lifestyle Event will be held Jan 9-12, 2025 at Phuket Yacht Haven with the second annual Thailand Yachting Conference taking place on Jan 8 followed by the yachting awards and gala dinner that evening. For more information, visit ThailandInternationalBoatShow.com

TAT 'Phuket Luxclusive' project targets long-term sustainability

THE TOURISM AUTHORITY OF Thailand (TAT) Phuket Office is hoping its 'Phuket Luxclusive' project will help raise international competitiveness standards of local tourism operators.

Some 60 Phuket tourism businesses took part in a workshop at the Ramada Plaza Chao Fah Hotel in Wichit last Friday (May 24), held to promote sustainable business practices among local tourism operators.

The workshop, titled 'TAT Star & CF Hotels Mini Workshop', was presided over by Lertchai Wangtrakuldee, Director of the TAT Phuket Office.

The initiative aimed to enhance understanding and implementation of sustainable practices aligned with current tourism trends, providing a platform for future marketing opportunities, Mr Lertchai explained.

During the event, participants engaged in a detailed mini-workshop on enrolling in the TAT Star and CF-Hotels ('Carbon Footprint Hotels') programs. They also listened to experiences and management strategies from Phuket's sustainability champions in the tourism industry.

Mr Lertchai highlighted that the TAT Phuket Office's activities fall under the Phuket Luxclusive project, aimed at raising international competitiveness standards. Taking part in the workshop, joining the TAT programs and practicing the principles explored at the event would enhance the businesses' market value and showcase



Photo: PR Phuket

their environmental friendliness, he said.

The event featured various sustainability-focused activities, including discussions on transitioning to sustainable tourism using the Sustainable Tourism Goals (STGs) framework. Operators in the region shared their insights on sustainable business practices. The workshop also included a segment on greenhouse gas management in Phuket's hotel industry and a mini-workshop for those interested in the CF-Hotels program.

The event also showcased environmental management innovations from local operators, such as used cooking oil recycling, adding value to plastic bottle caps and creating art from discarded materials.

The TAT Phuket Office hopes the event will drive sustainable business practices in Phuket, enhancing the province's tourism potential on the international stage and attracting quality tourists who value sustainable travel, Mr Lertchai noted.

The Phuket News

Phuket expects B400bn bonanza in 2024

THE TOURISM AUTHORITY of Thailand (TAT) is confident that tourism revenue in Phuket this year will reach at least B400 billion, reporting that more than 3.6 million tourists visited the resort island in the first quarter.

Lerdchai Wangtrakoondee, director of the provincial TAT office, told the media last Saturday (May 25) that the number of tourists coming to Phuket from January to March increased by 30% compared to the same period last year.

Revenue earned from tourism in the first quarter was B137bn, which also improved from a year ago.

Phuket may now be entering its off-peak season but the number of hotel reservations on the island has not dropped significantly, he added. Local business operators thus regard the island as having no low season and dub this period of the year "the green season".

Mr Lerdchai said that during the high season Phuket Airport typically welcomed more than 20,000 tourists daily and the number was usually expected to drop at this time of year.

Currently, the average number of foreign tourists



Tourists visit a walking street in the Old Town of Phuket. Photo: Achadthaya Chuenniran

arriving via direct flights is 10,000 per day, compared to about 6,000 during the low season in the past.

Phuket has the most hotel rooms of any province in Thailand, at 101,000. The occupancy rate has declined but not substantially, from 86% in March to 70% in May.

Hotel operators in Patong, Kata, Karon and Phuket Town said their revenues had not decreased much. Part of the reason is higher room prices, which have increased by 30% from last year, they said.

Eleven million tourists visited Phuket last year, generating B388bn in revenue.

The majority of business operators do not want this year's number to exceed 11mn. Excessive growth of tourists would cause traffic issues and congestion in tourist areas, they said.

However, despite the number of tourists, business operators are confident that revenue this year will exceed B400bn following a number of special local TAT promotions.

Bangkok Post

Three people sentenced on lese majeste charges

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Criminal Court has sentenced singer Chai-amorn Kaewwiboonpan, aka 'Ammy The Bottom Blues', to four years in prison and his accomplice to one year for burning His Majesty the King's portrait and sharing a video of it in 2021.

Public prosecutors charged that Chai-amorn and Thanaphat Kapheng poured kerosene on a portrait of His Majesty the King in front of the Klongprem Central Prison in Chatuchak district on the night of Feb 28, 2021 then set it alight.

Later Chai-amorn posted a video of the incident on his Facebook account, The Bottom Blues, which was set for public access.

The sentences, handed out on Monday (May 27), were not suspended. Both men subsequently applied for release on bail pending appeal and their requests were being considered, at time of press.

The Criminal Court rejected the men's assertion



Thanaaphat (left) and Chai-amorn arrive at the Criminal Court in Bangkok on May 27. Photo: Supplied

that they had no ill intention towards the monarch and just wanted to express support for their call for the release of fellow activist Parit Chitwarak, aka Penguin, who was detained on many charges, including alleged lese majeste and sedition.

The court said there were many other ways that they could have shown support for their cause and that the burning of the King's portrait conveyed a threat that dishonoured and discredited

His Majesty the King.

Chai-amorn, 34, was found guilty of lese majeste and computer crime over his online post, which was deemed a threat to national security.

The court initially set the prison term for each offence at three years, sentencing him to six years behind bars. It was commuted to four years because he confessed.

Thanaphat was found guilty of lese majeste and was initially sentenced to one year and six months in

prison, because he was only 18 years old at the moment of the crime. His sentence was commuted to one year because he confessed.

The ruling came hours after Move Forward Party MP Chonthicha Jangrew was sentenced to two years in prison by Thanyaburi Provincial Court for royal defamation under the lese majeste law, Section 112 of the Criminal Code.

Ms Chonthicha was initially handed a three-year sentence which was reduced to two years with no suspension, while another charge of violating the emergency decree on public gatherings was dropped, according to the court.

The charges were filed after she and nine other activists rallied in front of the court in Thanyaburi on Sept 11, 2021, demanding the release of political prisoners.

Ms Chonthicha immediately applied for and was allowed release on bail to fight the case in the Appeal Court and she will retain her MP status during the court battle.

Dozens hospitalised after turbulence scare

BANGKOK

SINGAPORE AIRLINES has confirmed that 34 individuals remain hospitalised in Bangkok following an incident that saw severe air turbulence aboard Flight SQ321 on May 21.

The flight, en route from London to Singapore, encountered unexpected turbulence over the Irrawaddy Basin in Myanmar, resulting in numerous injuries and the death of a 73-year-old British passenger before making an emergency landing at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok.

In an update late Monday (May 27), the airline said 50 people who were on the May 21 flight are still in the Thai capital, including the 34 receiving medical treatment, while all the crew have returned to Singapore.

Of the 34 passengers receiving treatment at Samitivej Srinakarin Hospital, Samitivej Sukhumvit Hospital and Bangkok Hospital,



The Singapore Airlines plane at Suvarnabhumi International Airport on May 22. Photo: AFP

15 are men and 19 women from countries such as Australia, Britain, Malaysia and the Philippines. Most of the injuries involved the head or spine, and more than a dozen people needed surgery, hospital officials confirmed.

The incident prompted the pilot to divert the Boeing 777-300ER, which was carrying 211 passengers and 18 crew members, to Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, where an emergency landing was made at 3:45pm local time on May 21.

Officials said the situation remains under observation, and further updates on the passengers' conditions and ongoing investigations into the incident will be made periodically. *NNT*

NACC redacts Prawit report

BANGKOK

THE NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION Commission (NACC) handed a report on the infamous watch case of former deputy premier Gen Prawit Wongsuwan to activist Veera Somkwamkid on May 23, as ordered by the Administrative Court.

However, many details remain redacted with black ink, Mr Veera, head of the Anti-Corruption People's Network, said the following day (May 24).

He said the court ordered the NACC to give details of the case to him within 15 days after the order was issued on May 2. He also gave the NACC another 15 days but said it has not sent him the complete documents as ordered.

On May 2 the court issued the order, accompanied with a B10,000 fine, after the NACC ignored an earlier order on Aug 22, 2019, to disclose to Mr Veera three documents relating to the NACC's investigation into Gen Prawit's alleged failure to declare his luxury wristwatches in a mandatory assets declaration with the NACC.

The earlier order was made by the Office of the Official Information Commission in response to Mr Veera's petition.

Mr Veera said the NACC keeps ignoring the May 2 court order as he did not receive the full version of the three documents due to all the black ink and missing pages.

The redacted parts include the names of the NACC officers involved and other details, he said.



Prawit Wongsuwan. Photo: Bangkok Post

"This is unacceptable," Mr Veera said, vowing to file another petition to force the NACC to submit all of the documents.

He said an official verification signature was not visible on any of the 1,000 pages of documents he received.

He said he was legally restricted from publicising the documents as he could face a year in jail and/or a maximum fine of B20,000.

"But I don't mind if I have to be in prison for releasing the paper. I will do so for the public benefit," Mr Veera said.

Bangkok Post



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The well at Wat Chalong, built by the revered Luang Por Chaem, is deemed to contain sacred water. Photos: PR Phuket



Honouring sacred waters

The Phuket News
editor1@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat has invited the public to join a formal ceremony to draw water from a sacred well at Wat Chalong to be used during the royal celebrations to mark the auspicious occasion of His Majesty the King's 6th Cycle (72 years) Birthday on July 28.

Governor Sophon announced the invitation at a press conference at

Phuket Provincial Hall on May 23.

Joining Governor Suwannarat for the announcement were Phuket Vice Governors Sattha Thongkham and Adul Chuthong along with Phuket Provincial Defense Office Chief Akara Suwatthikul; Sophon Thongsai, Head of the Phuket Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office (DDPM-Phuket); Ratchadaphon O-in from the Phuket Tourism and Sports Office; and Lertchai Wangtrakuldee, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Phuket Office.

Also present were Tasaneeya

Srirattanapraphan, Deputy Director of the Election Commission of Thailand Phuket office (ECT Phuket); Rangsan Phonsamak, Dean of the Faculty of Science at Phuket Rajabhat University; and Suthipong Suwandechakul, Assistant Manager of the Provincial Waterworks Authority Phuket branch (PWA Phuket).

Governor Suwannarat detailed the preparations for the holy Buddhist water ceremony, which will include several key events:

July 4, at 2:49pm: A water-drawing ceremony at the sacred well of Wat Chaiyatharam (Wat Chalong)

July 7, at 5:09pm: A ceremony to consecrate the holy water at Wat Phra Thong in Thepkasattri

July 8, at 12pm: A candle procession ceremony to celebrate the holy water at Wat Phra Thong in Thepkasattri

The sacred well at Wat Chalong has a long history of spiritual significance, said an official report of the announcement. Built by Phra Khru Wisutthiwongsachan Yanmuni (Luang Por Chaem), the second abbot to serve at the revered temple, it features a square rock pond with clear, clean water that naturally bubbles up.

Locals believe the water possesses healing properties and brings good fortune. It has been used in significant ceremonies, such as the holy water ceremony for His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 7th Cycle Birthday Anniversary in 2011 and the Royal Coronation Ceremony of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn in 2019.

"Governor Suwannarat invites all sectors, including state enterprises, local government organisations, and the general public, to participate in these sacred ceremonies," said the announcement

"This is a unique opportunity to honour His Majesty the King and celebrate a significant milestone in Thai history," the announcement added.

ROYAL ORDINATION

Governor Sophon last week also presided over a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall to prepare for the royal celebrations of His Majesty the King's 72nd birthday on July 28.

Among the key participants were Phra Kru Phromprapassorn, Deputy Chief Monk of Phuket, Phra Maha Taweesak Nanthammo, Chief Monk of

Kathu District, Phra Kru Wisut Kittiyaporn, Chief Monk of Mueang Phuket District, Phuket Vice Governor Sattha Thongkham and Mrs Bussadee Suwannarat, Governor Sophon's wife and President of the Phuket Red Cross.

During the meeting, it was announced that the Ministry of Interior had highlighted the significance of the King's upcoming birthday, marking six cycles (72 years) on July 28, 2024. The government intends to hold a series of celebratory events, including a royal ordination project, in honor of the auspicious occasion.

The first committee meeting took place on Nov 23 last year, at the Government House, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Somsak Thepsuthin, said an official report of the meeting yesterday.

The committee agreed to hold formal celebration activities from July 14 to Aug 3, 2024. Participants will include government officials, private sector employees, and the public. Each province, including Bangkok, will have 73 participants, with ceremonies held at designated temples.

In Phuket, the ordination ceremonies will take place at Thep Wanaram Temple (Wat Manik). The schedule includes pre-ordination rehearsals on July 12, hair shaving on July 13, the ordination ceremony on July 14, daily almsgiving or chanting from July 15 to Aug 3, and the monks' return to lay life on Aug 3.

The Phuket Provincial Office encourages all sectors, including state enterprises, local government organisations and the general public to support the project, said the official report.

Each ordination requires a sponsorship of B3,000 to cover necessary expenses, such as robes, food and drinks for the monks throughout the 21-day period. Contributions can be made to the Phuket Provincial Office's Finance and Accounting Division through the designated Krung Thai Bank account (Account No. 805-6-01545-0). For more information, contact 076-224822 or 076-211102.

"Phuket calls upon all to join in this revered celebration and support the ordination project, contributing to a momentous event that honours His Majesty the King's significant milestone," said the report.

Where to eat in PHUKET

The July/August 2024
hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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HeadStart - Class of 2024



HeadStart International School is thrilled to celebrate the diverse achievements of its graduating class of 2024. This year, our students have secured spots at prestigious universities around the globe, showcasing their academic excellence and dedication. From Medicine and Engineering to Business and Design, our graduates are stepping into programs that reflect their passions and hard work. Their choices include renowned institutions such as Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok, Erasmus University in Rotterdam, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, BIMM University in Berlin, and the Singapore Institute of Management. These accomplishments are a testament to the rigorous academic environment and supportive community that have helped shape their learning journeys.

Beyond academics, our students have demonstrated exceptional leadership and community spirit. Sarita Singhapan, our Head Girl, and Charles Callens, our Head Boy, have set exemplary standards in their roles. They, along with other students, have held significant positions such as School Prefects and leaders of various committees and clubs. Their contributions span a wide range of activities, including tutoring, environmental initiatives, sports, music, and the arts. Their involvement in extracurricular activities such as the Model United Nations, enterprise projects, and CAPA productions highlights their well-rounded capabilities and readiness to take on future challenges. Additionally, many students have engaged in volunteer work, from beach clean-ups to community outreach programs, showcasing their commitment to making a positive difference. Musical performances like "Chicago" and "The Wizard of Oz" have seen significant student participation, reflecting their diverse talents and dedication.



As these graduates embark on their next chapters, whether pursuing higher education, taking gap years for personal growth, or entering the professional world, the HeadStart community takes immense pride in their accomplishments. We are confident that their time at HeadStart has equipped them with the skills, knowledge, and values to excel in their future endeavours. Their learning journeys reflect the school's commitment to fostering talent and nurturing leaders who will make positive contributions to society. We wish our 2024 graduates all the best and eagerly anticipate the remarkable achievements they will undoubtedly continue to realise. Their stories are a source of inspiration and a reminder of the power of education in transforming lives and communities.

For more Information about HeadStart visit our website: www.headstartphuket.com

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POP QUIZ

- 1. The city of Eindhoven is the birthplace of which famous electronics company?
- 2. In which Quentin Tarantino-directed film did American actress Sydney Sweeney appear?
- 3. How many bones are there in an adult human body?
- 4. Englishman Edwin Budding invented the first what in 1830?
- 5. Which is the largest and most populated island in Japan?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. Beat

4. Little in Paris

9. ___ goose

14. Clinch

15. Union demand

16. Intestinal pouch

17. Ordinary folk

20. Dolly ___ of "Hello, Dolly!"

21. Snuggled

22. Not slouching

24. Pain-inflictors

28. Mongol rulers

32. Bony part of a tooth

33. Early Jackson 5 single

36. Destroyer destroyer

38. Home to some Mongolian nomads

39. Litigation type

43. Bee or Em

44. Certain sorority woman

45. Father figures

46. Stop working

49. Rocket fuel ingredient, for short

51. Heavy hydrogen, e.g.

53. Text version

57. Despicable coward, old word

61. Fluish feeling

62. Algebra, e.g.
66. Map feature

67. Title holder

68. Collected

69. Autocrats of old

70. Malaysian meat dish

71. Dummkopf
- Down
1. Deed

2. Reddish yellow

3. Irk

4. All-___

5. Merit

6. Young boy

7. Egyptian fertility goddess

8. Cabanas

9. Bow

10. Some male horses

11. Mozart's "L___ del Cairo"

12. Fraternity letters

13. River to the North Sea

18. Candle part

19. Hefty competitor

23. As a result

25. Basin for holy water

26. Leg bone

27. Piques

29. Grp. concerned
30. Arrow part

31. "Paradise Lost" figure

33. Category of arachnids

34. Holiday music

35. "The Faerie Queene" division

37. Dwelling; var.

40. Seamstress, at times

41. Pick

42. Old ointment

47. Subjects to ridicule

48. Big story

50. Kind of testimony

52. Character of a culture

54. Insect-eating lizard

55. Blends

56. Strains

58. Part of the Corn Belt

59. Source

60. Dog biter

62. Billboard listing

63. Helpful connections

64. Govt. property overseer

65. Have a bawl

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

(1) Philips; (2) Once Upon a Time in Hollywood; (3) 206 (a baby has around 305 bones at birth); (4) lawn mower; (5) Honshu (meaning 'main island')

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14				15						16				
17				18						19				
20					21									
22				23				24				25	26	27
				28		29	30	31		32				
33	34	35		36				37			38			
39			40						41	42				
43						44						45		
46				47	48		49				50			
51						52				53		54	55	56
			57				58	59	60		61			
62	63	64								65				
66						67						68		
69						70						71		

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

3

year-olds who napped after learning new verbs had a better understanding of the words when tested 24 hours later.

30

percent of people who have had a one-night stand end up in a long-term relationship because of it.

10,900

steps a day taken by employees makes them less likely to let a bad day at the office spill over into their home.

211,487

homicides in the US between 1980 and 2010 saw no arrests made at all.

300 million

US dollars a year is what the population of Japan spends on mushrooms alone.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Kata Beach sunset. Photo by Sue Foster

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

This week in history

May 31, 1927

The last Ford Model T (also called the 'Tin Lizzie') rolls off the assembly line after a production run of 15,007,003 vehicles.

June 1, 2001

Nepalese royal massacre: Crown Prince Dipendra of Nepal shoots and kills several members of his family, including his father and mother.

June 2, 1962

During the FIFA World Cup,

police have to intervene multiple times in fights between Chilean and Italian players in one of the most violent games in football history.

June 3, 2017

London Bridge attack: Eight people are murdered and dozens of civilians are wounded by Islamist terrorists. Three of the attackers are shot dead by the police.

June 4, 2018

'Day Zero' in Cape Town,



Photo: ModelTMitch

South Africa, with most taps in the capital city turned off to conserve water.

June 5, 1949

Thailand elects Orapin Chai-

yakan, the first female member of Thailand's Parliament, elected as a representative for Ubon Ratchathani Province.

June 6, 1985

The grave of 'Wolfgang Gerhard' in Embu, Brazil is exhumed and the remains are later proven to be of Josef Mengele, Auschwitz's 'Angel of Death'; thought to have drowned while swimming in February 1979.

Source: Wikipedia

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WINDOW ON PHUKET

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Where to eat in PHUKET

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FRI 7 JUN



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Monday BBQ Night

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SUN 2 JUN

WED 5 JUN

SUN 16 JUN



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Wednesday BBQ Night

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



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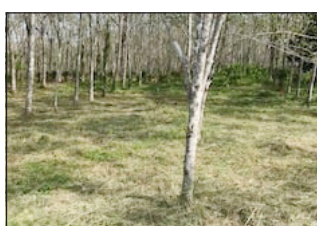
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AUSTCHAM JOINT CHAMBERS PHUKET SUNDOWNERS - MAY 2024

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand (AMCHAM), British Chamber of Commerce Thailand (BCCT), Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber of Commerce, CanCham Thailand, Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce (FTCC), German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (GTCC), Netherlands-Thai Chamber of Commerce (NTCC), Phuket Chamber of Commerce, Thai-Italian Chamber of Commerce (TICC) and Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce, Phuket Sundowners was held on Friday, May 24, at Angsana Laguna Phuket. Over 100 members and guests were treated to a great selection of food and beverages served by the Angsana Laguna Phuket team alongside fantastic Aussie pies from Lady Pie. Thanks to the AustCham Thailand team for again arranging one of the best networking events on the island.



WINDOW ON PHUKET

June/July 2024 issue

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Photo: PR Phuket

Hundreds brave rain for 'Phukethon 2024 Run'

RUNNING

THE ICONIC STREETS of Phuket Town came alive recently as more than 500 runners from across Thailand and around the world participated in the highly anticipated Phukethon 2024 Run Fiesta.

The Phukethon 2024 Run Fiesta kicked off at Saphan Hin Public Park at 5am on Saturday, May 18, with the official opening of the event presided over by Damrong Chaisena, Director of the Phuket office of the Sports Authority of Thailand.

The initial five-kilometre run was organised in collaboration with Run Rio Thailand and supported by over 10 organisations, including Phuket City Municipality, Mueang Phuket District Office and the Thai Health Promotion Foundation.

With the course winding its way along the streets of Phuket

Old Town, highlighting the Sino-European architectural heritage dating back to 1903, the Phukethon run event has now been recognised as a prestigious 'World Athletics Road Race Label' event.

This year's event emphasised environmental responsibility through the 'Phukethon Go Green' campaign. Runners were encouraged to bring their own water bottles to reduce plastic waste and used recycled products, including BIB numbers and cloth bags.

The campaign also promoted carpooling, the use of bicycle transportation, and reduced noise pollution, fostering a culture of sustainability.

The 'road race festival' event, which concluded on May 19, was expected to inject over B150 million into the local economy, highlighting its significant impact on Phuket's tourism and community, organisers announced.

The Phuket News

Leclerc finally wins at home

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato

michael@boxofneutrals.com

Charles Leclerc won an emotional first Monaco Grand Prix on his home streets of Monte Carlo after a massive first-lap crash suspended the race for more than 40 minutes last Sunday (May 26).

Leclerc was flawless off the line to hold the lead from front-row starter Oscar Piastri, but behind him chaos enveloped the field.

Carlos Sainz, starting third, tangled with Piastri and picked up a costly front-right puncture that forced him to park up at Casino Square, his race seemingly over on the spot.

Further down the field, however, a bigger incident saw Kevin Magnussen and Sergio Pérez tangle, with the latter spinning out of control before Magnussen ploughed into him, both making heavy contact with the steel barriers.

Pérez then rebounded onto the track to collide with Magnussen's teammate, Nico Hülkenberg, to take all three out of the race on the spot.

All three drivers walked away unscathed despite severe damage to the Mexican's Red Bull Racing car.

Further along, another incident saw irreparable damage to Esteban Ocon's car after a skirmish with Alpine teammate Pierre Gasly.

The series of crashes meant a 40-minute delay ensued to repair the barriers, effectively deciding the race at the end of the first lap.



Leclerc in action on the streets of the sport's most famous race. Photo: AFP

With all drivers allowed to make their mandatory tyre changes during the red flag, the Monaco Grand Prix became a long 75-lap procession of tyre management to the chequered flag at the slowest possible speed.

However, the dour nature of the race did nothing to dent Leclerc's joy to have finally won the sport's most famous race, having twice failed to convert pole position to victory at home in the last three years.

"No words can explain that," he said. "It's such a difficult race. I think the fact that twice I've been starting on pole position and couldn't quite make it makes it even better in a way."

"It means a lot. It's the race that made me dream of becoming a Formula

1 driver one day," he added.

Leclerc was pushed gamely by Piastri, who turned a career-high second on the grid into his best-ever grand prix finish of second at the flag.

Sainz made the most of his lucky second chance to finish third, having pressured Leclerc in the final stages of the race as tyre life became most precarious.

Lando Norris completed an unchanged top four, while George Russell held off Max Verstappen in fifth and sixth ahead of Lewis Hamilton in seventh.

Yuki Tsunoda finished eighth ahead of Alex Albon's first score of the season for Williams in ninth with Gasly's damaged Alpine completing the point-scoring positions.

Muay Thai set to demo at Paris Olympics

MUAY THAI

A MUAY THAI FIGHT demonstration has been confirmed to feature during the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris, touted as the first step towards the sport's inclusion in the international event.

The International Federation of Muaythai Associations (IFMA) held a press conference on May 23 with acting IFMA president Sakchye Tapsuwan, Sports Authority of Thailand Governor Kongsak Yodmanee, Professional Boxing Association of Thailand president and IFMA President Somchart Charoenwacharawit and French Federation of Kickboxing, Muaythai and Associated Disciplines President Nadir Allouache.

Mr Sakchye said the National Olympic Committee of France, the organiser of this year's Summer Olympics, has agreed to allow the IFMA to stage a Muay Thai demonstration at the Olympic Park in Paris during the sporting event.



Photo: Bangkok Post

According to him, IFMA member states will send their Muay Thai fighters to participate in the demonstration.

There will be a wai khru performance to pay respects to Muay Thai teachers, along with a showcase of traditional Muay Thai music, he said.

The demonstration will also feature Buakaw Banchamek, a well-known Muay Thai fighter, he said.

Mr Sakchye said that Muay

Thai will also be included as one of the "side programmes" of the Olympic Games Paris 2024. Muay Thai workshops will also be offered in the Olympic Park for five days, he added.

Mr Allouache said the fight demonstration will mark a significant cooperation and the first step towards the inclusion of Thai boxing in the Olympic Games. *Bangkok Post*

PM hopes for Thai F1 circuit

FORMULA ONE

PRIME MINISTER SRETTHA Thavisin has met with Formula One organisers in Italy and said he hoped the construction of an F1 racing circuit would start near U-Tapao airport in Rayong province in three or four years.

The prime minister met executives of Formula One Group in Milan ahead of the Emilia Romagna Formula One Grand Prix at the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari race track in Imola on May 19.

Mr Srettha told reporters that Thailand needed international sporting events to boost tourism, and the government wanted the country to be a venue of the Formula One World Championship.

Also present in the meeting were Chatchai Phromlert, chairman of PTT Plc, and Kavin Kanjanapas, president of BTS Group Holdings Plc.

The prime minister said he invited both men along as he expected PTT to sponsor the construction of the new circuit and BTS Group Holdings was the concessionaire of the vast compound of U-Tapao airport. The prime minister said his delegation received a positive



PM Srettha Thavisin (left) and Red Bull Racing's team principal and CEO Christian Horner ahead of the Emilia Romagna Formula One Grand Prix on May 19. Photo: AFP

response from the Formula One Group.

"I believe that the we and the organisers both want (this) to happen. I am confident that there will be good news in a few months," Mr Srettha said.

There could be F1 and F2 events at the track, and also events for young racers, he said. In-depth details had yet to be discussed, but the government would be ready to start construction of the circuit in 2027 or 2028 at the latest, the prime minister said.

During his trip to Italy, PM Srettha visited the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari Formula One circuit in the town of Imola, east of Bologna.

An evaluation of the

amount of revenue Formula One will generate for Thailand has not been conducted, said Mr Srettha.

To give an idea how much it could be, he said VIP tickets to the event cost between US\$5,000 (B181,000) and \$8,000 per person while other revenue streams will come from sponsors, food sales at the event and tourism.

During Formula One Group's visit to Thailand last month, Mr Srettha discussed with the company's CEO Stefano Domenicali the feasibility of organising a Formula One race in the country, with the latter saying he hoped to cooperate with the Thai government.

Bangkok Post

United shock City to win FA Cup

FOOTBALL

AFP
Erik ten Hag made a convincing case to be spared the sack as Manchester United upset Manchester City to win the FA Cup with a shock 2-1 victory last Saturday (May 25).

Ten Hag was reportedly set to be dismissed regardless of the result at Wembley after a troubled campaign that even the United manager recently described as “terrible”.

But United’s hierarchy might be having second thoughts after Ten Hag’s tactical masterclass ruined City’s history bid.

City were hot favourites to win a second successive Premier League and FA Cup double yet Ten Hag found a way to neutralise Pep Guardiola’s side as first half goals from Alejandro Garnacho and Kobbie Mainoo put United on course to win the trophy for the first time in eight years.

Jeremy Doku squeezed an 87th minute strike past Andre Onana but it proved too late to rescue City.

Ten Hag celebrated by kissing the Cup as he held it aloft in the Royal box.

Asked if he was worried about his future, he said: “I don’t know. The only thing I’m doing is preparing my team.”

Having ended a turbulent season on a high note, if Ten Hag’s two-year reign does end, his exit would provoke memories of fellow Dutchman Louis van Gaal’s Old Trafford departure, fired just two days after United’s FA Cup final



Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes lifts the FA Cup. Photo: AFP

victory against Crystal Palace in 2016.

Ten Hag will hope a more apt comparison is Alex Ferguson’s 1990 FA Cup final win against Palace, which kick-started his remarkable run after calls for his sacking earlier that season.

United shareholder Jim Ratcliffe, who has control of football operations at Old Trafford, was watching from the stands alongside co-owners Joel and Avie Glazer.

Linked with Thomas Tuchel, Mauricio Pochettino and Gareth Southgate, among others, there is still plenty for Ratcliffe to ponder after United finished eighth in the Premier League this season – their lowest final position since 1990 – and crashed out of the Champions League in the group stage.

However, Ten Hag ended United’s six-year trophy drought by winning the League Cup last year and has now avenged their 2-1 loss to City in the FA Cup final 12 months ago despite finishing 31 points behind the champions this term.

United will also qualify for the Europa League, avoiding a first season without European action since 2014-15.

Meanwhile, Southampton clinched promotion back to the Premier League after a one-year exile with a 1-0 win against Leeds United in the Championship play-off final at Wembley on Sunday (May 26).

Russell Martin’s Saints join fellow promoted teams Leicester City and Ipswich Town in England’s top league next season.



The War Elephants. Photo: Supplied

Thailand to face Malaysia, Singapore in ASEAN clash

FOOTBALL

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS
Thailand have been drawn to face arch-rivals Malaysia and Singapore in the opening round of the 2024 AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup.

The other teams in Group A will be Cambodia and the winners of a play-off between Brunei and Timor Leste.

The official draw for the tournament, which has been rebranded as the ASEAN championship, was held in Hanoi, Vietnam, on May 21 and the prestigious event will take place from Nov 23-Dec 21.

Last year’s runners-up Vietnam and reigning SEA Games champions Indonesia have been drawn in Group B along with the Philippines, Myanmar and Laos.

War Elephants coach Masatada Ishii attended the ceremony in Hanoi along with Malaysian counterpart Kim Pan-Gon.

Under tournament rules, the top nine ranked ASEAN countries qualify automatically for the round-robin first stage with one of the two bottom-ranked sides advancing through a play-off.

The first-round matches take place on a home and away basis with the top two teams from each group qualifying for the home-and-away semi-finals.

The title showdown is also played over home-and-away legs.

Thailand have so far won seven AFF Championship titles (1996, 2000, 2002, 2014, 2016, 2020 and 2022).

Bangkok Post

Premier League teams set to vote on the future of VAR

FOOTBALL

PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS will be given the chance to scrap the video assistant referee (VAR) from next season when they vote on the controversial review system at their annual general meeting next month.

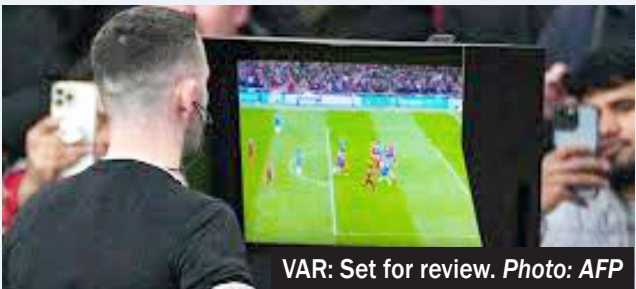
Wolves have submitted a resolution to abolish VAR to the Premier League, triggering a vote of the top flight’s 20 teams on June 6.

The Molineux club said VAR is “undermining the value of the Premier League brand” after another season marred by a host of debatable decisions.

In order for VAR to be axed by the Premier League, 14 of the 20 clubs will have to vote against it.

Wolves are expected to canvas other clubs in order to gain support before the meeting.

VAR was introduced in the Premier League in 2019 with the aim of helping referees avoid clear and obvi-



VAR: Set for review. Photo: AFP

ous errors that had marred matches in the past.

But there were numerous controversies surrounding the technology last season as Premier League managers and fans grew increasingly vocal in their disdain for the system.

“The introduction of VAR in 2019/20 was a decision made in good faith and with the best interests of football and the Premier League at its heart,” a Wolves statement said.

“However, it has led to numerous unintended negative consequences that are damaging the relationship between fans and football, and undermining the value of the Premier League brand.

“Our position is that the

price we are paying for a small increase in accuracy is at odds with the spirit of our game, and as a result we should remove it from the 2024/25 season onwards.”

The impact of VAR on goal celebrations, the length of time taken for checks and a lack of communication in the stadium are all issues that have irked supporters and cited by Wolves as reasons for scrapping the system.

However, the Premier League believes VAR is still a valuable tool and is in regular dialogue with referees’ governing body PGMOL, stating the number of incorrect decisions would increase without VAR which could damage the competition’s reputation. *AFP*

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Sport



FA Cup glory for Ten Hag's United > p15

AWARD HAT-TRICK FOR PANIPAK

ALL SPORTS

Bangkok Post

Taekwondo star Panipak Wongpattanakit won her third consecutive Sport Writers Association of Thailand (Swat) award for best amateur female athlete at the 2023 ceremony in Bangkok on May 21.

Surat Thani native Panipak stood out with her gold-winning performance in the 49kg class of the taekwondo competitions at the Hangzhou Asian Games in China last September.

It was her second Asian Games gold medal after her success in Indonesia in 2018, while the 26-year-old also won her country's first gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

Nicknamed 'Tennis,' Panipak is now focused on the upcoming 2024 Olympics in Paris, after which she plans to retire.

Badminton ace Kunlavut Vitidsarn walked away with the top male amateur award after becoming the



Panipak (left) with Thailand's International Olympic Committee member Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul at the Swat awards ceremony in Bangkok on May 21. Photo: Supplied

first Thai ever to win the men's world badminton singles title last year.

It marked the second consecutive year that Kunlavut won the Swat award in his category.

The annual event was held in Bangkok and presided over by Minister for Tourism and Sports Sermsak

Pongpanit.

The top awards in the men and women's professional sports went to motorcycle rider Somkiat Chantra and LPGA golfer Chanettee Wanasanaen, respectively.

A victory in the Moto2 race at the 2023 Japanese Grand Prix proved

enough for Somkiat to land the men's award, while 20-year-old Chanettee impressed the selection committee with her victory in the 2023 Portland Classic of the LPGA Tour to earn the women's top honour.

Young male athlete of the year was weightlifter Weeraphon Wichuma, who tasted success in the 73kg category at two qualifying events for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

Teenage shuttler Pitchamon Opatniputh claimed the best young athlete of the year award thanks to her triumph in the world youth badminton championships last year.

The best team (sport) award went to the national women's volleyball squad for winning the Asian title against tournament favourites China in Nakhon Ratchasima last September.

The best team (event) were the Thai women's table tennis team, who won a historic bronze medal at Hangzhou Asian Games – their first ever medal in 57 years.

Buriram United were again named the best professional team (pro sport)

after they swept all domestic titles – the Thai League 1, League Cup and FA Cup.

The women's golf team of Athaya Thitikul, Patty Tavatanakit, Moriya Jutanugarn and Ariya Jutanugarn were named the best team (pro event) following their victory at the LPGA International Crown match play event in the United States.

Wijan Ponlid, of the Thai women's boxing team, won the best amateur coach award while Japanese tactician Masatada Ishii, currently coach of the Thai national men's football team, was honoured in the professional category for leading Buriram's all conquering season last year.

Tawanchai PK Saenchaimuaythaigym took the best Muay Thai fighter crown while Songpayak Boomdeksian was voted the rising star of the discipline.

Wheelchair racer Athiwat Paengnuea and wheelchair fencer Samsunee Jana were voted the best male and female handicapped athletes of 2023, while the golf association was the pick of the national associations.

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