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# CRAP SHOOT



Patong Mayor Lalita Maneesri and her team at the Patong wastewater treatment plant. Photo: Patong Municipality

## PHUKET EYES FERTILISER PUSH AS GLOBAL SUPPLY RISKS MOUNT

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Phuket is moving to boost local fertiliser production as Thailand scrambles to secure supplies from abroad, with officials warning that rising tensions in the Middle East could disrupt critical imports and expose the country's heavy reliance on foreign sources.

The concern comes as the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives holds talks with Russia over the potential import of 1-2 million tonnes of urea fertiliser per year, underscoring the extent of Thailand's dependence on external supply at a time of mounting geopolitical uncertainty.

Thailand imports more than 90% of its chemical fertiliser, with

total demand estimated at 4-5mn tonnes annually. Much of that supply is tied to global energy and raw material markets, particularly in the Middle East, leaving the country vulnerable to price shocks and potential shortages if conflict escalates or key transit routes are disrupted.

Import data further highlights the concentration of risk. Around 22.5% of Thailand's fertiliser comes from China, followed by 14.6% from Saudi Arabia, 8.6% from Malaysia, 7.7% from Russia and 7.1% from Qatar – a supply chain heavily exposed to geopolitical and trade instability.

Officials have increasingly warned that any disruption affecting strategic routes such as the Strait of Hormuz could have

immediate consequences for fertiliser availability, with knock-on effects for agricultural output and food security.

Against that backdrop, efforts are intensifying to expand domestic production, particularly organic fertiliser, as part of a broader strategy to reduce structural dependence on imports.

Nationally, Thailand produces about 3.32mn tonnes of organic fertiliser per year, with targets to increase that to as much as 3.5-4mn tonnes. However, officials acknowledge that organic fertiliser cannot fully replace chemical alternatives, particularly for high-demand crops.

"It's important to consider the overall picture," agricultural specialist Petchara Wannapech

said, speaking on behalf of Phuket Land Development Station chief Songwut Saengsuriya.

"For example, 100kg of organic fertiliser contains only about one kilogramme of nitrogen," she said. "Chemical fertiliser provides equivalent nutrients in smaller quantities and delivers faster results."

This limitation remains critical for sectors such as oil palm and rubber, which require high nutrient input for commercial yields. "Some sectors require large amounts of chemical fertilisers for rapid results," Ms Petchara added.

**LOCAL RESPONSE**

In Phuket, however, even small-scale fertiliser production is now being viewed as part of a wider...

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# News



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## Phuket makes fertiliser push

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...resilience strategy – one that links waste management with agricultural supply.

Current output remains modest. Phuket produces about eight tonnes of fertiliser per month – roughly 96 tonnes per year – primarily from food and organic waste streams.

“However, the real figure is higher,” Ms Petchara said.

“We know that in Phuket Town alone, we produced eight tonnes per month last year, but currently production exceeds this amount, as it does not include output from Patong and private sector operators.”

At the Phuket Land Development Station, production focuses on agricultural waste rather than municipal food waste.

“The office produces a large amount of fertiliser from inedible fruit waste, using microbial inoculants for composting,” Ms Petchara said. “The amount of fruit waste compost produced is about 40 tonnes per year.”

Liquid fertiliser is also produced and distributed locally. “Currently, we pro-

duce about 6,000 litres per month, including bio-fermented liquid,” she said. “Each production run distributes approximately 1,000 bottles to local farmers.”

Distribution remains targeted rather than commercial. “At present, the production volume is not that large. We are focusing on distribution to those in need,” Ms Petchara said.

Despite its limited scale, officials see the model as a foundation for future expansion. “The future plan is to produce more volume,” she added.

### PATONG MODEL

At the municipal level, Patong has emerged as one of the island’s most active sites for converting waste into fertiliser, though capacity constraints remain a major challenge.

Deputy Mayor Arwut Nuchet, speaking on behalf of Mayor Lalita Maneesri, said the municipality currently collects about one tonne of organic waste per day, mainly fruit scraps from local businesses.

“Patong Municipality currently does not directly process wet waste, but



Patong Mayor Lalita Maneesri hold up bags of homemade fertiliser ready for sale. Photo: Patong Municipality

focuses on organic waste such as fruit scraps,” he said.

However, the conversion process relies on natural composting, which limits throughput.

“The process requires about one and a half months per cycle, which restricts capacity,” Mr Arwut said.

The municipality is also producing liquid fertiliser from wastewater sludge generated by its treatment system, which is distributed for agricultural use.

To address bottlenecks, Patong is planning to introduce new technology capable of accelerating production.

“The next phase is to procure an organic waste shredder capable of processing waste into fertiliser within 24 hours,” Mr Arwut said. “The machine can

handle approximately one tonne per day.”

However, cost remains a significant barrier. “The machine costs millions of baht, so we must start with a trial run,” Mr Arwut added.

Officials said the pilot project is intended to build confidence among local businesses, including hotels and restaurants, before any wider rollout.

### ZERO-WASTE PUSH

At the provincial level, fertiliser production is being driven by a broader policy push to reduce waste at the source.

Phuket Governor’s secretary Aom Kanthima confirmed that all local administrative organisations are now required to implement composting systems as part of a zero-waste target.

“The governor has a policy to reduce organic waste at the source to zero in all local administrative organisations by the end of this year,” she said.

“That means every local administrative organisation must have its own waste composting machine.”

However, the initiative is being implemented without central government funding.

“According to the previously proposed plan, the province did not receive funding,” Ms Kanthima said. “Authority has now been delegated to each local organisation to procure equipment themselves.”

Progress is being monitored through regular meetings, with local authorities required to report updates on implementation.

“There will be a progress monitoring meeting this Friday, and we hold it every month,” she added.

### LIMITS AND REALITY

Despite the policy momentum, officials acknowledge that local fertiliser production remains a partial solution at best.

Organic fertiliser, while environmentally beneficial

and aligned with waste reduction goals, cannot yet match the efficiency or nutrient density of chemical products at scale.

It is also, in some cases, more expensive.

“Organic fertilisers... are relatively more expensive than imported chemical fertilisers but yield slower results,” Ms Petchara said.

For Phuket, where agriculture plays a relatively small economic role compared with tourism, the focus is less on large-scale production and more on resource efficiency and environmental management.

Still, officials say the direction is clear.

By turning organic waste into fertiliser, the province is not only reducing the volume of refuse sent to disposal sites, but also contributing – however modestly – to a national effort to strengthen supply resilience.

For now, Phuket’s output remains limited and locally focused. But as pressures on global supply chains grow, officials say expanding domestic production – however incremental – is no longer optional, but necessary.

## AirAsia Krabi flight grounded after passenger bomb scare ‘joke’

A THAI AIRASIA FLIGHT departing Krabi was delayed for more than four hours after a passenger allegedly claimed there was a bomb on board, triggering a full emergency response and security sweep at Krabi International Airport last Sunday (Apr 26).

The incident occurred at 4:47pm as flight FD4401, bound for Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi Airport, was preparing to depart. According to officials, a male passenger made a remark about a bomb while cabin crew were arranging luggage in the overhead compartment.

The flight attendant immediately informed the pilot, who ordered the aircraft to return to the parking bay in line with standard aviation safety procedures. All passengers and their baggage were then disembarked for inspection.

Police later identified the passenger as 45-year-old Klathach Phetpathomchon, from Chonburi. He reportedly told officers he had been joking, using a phrase he commonly used with friends.

Despite the claim, authorities treated the threat as genuine. An Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team was deployed, and the aircraft was moved to a remote bay away from the terminal as part of the airport’s emergency response plan.

A thorough search of the aircraft and all luggage found no explosives or prohibited items.

Deputy Transport Minister Phatraphong Phatprasit said he had ordered close monitoring of the case and stressed that safety must take priority in all aviation operations.

“Any claims or actions that create panic, whether intentional or joking, are all illegal, and officials will take decisive action,” he said.

The inspection was completed at about 8pm, and the flight eventually departed at around 9pm, approximately four hours and 15 minutes behind schedule. Airport officials confirmed that the incident did not disrupt other flights, which continued to operate as normal.



Photo: Nuea Khlong Police

Thai AirAsia has since filed a complaint with Nuea Khlong Police, and legal action is expected.

### POOR TIMING

The incident came just a day after high-level diplomatic meetings in Krabi involving Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who visited the province as part of an official trip to Thailand from Apr 23-25.

During his visit in Krabi, Mr Wang, Member of the Politburo, Director of the Central Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Communist Party of China, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, held discussions with Thai Deputy

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sihasak Phuangketkaew, focusing on strengthening bilateral ties and advancing a proposed Thailand-China Joint Action Plan.

The plan is expected to prioritise cooperation in key sectors including innovation, digital technology and the transition towards a green economy, with China playing a significant role in areas such as electric vehicles and solar energy.

The meeting in Krabi followed Mr Wang meeting Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul in Bangkok on Friday (Apr 24), where both sides reaffirmed their intention to deepen what they described as a “sister nation” relationship, with closer coordination on trade, investment and regional security.

China reiterated its readiness to support Thailand’s economic development and long-term stability, while Thailand welcomed increased Chinese investment, particularly in advanced industries.

Security cooperation was also a key focus, with both countries agreeing to intensify joint efforts to combat transnational crime, including scam networks, which have affected citizens in both nations.

Officials said Mr Wang’s visit carried added significance as the two countries mark 50 years of diplomatic relations, and comes amid efforts to elevate ties into a more comprehensive strategic partnership.

The visit also reinforced confidence in Thailand among Chinese stakeholders, with authorities highlighting its potential to support tourism recovery, particularly from the Chinese market, through stronger policy alignment and high-level engagement.

Mr Wang reportedly praised Krabi’s natural environment during his visit, describing it as a destination with strong appeal, particularly for high-value and long-stay travellers.

Eakkapop Thongtub

# Phuket ‘sustainability’ prowess goes on show

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The Global Sustainable Tourism Conference 2026 (GSTC 2026) has concluded in Phuket with a formal handover to the Bahamas for next year’s event, capping four days of discussions on advancing sustainability in the global tourism sector.

Held from Apr 21-24, the conference brought together more than 600 delegates from over 55 countries, including policymakers, industry leaders and sustainability experts, positioning Phuket at the centre of international efforts to translate sustainability commitments into practical action.

The event was officially opened on Apr 21 by Tourism and Sports Minister Surasak Panjaroenvorakul, who reaffirmed Thailand’s shift towards “value-based” tourism focused on environmental protection, cultural preservation and community benefit. He highlighted policies promoting low-carbon travel, secondary destinations and more equitable income distribution.

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Thapanee Kiatpaiboon said hosting GSTC 2026 reinforces Thailand’s ambition to become a global leader in sustainable



Photo: PR Phuket

tourism, while Phuket Governor Nirat Pongsitthaworn described the island as a model for responsible tourism development.

The conference programme featured forums, workshops and networking sessions addressing climate adaptation, disaster recovery, waste management, accessibility and managing visitor capacity. Key themes included sustainable hospitality and building resilient communities.

Organised through collaboration between the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, TAT, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau and local agencies, the event also

incorporated carbon reduction measures and a tree-planting initiative.

The conference formally closed with a farewell dinner at Kata Thani Phuket Beach Resort on Apr 23, where organisers confirmed the Bahamas as host of GSTC 2027.

Delegates are taking part in post-conference field trips across Phuket today (Apr 24) to observe sustainable tourism practices in local communities and marine environments.

Officials said the partnerships and ideas developed during the event are expected to shape future policies and strengthen Phuket’s role as a leading sustainable tourism destination.



Photo: Patong Municipality

## Seaweed’ returns to Patong Beach

SEAWEED HAS AGAIN washed ashore along Patong Beach, prompting officials to step up clean-up efforts to maintain the appearance of Phuket’s most popular beach.

Patong Deputy Mayor Awut Noochet led an inspection last Friday (Apr 24), joined by Deputy Mayor Sanakorn Kisin, municipal officials and department heads, to oversee the operation. Sanitation workers from the Public Health and Environment Division were deployed to clear and dispose of the seaweed, aiming to prevent foul odours and protect the beach’s image.

The latest accumulation follows similar incidents earlier this year that raised concerns among residents and visitors.

During a provincial inspection on Feb 17, Phuket Governor Nirat Pongsit-

thaworn ordered cruise ships anchoring offshore to move further out to sea, increasing distances from two to three kilometres as a precaution while investigations continue.

Officials say seaweed blooms are often seasonal, typically occurring between January and April when conditions favour growth. Data from the Phuket Provincial Fisheries Office indicates algae can increase significantly during this period.

However, authorities have also identified high phosphate levels from wastewater as a contributing factor, along with strong waves that can dislodge seaweed and wash it ashore.

Officials stress Patong Beach remains open and safe, with clean-up operations ongoing while longer-term solutions are pursued.

The Phuket News

## Senate advisor ‘realises’ Phuket’s landfill crisis

AN ADVISOR TO THE SENATE Committee on Natural Resources and Environment has realised that Phuket’s landfill crisis is creating “visual pollution” – with piles of garbage now beginning to affect the island’s image as a “world-class tourist city”, in what many might consider a statement of the obvious.

The remark came during a recent visit by Senate Committee advisor Samran Sinthong and his delegation to Phuket City Municipality, where they inspected waste management operations and the increasingly strained landfill system at Saphan Hin.

During the visit, the team toured the municipality’s Community Solid Waste-to-Energy Plant (Plant 2), which handles up to 700 tonnes of waste per day.

According to an official report of Mr Samran’s visit, the advisor highlighted the importance of maintaining proper combustion standards to control air pollution and ensure effective management of residual waste. Apparently that is important.

However, it was the condition of the landfill that drew the most attention. Local officials have already described the site as being in a “crisis” state, struggling to cope with the growing volume of waste driven by tourism and economic activity – an issue that has been evident to residents for years.

It was brought to Mr Samran’s attention that among the impacts were foul odours affecting nearby communities, visible accumulations of rubbish, and environ-



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

mental risks from potential wastewater seepage into surrounding soil and water sources – all factors long widely known in Phuket.

Mr Samran said the findings from the visit would be raised with relevant agencies at the Senate level, with several measures proposed to address the situation, said the official report of this visit.

These include expanding the capacity of waste incineration facilities, identifying new landfill sites, promoting waste separation at source, and tightening environmental controls to limit the impact on local communities, the report noted, without providing any further details.

The visit underscores renewed attention from central authorities on Phuket’s long-running waste management problems, though for many on the island, the scale of the issue has hardly been difficult to spot.

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Screenshot: Supplied

## Truck driver pulls scythe in Kalim road dispute

A DRIVER BRANDING a scythe threatened motorists on a busy Patong road late last Friday night (Apr 24) following an apparent road rage incident, with dashcam footage widely shared online.

The incident occurred at about 11:50pm on Phra Baramee Rd near Kalim Beach, as traffic headed towards Kamala. Video shows a water tanker truck cutting in front of a car after attempting to merge from a side road.

The driver who shared the footage said they were unable to slow down to give way due to another vehicle close behind. The situation escalated when the truck followed closely before both vehicles stopped.

The truck driver then exited his vehicle holding

a scythe and approached the car, threatening the occupants, who reportedly included foreign passengers. No physical violence was reported.

The motorist said they tried to contact the company operating the tanker but received no response.

The viral clip prompted widespread reaction online, with many urging the victim to file a police report and others calling for action by transport authorities. The page that shared the video also warned road users to prioritise safety and called on the company to investigate the driver's behaviour.

The incident has renewed concerns over aggressive driving and road safety in Phuket. Authorities have yet to comment.

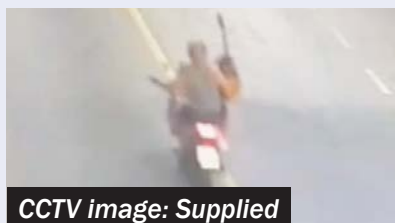
Eakkapop Thongtub

## Tourists steal guitar from parked motorbike in 'opportunity theft'

CCTV FOOTAGE HAS captured two foreign tourists stealing a guitar from a parked motorcycle in Karon in the early hours of Apr 23, prompting the owner to appeal for help in identifying the suspects.

The incident occurred at about 2:30am on Thaina Rd near Beyond Surf Kata Phuket. The victim, 19-year-old Kasidit Nommuang, had left the guitar on his motorcycle seat.

Footage shows two men arriving on a motorcycle. One moves his bike while the other



CCTV image: Supplied

takes the guitar before both flee on a white Honda Click.

Mr Kasidit filed a complaint with Karon Police, who are using the footage to track the suspects. Authorities urge anyone with information to come forward.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Parasail tow-rope snap sparks safety concerns

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A parasailing tow rope snapped mid-air off Kamala Beach on Apr 20, sending two tourists into the sea and raising fresh concerns over marine tourism safety in Phuket.

The incident gained attention after a video circulated online showing a speedboat towing a parasail before the rope suddenly broke. The parasail, carrying two Turkish tourists, fell into the water from about five metres. None were injured, and the tourists declined to take legal action.

The Phuket Marine Office ordered the operator to suspend activities on Apr 22 until all equipment meets safety standards. Marine Office Chief Adoon Raluekmoo said officials, along with Tourist Police and Marine Police, would conduct a detailed inspection, with findings to be announced.

Online reaction questioned equipment maintenance and oversight, with some warning that ropes exposed to sun and saltwater can deteriorate if not regularly replaced.

Authorities said safety measures will be tightened, with inspections increased from every six months to every two months. Officials also plan to work with



Photo: Phuket Tourist Police

private-sector experts to improve inspection frequency and consistency.

Safety awareness campaigns for operators and tourists are also being prepared, including guidance on checking equipment and proper procedures.

Officials warned that repeated safety incidents could damage Phuket's tourism reputation, stressing the need for stricter enforcement.

The incident follows a fatal parasailing accident at

Karon Beach last year, when a 31-year-old staff member fell to his death without a safety harness. Authorities later confirmed safety gear and staffing requirements were already mandatory, and the operator faced negligence charges.

In response, stricter rules were introduced, including mandatory protective equipment, tighter staffing controls and increased inspections, with authorities warning that violations will result in legal action.

## Aussie wanted for hotel worker assault

AN AUSTRALIAN TOURIST has been accused of assaulting a hotel worker inside a room at a hotel on Bangla Rd early on Apr 24.

Police were notified of the incident at 2:15am after receiving a report of an assault at the Doze Bangla hotel in Patong.

According to police, the incident occurred at about 12:30am inside Room 324, where the suspect, identified as Ridge Geoffrey Gordon Sherlock, 33, an Australian national, assaulted hotel employee Puri Udompanyavith, 38.

Another hotel employee who later entered the room after hearing an argument was also injured while attempting to intervene.



Photo: Patong Police

Both Mr Puri and the other hotel employee were both taken to Patong Hospital for treatment.

Investigating officers have accepted the complaint and are continuing to question those involved as part of the investigation.

So far police have not reported the cause of the altercation.

Eakkapop Thongtub

# Underpass lights get fast fix

The Phuket News  
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Phuket authorities have ordered urgent, round-the-clock repairs to underpass lighting systems across the island, with all work to be completed before the new school term begins on May 14.

Governor Nirat Pongsitthaworn issued the directive during the latest meeting of the Phuket Provincial Joint Public-Private Sector Committee for Solving Economic Problems (PJPC), instructing agencies to accelerate inspections and repairs on roads under the Highway Department.

The order follows earlier concerns over a B48.4 million project to upgrade lighting and electrical systems at five key underpasses, which had failed to begin more than four months into its contract. Authorities had warned the contractor, Better World Traffic Co Ltd, could abandon the project, prompting scrutiny by the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) Region 8 and other agencies.

The project, signed on Sept 27, 2025, with a 210-day deadline ending Apr 24, 2026, covers upgrades at Phuket Airport, Bang Khu, Samkong, Darasomut and Chalong underpasses. Planned works include LED lighting, fault warning systems, licence plate recognition, smart signage and a centralised monitoring system.

Officials now say work has begun in earnest. Sutham Phuaphun, head of

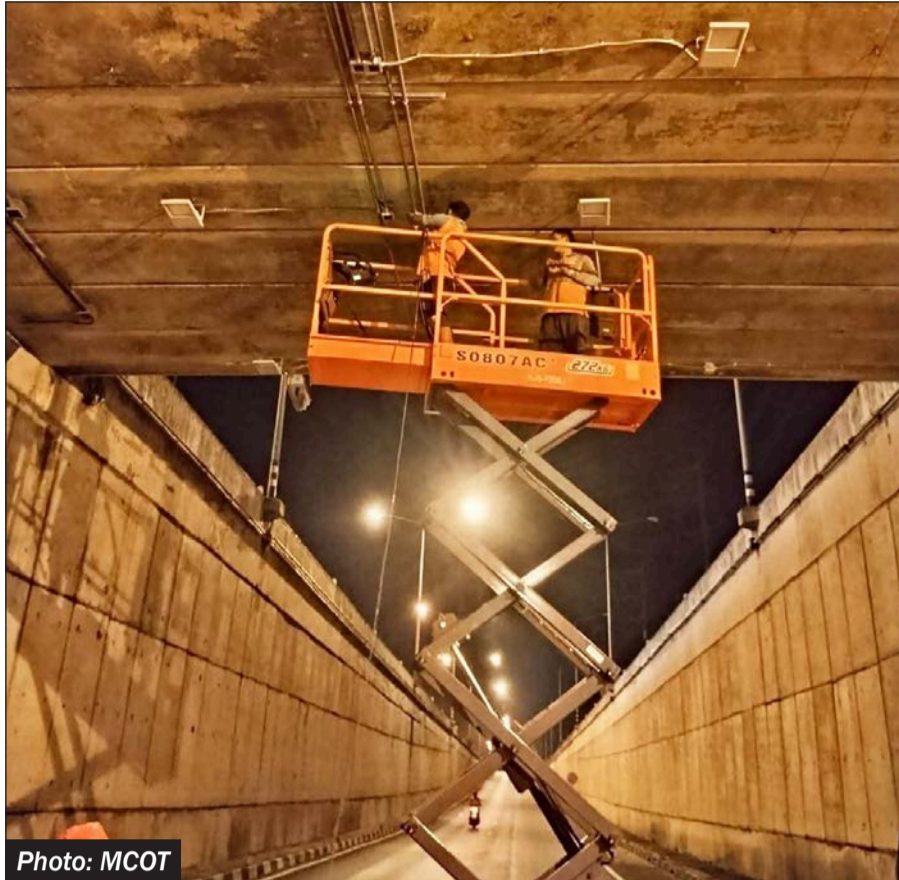


Photo: MCOT

the engineering division overseeing the project, confirmed construction started at 9pm on Apr 23, with crews working continuous day and night shifts. Day work runs from 9am to 6pm, with night operations from 9pm to 6am.

Authorities said the accelerated schedule is critical before schools reopen, when traffic will increase and daytime closures become impractical. Police have approved temporary

underpass closures during off-peak hours, particularly between 9am and 4pm.

The Highway Department has been instructed to closely supervise the contractor and enforce penalties if deadlines are missed. Officials also urged the public to report faulty streetlights via hotline 1586, stressing that tighter oversight and faster construction are essential to complete the delayed project on time.



Photo: PR Phuket

## Finland opens Honorary Consulate

THE REPUBLIC OF Finland has officially opened an honorary consulate in Phuket, in a move aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and improving services for Finnish nationals on the island.

Phuket Governor Nirat Pongsitthaworn presided over the opening ceremony on Apr 21, joined by Mueang District Chief Siwat Rawangkul and other officials.

The new Honorary Consulate of Finland in Phuket will be headed by Sornkom Kitprasan, who welcomed guests at the ceremony.

Officials said the establishment of the consulate marks an

important step in enhancing cooperation between Thailand and Finland, while also improving support for Finnish citizens and tourists visiting Phuket.

The presence of the consulate is expected to streamline assistance services, including coordination with local authorities, and contribute to maintaining Phuket's reputation as a leading international tourist destination.

The consulate is located at 265 Yaowarat Rd in Phuket Town, and can be contacted via email at official@kitprasangroup.com or by phone at 085-0222205.

The Phuket News

# Phuket Pride Festival 2026: 'Be Loud, Be Proud, Be You'

THE PHUKET PRIDE FESTIVAL 2026 will return on a larger scale than ever before, with organisers promising to transform Patong into a space of equality and diversity from May 29 to June 7.

The plans were confirmed at a meeting chaired by Patong Mayor Lalita Maneesri at Patong Municipality on Apr 20, where officials, police, hospital representatives, business leaders and community groups gathered to prepare for the 10-day event.

Speaking at the meeting, Andaman Power Association President Supakorn Suwan said this year marks the fourth edition of the festival and will be the biggest yet, reinforcing Phuket's ambition to position itself as a leading destination for the global LGBTQI+ community.

This year's edition is being held under the banner 'From Visibility to Equality', and the motto: "Be Loud, Be Proud, Be You".

Mr Supakorn said the festival aims to promote diversity, boost tourism confidence and highlight human rights, including gender equality, while encouraging wider social acceptance and equal access to services.

Organisers say the event will go beyond celebration, positioning Pride as a platform to amplify voices and support longer-term structural change through



Photo: Patong Municipality

links to policy and urban development.

A range of activities is planned throughout the festival, including beach volleyball competitions, an equality and diversity seminar series, the Miss Queen Andaman Power 2026 pageant and a large-scale Pride parade through Patong.

Mayor Lalita said Patong Municipality is fully committed to supporting the event, describing it as another key highlight for the resort town as a world-class tourism destination.

She called on all sectors to cooperate in ensuring the festival runs smoothly and safely.

The Phuket Pride Festival is expected to draw both domestic and international visitors, with organisers aiming to create an inclusive environment welcoming people of all ages and backgrounds.

The Phuket News

## Where to eat in PHUKET

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# Visa-free scheme faces rollback

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Thailand is preparing to review – and potentially roll back – its 60-day visa-free entry scheme following reports of inappropriate behaviour by some foreign visitors, Minister of Tourism and Sports Surasak Panjaroenvorakul said in Phuket on Apr 22.

Speaking after officially opening the Global Sustainable Tourism Conference 2026 (GSTC 2026) at the Royal Phuket City Hotel, Mr Surasak confirmed that multiple agencies had raised concerns during the trial period of the extended visa-free policy, which was introduced to boost tourism.

“Many problems have been reported,” he said. “The Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the security sector must review the visa-free measure to ensure its appropriateness after a trial period.”

The review will focus on how the policy has been implemented in practice, including mechanisms to address inappropriate behaviour and prevent issues linked to so-called “undesirable tourists”, he added.

Mr Surasak indicated that one proposal under consideration is to



Tourism Minister Surasak Panjaroenvorakul in Phuket. Photo: PRD

abolish the 60-day visa-free entry for all countries and revert to country-specific visa arrangements.

“I believe the first step is to cancel the 60-day visa-free scheme and return to the normal visa system for each country, while introducing new, appropriate visa options,” he said. “This will serve as an initial screening process for tourists.”

He noted that the visa-free policy was originally approved by Cabinet, meaning any amendments must also be submitted for Cabinet consideration. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already held internal discussions and is expected to present recommendations to Cabinet in the near future.

The minister’s remarks come amid a broader push by the government to reposition Thailand’s tourism strategy towards higher-quality, longer-stay visitors, in line with sustainability goals highlighted at GSTC 2026.

According to remarks reported at the conference, sustainable tourism policy must balance environmental, economic and safety considerations, while ensuring local communities benefit from tourism revenue.

Authorities are also considering additional measures, including stricter screening of visitors and the development of new visa categories tailored to different markets.

## TAX CLAIM SPARKS INVESTIGATION

Mr Surasak also addressed a separate issue involving a foreign national who claimed online that he could purchase residential property in Thailand without paying taxes.

The case refers to a social media post made on Apr 19 by expatriate Samuel Leeds, who stated that he had purchased a B56 million property near Bang Tao Beach and would be able to remain in Thailand while paying “0% tax” on global income under a “wealthy global citizenship” arrangement.

The post drew widespread criticism from other foreigners, many of whom questioned the accuracy of the claims and their compliance with Thai law.

Mr Surasak said the matter is now under investigation.

“Residing in a residence without paying taxes is already illegal,” he said. “This must be verified, including the type of visa used and supporting documentation.”

He added that any visa issuance must comply with existing regulations, including checks on financial status, sources of investment and supporting evidence.

“If the claim of tax exemption is true, it is illegal and must be

investigated by the relevant agencies,” he said, noting that the Phuket Governor and related officials are already examining the case.

## CABINET PROPOSALS AND DOMESTIC TOURISM PUSH

In parallel, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports is preparing to submit a package of “Quick Win” tourism measures to Cabinet, aimed at stimulating domestic travel.

Mr Surasak said these measures may include tax incentives and other mechanisms to encourage spending within the country, helping to generate revenue and offset fluctuations in international arrivals.

The GSTC 2026 event, held from Apr 21-24, drew hundreds of participants from dozens of countries, including policymakers, tourism executives and sustainability experts, reflecting Thailand’s ambition to position itself as a leading sustainable tourism destination.

The outcome of the visa policy review is expected to play a key role in shaping that strategy, as authorities seek to balance tourism growth with regulatory control and long-term sustainability.

## Long-stay visas for condo buyers clarified

IMMIGRATION authorities and real estate executives have clarified a new long-stay visa programme aimed at attracting foreign property investors and supporting Thailand’s real estate sector.

The scheme offers one-year renewable visas to foreigners who purchase condominiums valued at B3 million or more, or rent housing for at least B85,000 per month. Although in place since October 2025, Phuket Immigration Chief Pol Col Khemmachat Wattanaphakesem on Apr 21 acknowledged initial challenges as both applicants and officials adapt to the system.

Tourism operators in Phuket have criticised the programme, arguing the B3mn threshold is too low and may attract “non-quality” visitors, potentially increasing illegal activity and driving up property prices beyond the reach of local residents. They also urged strict enforcement to prevent misuse, such as foreigners



Photo: MCOT

operating businesses without permits or buying multiple units to rent to short-term tourists.

Speaking at a briefing hosted by Ayana Phuket in cooperation with Thailand Longstay Co, Pol Col Khemmachat outlined three investment options. The first requires purchasing a condominium worth at least B3mn from a Thai developer, in line with foreign ownership rules capped at 49% per development.

The second allows leasing a property for at least B85,000 per month, with advance payments required. The third option involves a three-year lease valued at no less than B3.06mn, supported by contracts and proof of payment.

Applications must be

submitted through authorised agents approved by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, with documents verified before reaching provincial immigration offices.

Thailand Longstay Co CEO Piyapat Suban Na Ayudhya said the programme aims to reduce an oversupply of more than 280,000 housing units. Applicants must pass screening and report to immigration every 90 days, with visas subject to revocation if laws are broken.

She added that foreign buyers contribute through taxes and spending, while Ayana Phuket said the scheme is intended to build investor confidence, particularly among buyers from Russia and Ukraine.

Bangkok Post

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# Government plans B4k aid rollout

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The government's new 'Thai Help Thai Plus' subsidy programme is expected to be submitted to the Cabinet this month and rolled out in June, with each eligible participant receiving B1,000 per month for four months, totalling B4,000.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul confirmed the timeline last Saturday (Apr 25), following remarks by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Ekniti Nitithanprapas. The scheme is intended as a short-term measure to ease the cost of living and inject liquidity into the economy.

"The programme will be tabled for Cabinet approval within May to ensure it can begin on schedule in June," Anutin said.

Payments will be disbursed monthly at B1,000 over four months, he said, adding that the project builds on a Bhumjaithai (BJT) Party campaign pledge and draws on lessons from earlier co-payment schemes. Initially conceived



Consumer products available with discounts under a 'Thai Help Thai' campaign in Bangkok on Apr 21. Photo: Varuth Hirunyatheb

as a two-month stimulus, the policy has been expanded after earlier versions proved popular.

Anutin explained that the previous phase delivered tangible benefits but was interrupted by the dissolution of parliament. The revised programme reflects both continuity and adaptation to current conditions, he said.

He added the government deliberately avoided reviving the 'Khon La Khrueng' (co-payment)

branding, opting instead for a model focused more directly on financial assistance rather than matching consumer spending.

### GLOBAL UNCERTAINTIES

The change comes amid global uncertainties, including the Middle East war, which could affect energy prices and household expenses in Thailand. Under the revised framework, the government will shoulder a greater share of the burden,

Anutin explained.

While details are still being finalised, Mr Ekniti has indicated a 60:40 split between the state and participants may apply in some cases, particularly for general consumers, while vulnerable groups could receive full support without co-payment requirements.

Mr Ekniti said registration is expected to open in May, with disbursement beginning the following month via the Paotang application, used in

previous state aid schemes. He described the measure as part of a broader effort to ease living costs and provide targeted relief.

However, questions remain over funding sources and policy design. Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva has called on the government to clarify how the programme will be financed, including whether it will rely on budget reallocation, the 2027 fiscal budget or new borrowing.

Mr Abhisit also urged the administration to ensure assistance is properly targeted, particularly towards vulnerable groups most affected by rising costs. He said alternative measures, such as reducing excise taxes or refining margins, could help lower prices at the source and reduce the need for subsidies.

### HARDSHIP

When asked whether the programme would be effective, Mr Abhisit said he would need to review the details, noting past relief measures – including those targeting the transport sector and taxi operators, as

well as initiatives by the Commerce Ministry – had not matched the scale of hardship faced by the public.

"The success of this scheme will depend on its main mechanism," Mr Abhisit said.

"It remains unclear whether it can be implemented through a budget transfer bill, the 2027 fiscal budget, or if it will require borrowing or special loans," he added.

Meanwhile, the Land Transport Federation of Thailand (LTFT) has urged the government to urgently address alleged irregularities in the oil supply chain, warning that fuel may be disappearing before reaching consumers, with potential losses estimated at up to B16 billion.

LTFT president Thongyu Kongkhan met Energy Minister Akanat Promphan last Friday (Apr 24) and raised concerns over a recent sharp increase in retail fuel prices of up to B6 per litre – described as the steepest single rise since 1978 – which triggered panic buying and localised shortages.

## China's foreign minister visits Thailand

### BANGKOK

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER Wang Yi made an official visit to Thailand last week, with talks centred on investment, technology cooperation and regional security.

Foreign Affairs Minister Sihasak Phuanketkeow said the Apr 23–25 visit underscored strong bilateral ties, with discussions set to prioritise expanding Chinese investment in advanced industries.

While China remains one of Thailand's largest investors, Mr Sihasak said Thailand is seeking greater technology transfer, particularly in electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing, to support its transition to clean energy.

"We do not want to be only a pathway," he said. "We want investment in technology and innovation that strengthens our domestic capabilities."

Beyond economic cooperation, both sides are expected to address regional and global challenges, including the crisis in Myanmar and wider geopolitical tensions affecting maritime security.

Particular attention will be given to disruptions linked to the Strait of Hormuz, with efforts to uphold a rules-based



Wang Yi (left) and Anutin Charnvirakul at Government House in Bangkok on Apr 24. Photo: AFP

international order and safeguard freedom of navigation. Mr Sihasak noted such risks are closely tied to global food and energy security.

On the Thailand–Cambodia issue, Mr Sihasak said China had previously offered to facilitate dialogue during the Thailand–Cambodia–China Fuxian Meeting, but stressed that progress depends on mutual willingness to engage.

"We want to see sincerity from Cambodia in engaging in dialogue, rather than seeking external platforms to exert pressure," he said, adding that trust-building is essential for advancing border and security discussions.

**'FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURS'** Ahead of his arrival in Bangkok, Wang met Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Apr 22.

According to the *Phnom*

*Penh Post*, Hun Manet briefed the Chinese delegation on recent developments along the Cambodia–Thailand border and reaffirmed Phnom Penh's commitment to resolving disputes peacefully, in line with international law and existing bilateral agreements.

Following his trips to Cambodia and Thailand Wang visited Myanmar, calling the three countries China's "friendly neighbours".

China hopes the visits to the three Southeast Asian nations will deepen ties to the region facing "risks and challenges" at a time of "once-in-a-century transformations".

All three countries are at "critical stages" of their development, Wang said, noting Thailand and Myanmar had just seen the formation of new governments.

Thai prime minister Anutin Charnvirakul said discussions would have an "open agenda".

"We will probably ask China to purchase more agricultural products, rice and fruits, and invest more," he said.

China has been keen to present itself to its allies as a more stable alternative to US President Donald Trump's punitive tariffs and mercurial policies. *AFP*



Self check-in kiosks at Suvarnabhumi airport. Photo: Bangkok Post

## B1,000 departure fee for Thai tourists

### BANGKOK

THE TOURISM MINISTER plans to impose a B1,000 departure levy on outbound Thai tourists to raise a fund for promoting domestic tourism.

Tourism and Sports Minister Surasak Phanchareonworakul said on Monday (Apr 27) that the existing Emergency Decree on Departure Levy BE 2526 (1983) allows the collection of the exit fee.

Previously, it had been charged at B500 before it was revoked, reports the *Bangkok Post*. The revival of the measure could happen soon because the relevant law remains in force. The law caps the levy at B5,000 per departure.

According to the minister, the exit fee will be collected from outbound Thai tourists only. Based on about 10 million outbound tourists annually, the government can raise as much as B10 billion a year. The money will be spent on a co-pay scheme to subsidise the costs of Thais' domestic trips.

Mr Surasak said he would discuss the timing of the departure levy's revival with the Finance Ministry and that the measure could resume with Cabinet approval.

He did not think the exit fee would affect outbound Thai tourists, saying the proceeds would promote domestic tourism and that tourists were more likely to be concerned about airfares, the minister added. *Bangkok Post*

# Michael Jackson biopic not Bad but it's no Thriller



Jaafar Jackson plays his real life uncle Michael Jackson in 'Michael'. Photo: IMDb

David Griffiths

Creative. Icon. King Of Pop. Controversial. They are the phrases that spring to mind when I think of the legendary musician that was Michael Jackson. If you grew up in the 1980s and 1990s like I did then there was no escaping a man who became the highest selling artist of all time. In a way his music became a soundtrack to your life whether you liked it or not – even some 40 years later I still remember attending my very first Sky Show

and while I can't remember what the fireworks themselves looked like I can remember that it was the first time that I ever heard *Man In The Mirror*... a song I still love today.

Earlier this year I experienced the magic of Michael Jackson return to audiences when I got to see the *Michael Jackson* stage musical and now, once again, we see the icon return to cinemas as director Antoine Fuqua (*Training Day*) brings his story to the cinema in the form of *Michael*. Excuse the puns but the big question here is whether the film would be a thriller or if it would just be plain bad!

Written by John Logan (*Gladiator*), Michael follows the career of Jackson from his early days of performing with the Jackson 5 through to when he goes out on his own for his Dangerous World Tour.

We see the abuse that Young Michael (Juliano Valdi – *Arco*) suffered at the hands of his father, Joseph (Colman Domingo – *Lincoln*), as he literally beat the Jackson 5 into the band he wanted them to be. During this time we are also shown the pain that his mother, Katherine (Nia Long – *Big Momma's House*), endures as she watches her husband's actions.

From there the film chronicles the hold that Joseph has over the older Michael (Jaafar Jackson – *The Jacksons: Next Generation*) and his brothers as the Jackson 5's success creates a better life for the entire family. Then comes the big challenge of Michael wanting to embark on a solo career with the help of producer Quincy Jones (Kendrick Sampson – *How To Get Away With Murder*) and his manager John Branca (Miles Teller – *Top Gun: Maverick*).

### Magic

As a film *Michael* really does have some special moments. Scenes such as Michael connecting with his adopted pet chimpanzee Bubbles and his love for animals brings a real human element to him as a person. Likewise, the film is probably at its best when it shows the deep moments that Michael had when he was given the freedom to have natural conversations with the likes of his head of security Bill Bray (KeiLyn Durrel Jones – *How To Die Alone*) and John Branca.

The film also has the courage to explore the abuse suffered at the hands of his father and how in a way that contributed to Michael staying in a childlike state for his whole life. There is one powerful scene that depicts a young Michael watching children play outside and laugh before he is grabbed by his father and a moment later beaten for not rehearsing. It is a brief moment of the film but it captures a strong part of what made Michael Jackson become the man we know he became.

The film also captures the magic that Michael wanted to bring to the world as we see him not only write some of his classic tracks but also the inspiration behind some of his most

iconic video clips – including the one we all remember in *Thriller*. Together, Fuqua and Logan place great little Easter Eggs throughout the film as a young Michael pours over books such as *Peter Pan* and has childhood toys on his dresser that one day will inspire his career.

For all of its great moments though there are some things about *Michael* that drag it down as a film. Only going as far into his career as the Dangerous World Tour seems a kind of 'get out of jail free' card in that it avoids the more controversial side of Jackson's life such as the child abuse allegations. However, that still doesn't explain key things being missing from the story – the main one being Janet Jackson. Yes, we know that it is legal reasons and in-family fighting that caused her to be left out of the film, but given that she is his sister and how their careers inter-crossed it does feel like a huge hole in the film when she is not even mentioned.

What does help overcome that downfall though are the acting performances. Jaafar Jackson (who is actually Michael's nephew) is sensational in the role of Michael. This kid is going to become a star, that is easy to see from the first second he appears on screen. Plus he captures every characteristic of his uncle from his voice right through to his iconic dance moves.

Also brilliant are Colman Domingo, who eats up the screen as the conniving and brutal 'villain' in this piece, while every scene that KeiLyn Durrel Jones appears in is heartfelt. While he only has a small role in the film he makes every second of screentime count.

While *Michael* does an amazing job of capturing the early career one of the world's biggest music icons what it overlooks is glaring. Still, this is a great tribute to the career of Jackson's music and is a must see for all music fans.

*Michael* is currently screening in Phuket and is rated 13+  
3.5/5 Stars

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

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# 'Miller Misadventures' with my Parents



## GLOBETROTTER

Todd Miller

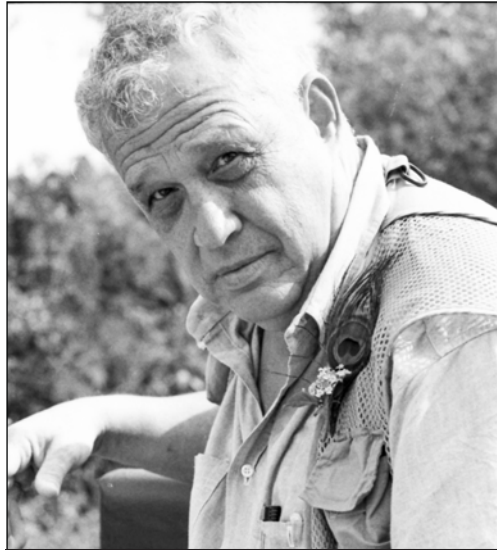
The most revealing thing I ever learned about my father happened in the middle of a crocodile-infested river. Our whitewater raft, navigating Class V rapids below Victoria Falls, had just flipped on the Zambezi in Zimbabwe.

While the rest of us were thrashing through the rapids, struggling to stay afloat, the image permanently seared into my brain is my father climbing on top of the overturned raft.

The current had stripped his swimsuit to the ankles. His pale Kentucky backside shone like a lighthouse beacon above the rapids. At the time, I was only concerned with survival. Today, it's one of my fondest memories of him.

For nearly 20 years, my parents and I travelled the world together. Our tradition began in my mid-20s when they were in their 50s. Once or twice a year we would pick somewhere interesting on the map and explore it – Central America, Rajasthan, Kenya. We planned our trips a year in advance, blocking the time off before work or anything else could claim it. We were committed to making these journeys happen.

Usually I was the one pitching the trip ideas – and my parents were game for almost anything. We gravitated toward offbeat destinations and remote corners of the map, often stitching to-



Doug Miller, the author's father, on a 'Miller Misadventure' safari in Botswana. Photo: Todd Miller

gether several countries and as many authentic experiences as we could squeeze into a single trip.

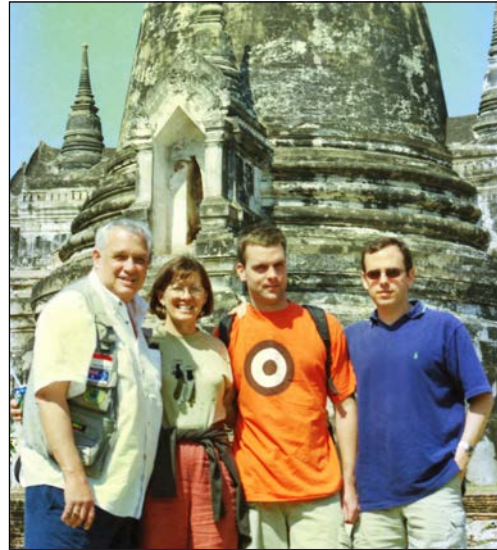
We had only one rule: go someplace new.

That rule worked beautifully. It also got us into a fair amount of trouble.

### Miller Misadventures

Over the years our trips spanned four continents and more than 40 countries. Enough things went wrong regularly that we eventually started noticing we Millers are magnets for mishap.

Take the night in Cairo when my father confidently handed our car keys to a man posing as a hotel valet. The thief disappeared with impressive efficiency. The only thing he left behind



The Miller family at Sukhothai on one of the earliest trips. Photo: Todd Miller

were skid marks about 10 metres long.

Or the road trip across Cuba where we spent most of the day searching for the national highway – despite the growing suspicion that we had already crossed it several times.

At the time, these moments were stressful. Occasionally terrifying. But they elevated the family dynamic to next level.

We still laugh about Cairo. We may have lost our luggage that night. But we gained something far more valuable.

### When the roles start to change

Something fascinating happens when you travel as an adult with your parents. At home, parents tend to run the show. They set the rules. But drop

everyone into a chaotic foreign environment and suddenly everyone improvises.

These shared adventures reshaped us as a family. Something about navigating foreign roads, missed turns and unexpected mishaps tightens the bonds in ways ordinary life rarely does. The laughter, the occasional panic, the stories that followed – those moments became core to our family.

### The window you don't see closing


Eventually the rhythm of our adventures began to change. The trips grew a little less ambitious and a little closer to home. Time and health quietly begin to redraw the edges of the map. And then one day you realise something surprising: The last trip has already happened.

My father passed away in March at the age of 83.

Looking back now, that time spent traveling with my parents is the richest investment I ever made. Now all I have left of him are memories. Fortunately, many of the best ones are scattered across the world.

Even the image of that Zambezi rafting disaster now feels like the perfect metaphor for the way he approached life: Curious. Fearless. And always ready for the next adventure.

*Adventurer Todd Miller has explored more than 120 countries. He authored the best-seller ENRICH: Create Wealth in Time, Money, and Meaning. [www.ToddMiller.asia](http://www.ToddMiller.asia)*


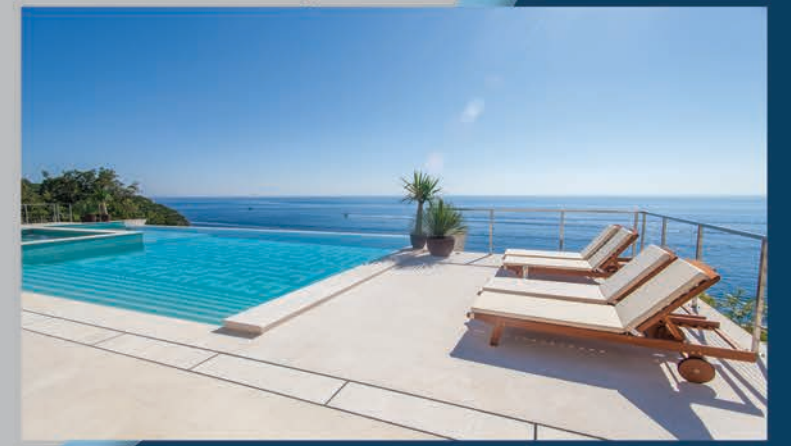



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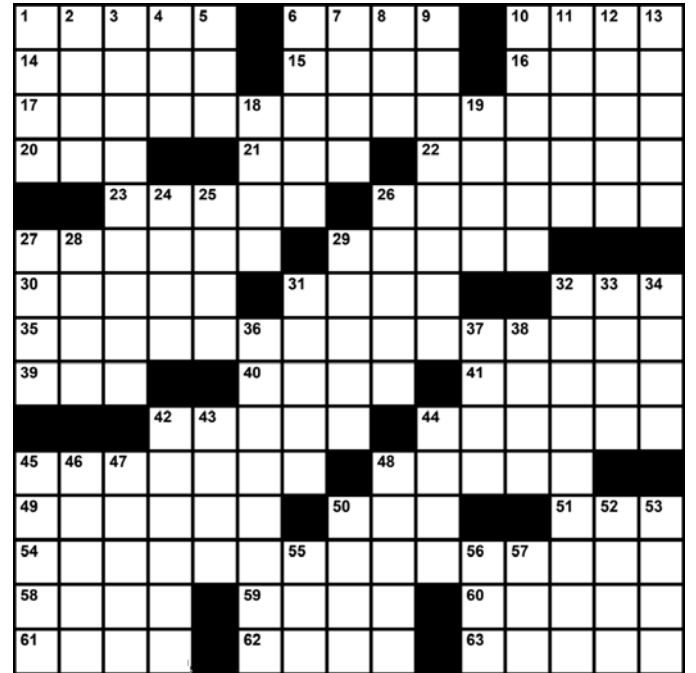
# POP QUIZ

- Which global city is recognised as receiving the most rainfall per year?
- Who wrote *The Thin Man* in 1934?
- A bind is a group of what type of fish?
- Gossima was the original name of what game?
- Which classical composer wrote the *Hungarian Rhapsody*?

Answers below, centre

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
- Certain bird
  - Keats, for one
  - "The Sound of Music" backdrop
  - Antipasto morsel
  - Biblical preposition
  - Gloss
  - George's aunt
  - Calendar abbr.
  - Puzzle
  - Put something on
  - Blast from the past
  - Reduces friction
  - Contradicted
  - Arouse desire
  - Bouquet
  - "\_\_\_ No Sunshine"
  - "A pox on you!"
  - "Stony End" singer
  - Numbskull
  - Irritate
  - Salsa, for one
  - Mark
  - Colorful bird
  - Call a koala an elk, e.g.
  - Chipper
  - Secrets
  - Arctic bird
  - TV doc
  - She beat Bo Bice
- Down**
- Microsoft product
  - African plant
  - Stains
  - Holiday lead-in
  - "Losing My Religion" rock group
  - Blender button
  - Black stone
  - "Yadda, yadda, yadda"
  - Bear
  - Ancient meeting places
  - Floor coverings
  - Newbie, of sorts
  - Eye sores
  - All fired up
  - Aces, sometimes
  - Arm or leg
  - Abby address?
- 26. Romance, e.g.**
- Cake with a kick
  - "zoic" things
  - Deed
  - Line to the audience
  - Needlepoint, e.g.
  - Ancient Andean
  - "Our Time in \_\_\_" (10,000 Maniacs album)
  - Speech of old Syria
  - Matinee \_\_\_
  - Handel oratorio
  - "St. Elsewhere" singer, \_\_\_ Barkley
  - Eastern royal
  - Tip for the dealer
  - Court officer
  - Fit to be tied
  - Deep-six
  - Disloyal one
  - Cuckoos
  - Cheat, slangily
  - Lofty lines
  - Fair \_\_\_ doctrine
  - Engine speed, for short
  - Chinese dynasty



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

## SUDOKU

Very Easy

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

### Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

- Mawsonram (India); 2) Dashiell Hammett; 3) Salmon;
- Table Tennis; 5) Franz Liszt

### Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

**1**

in 3 households in the US had a Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in 1990

**14**

minutes is how long it took Sia to write Rihanna's song *Diamonds*.

**40**

bottles of sunscreen were used by the cast *Baywatch* each month to keep them free from sunburn.

**1,000**

emojis is what students at China's University of Electronic Science and Technology were forced to write out every time they are late to class.

**5 billion**

US dollars is how much K-pop boy band BTS contribute to the South Korean economy each year.

Source: Uberfacts

## ISLAND VIEW



Laem Promthep from up on high. Photo by Ajinkya Tatkare

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

## This week in history

### May 1, 1844

Hong Kong Police Force, the world's second modern police force after London (UK) and Asia's first, is established.

### May 2, 1945

The Soviet Union announces the fall of Berlin.

### May 3, 1979

Margaret Thatcher wins the United Kingdom general election.



The following day, she becomes the first female British Prime Minister.

### May 4, 1904

The United States begins construction of the Panama Canal.

### May 5, 1260

Kublai Khan becomes ruler of the Mongol Empire.

### May 6, 1527

Spanish and German troops sack Rome; many scholars consider this the end of the Renaissance.

### May 7, 2000

Vladimir Putin is inaugurated as president of Russia. Source: Wikipedia

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**FRI 1 MAY**



**Live Theatre - The See Saw Tree**

A Must See! - Real theatre means no phones for an hour or so... just real people on a real stage, telling real stories about real impacts... now you can't get any more real than that! The play centers on a majestic, ancient oak tree that has stood for hundreds of years, providing a home and a delicate ecosystem for a diverse community of animals. The conflict arises when a local developer plans to cut down the tree to make way for a children's playground - ironically featuring a see-saw made of wood. It's a story with a plea for planetary preservation and a reminder that once a natural resource is destroyed, the "see-saw" of our ecosystem tips toward disaster. Produced in conjunction with The Litter Club, this story mirrors its mission: protecting the existing beauty of Phuket from 'waste'. Show dates Apr 30, May 1, 3, 7, 8 & 10. 650.00THB - Adult 500.00THB - Students with ID Free - 3 years and under Groups of 10 or more enter Coupon Code GROUP10 for a 10% discount. Tickets available at [www.thelitterclub.org/events](http://www.thelitterclub.org/events) See you at the show

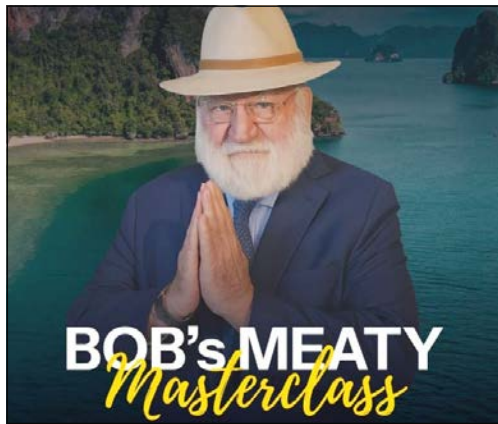
**FRI 8 MAY**



**Grow Boating Phuket Evening - May 2026**

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Bluu Asian Kitchen, Royal Phuket Marina from 5pm. Sponsorship for drinks is available for just 12,000 baht and includes a generous promotional package from our media sponsors The Phuket News, Live 89.5 FM and Phuket News TV. Send us a message or email [growboatingphuket@gmail.com](mailto:growboatingphuket@gmail.com) for more details. There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Bluu Asian Kitchen, Royal Phuket Marina for all attendees and as always, all your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket](https://facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket)

**WED 13 MAY**



**The Master Butcher's Masterclass: Phuket Edition**

Stop guessing and start grilling. Join us for a deep dive into the art of the Primary Cut. Learn exactly what makes world-class Aussie beef from the experts who have been doing it since 1972. The Menu: Starter: Sourdough Iberico Ham Bruschetta. The Flight: 3 O'Connor Mains (MB3+) - Striploin, Tenderloin, and Ribeye. Paired: 2 specially selected drinks. Sweet: Rhubarb Panna Cotta. Time: 18:30 Start. Price: 1,800 THB Per Person. Location: Bangkok Bob's Phuket (Srisoonthorn Rd, Thalang/Bangtao). Seats are strictly limited. Secure your spot at the butcher's table. Book Now: <https://bangkokbobs.com/product-details/product-phuket-meaty-masterclass-may-2026>

**FRI 22 MAY**



**Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners**

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, BeLuThai, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, NZTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce, SATCC, and TSCC, Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners. This event is scheduled to take place from 18.00 - 21.00 hrs., at SAii Laguna Phuket. and welcome our Corporate Sponsor, JLL. THB 750 for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members, 1,400 THB for non-members. Bookings office@austchamthailand.com

**TUE 5 MAY**



**Rotary Club of Patong Beach**

The only English-speaking Rotary Club in Phuket, we welcome Rotarians from around the world! With members from 18 nationalities, we are a diverse, dynamic, and well-known club in Thailand. 1st Tue each month - Fellowship dinner at different locations in Phuket, 3rd Tue each month - dinner meeting at Four Points by Sheraton Phuket Patong. Join us! if you are passionate about making a difference. More info - [www.facebook.com/RC0PB](http://www.facebook.com/RC0PB)

**SAT 9 MAY**



**Phuket White Collar Boxing**

Phuket is set for an exciting new addition to its social calendar as the first-ever Phuket White Collar Boxing. This glamorous black tie charity event will welcome over 400 guests for an unforgettable evening of live boxing, entertainment, great food and an after party at RAVA Beach Club. All proceeds go to the Laguna Children's Fund, helping to fund a brand-new mobile library supporting orphanages across Phuket. 20 local participants, many of whom you may recognise, have taken on the challenge of stepping into the ring after 12 weeks of training, all to raise funds for the community. Tickets are now available at: [www.PhuketBoxing.com](http://www.PhuketBoxing.com) Whether you're coming for the boxing, the atmosphere or the cause, this is an event not to miss. Tables of 10 are available for the full experience.

**SAT 16 MAY**



**PHAB 8 - Infinity Ball**

TICKETS ON SALE NOW! The Annual PHAB Gala Dinner is back - always an unforgettable night - and this year marks our 8th fundraising event with a very special theme: PHAB ∞ (Infinity). Infinity represents the endless impact that scholarship support has on our community. Every baht raised helps shape the future of young hospitality professionals, strengthens Phuket's tourism industry and creates opportunities that last a lifetime. Join us for an inspiring evening of great food, music and dancing, while helping us raise vital funds to change lives and build a more resilient future through education. We hope you can celebrate with us and be part of PHA. More info [phab.phukethotelsassociation.com](http://phab.phukethotelsassociation.com)

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**OFFICE OF THE ARBITRATION TRIBUNAL**

**Notification of the Thai Commercial Arbitration Office**

**Subject: Notice to Submit Statement of Defence – Case No. Black 2/2568**

Ms.Mei Ki TUNG (1), Mr.Willy Siu Yung CHU (2) the Petitioners filed a petition with the Thai Commercial Arbitration Office as case no. black 2/2568, seeking an arbitral award regarding a dispute with Waterside Suites Co., Ltd. the Respondent, the Respondent to compensate the Petitioners with total damages of THB 5,310,950.

Under AGREEMENT NO: 70000306, dated 7 February 2015, between the Petitioners and the Respondent, the parties agree to settle their disputes by arbitration. The Respondent is required to provide the documents as follows;

The Statement of Defense and/or Counterclaims (if any), in writing to the Thai Commercial Arbitration Office within 30 days after the date of receipt of this letter via <https://www.thephuketnews.com>

Hence, the Thai Commercial Arbitration Office hereby notified Waterside Suites Co., Ltd. the Respondent, to proceed as specified above within the time limit.

Announced on 1 May 2026

Best Regards,  
  
(Mr. Eakarín Boonsri)

The Registrar of the Thai Commercial Arbitration Office

ภายใต้ความร่วมมือระหว่างสภาหอการค้าแห่งประเทศไทย กับ มหาวิทยาลัยหอการค้าไทย

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**FRI 22 MAY**



**Joint Chambers Phuket Members Briefing**

Before Phuket Sundowners, the Australian-Thai Chamber of Commerce (AustCham Thailand) is pleased to invite members and guests to an exclusive Phuket briefing session on the topic "Phuket Hotel Industry Focus: Market Trends and Outlook 2025-2026". This briefing session provides a focused overview of Phuket's hotel market, combining key data with insights from industry operators. It will highlight current performance trends, demand drivers, and important factors influencing the market's direction. Meet JLL Speakers: Jon Cannon : Senior Vice President - Hotel Asset Management Thailand and Vietnam & Chanavudh Vanachaiyong : Senior Vice President and Head of Hotels Advisory, Thailand. Open Registration for briefing session at 16:45 hrs. SAii Laguna Phuket. Free of Charge for AustCham, Australian Alumni, Partner members & attendees who join Phuket Sundowners. Bookings office@austchamthailand.com

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### SKÅL PHUKET - APRIL DINNER

Held on Thursday, April 23, the Skål Phuket gathering, hosted by Ajay and his team at Pullman Phuket Karon Beach Resort, was a special edition and featured an interactive workshop session. The workshop was presented by The Thrive Approach with Niels Steeman, one of Bangkok's leading health and lifestyle coaches. Niels built a custom two-hour, practical and valuable session, based on attendees' input for the topics. Following the workshop, networking drinks were held at the Lagoon Foyer, then on to a fabulous Mediterranean farm-to-table dinner at Malangpor restaurant. For more information, please visit [facebook.com/SkalPhuket](https://facebook.com/SkalPhuket)



## Proposal to shake up Asian Games schedule

### ASIAN GAMES

THE ASIAN GAMES could be moved to odd-numbered years starting in 2031 so the event takes place in the 12 months leading into the Olympics, reports say, reshaping the sporting calendar.

The reported proposal would mean Asia's biggest sporting spectacle doubling up as qualifying and preparation for the Olympics, giving it added significance.

The Asian Games in Japan this September-October will be unchanged but the 2030 edition in Doha would be pushed back a year, after which the Games will be held every four years as normal but in odd years instead of even ones.

The executive board of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) has approved the idea and there will now be more talks with international sports federations, China's state Xinhua news agency said.



Photo: AFP

Specialist website Inside The Games said the proposal was discussed by the OCA in Sanya, the Chinese resort city currently hosting the Asian Beach Games.

Song Luzeng, vice president of the OCA, told Xinhua: "It would allow the Asian Games to serve as a qualifying event for the Olympics, giving more elite athletes valuable competition opportunities and raising the overall standard of the Games."

The OCA did not immediately reply to an AFP request for comment.

The Asian Games is the continent's biggest sporting event and typically involves more competitors than the Olympics. AFP

## 'Big loss' if Verstappen quits

### FORMULA ONE

AFP

If four-time world champion Max Verstappen were to quit Formula One, as he has hinted on numerous occasions, it would be a "big loss" for the sport, his McLaren rivals Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri have said.

The 28-year-old Dutchman, who won four consecutive titles from 2021 to 2024 and narrowly missed a fifth last season, has struggled at the start of this campaign with Red Bull against Mercedes, Ferrari and McLaren.

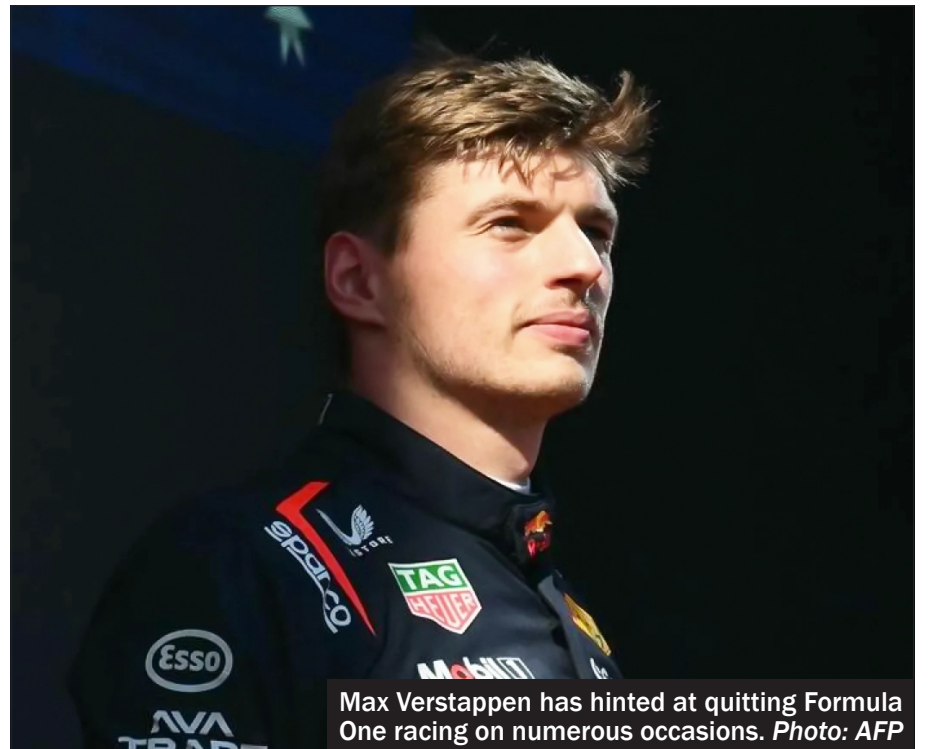
Verstappen has repeatedly voiced his frustration at the sport's sweeping 2026 rules overhaul, which places greater emphasis on electric energy management in qualifying and races, as well as limiting car speeds.

"I think it would be a big loss for the sport as a whole. I think for us as drivers we want to race against the best and try and prove ourselves against the best," said Piastri.

The 25-year-old Australian said Verstappen had "shown his calibre in the last 10 years" and added that the Dutchman had been the benchmark "for the last five or six".

Norris, the 2025 world champion, believes Verstappen's exit would leave F1 a poorer place.

"It would be a shame for the sport, it would be a miss for the sport if that does happen, because he probably is one of the best drivers you'll see in



Max Verstappen has hinted at quitting Formula One racing on numerous occasions. Photo: AFP

Formula One ever," said Norris.

"He's always been very open to say what he thinks, whether you agree or not."

Verstappen has openly criticised his Red Bull car and likened the direction of F1 to "Formula E on steroids" or the video game "Mario Kart".

At the Japanese Grand Prix on Mar 29, he spoke of wanting to spend more time with his family and has increasingly turned his attention to endurance racing.

Meanwhile, it has been confirmed that the Turkish Grand Prix will return to the Formula One calendar in 2027

after a six-year hiatus.

The race, which was held from 2005-2011 and then 2020-21, will take place on the Istanbul Park circuit and is guaranteed a run of at least five years.

FIA President Mohammed Ben Sulayem said last Friday (Apr 24) that Turkey's reappearance on the schedule was "a powerful reflection of the continued global growth and appeal of our sport".

The 2027 season will see the return of the Turkish and Portuguese Grands Prix, while the Dutch Grand Prix will drop off the calendar.

## Badminton to adopt new scoring system

### BADMINTON

MEMBERS OF THE BADMINTON World Federation (BWF) have voted to adopt a new scoring system in a major move for the sport.

Currently matches are the best of three games with the winner of each game being the first to 21 points. From Jan 4, 2027 it will be the first to 15 points.

BWF members voted to adopt the new format at the global body's annual general meeting in Horsens, Denmark, last Saturday (Apr 25).

BWF President Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul said the decision marked an important milestone for the future of badminton.

"We are building a sport that speaks to the next generation, while continuing to invest in the long-term future of our players," she said.

"The 3x15 scoring system is intended to deliver more exciting and competitive badminton, improved scheduling, more consistent match durations, and potential benefits for player welfare and recovery.

"By bringing high-pressure moments earlier and creating tighter scores and more dramatic finishes, the format aims to keep fans engaged from the first rally to the last," she added.

The decision follows a long-term process of testing, analysis and consultation with members and



Khunying Patama. Photo: AFP

stakeholders, and reflects the collective judgment of the BWF membership, guided by a commitment to innovation, player welfare, and supporting players in achieving longer, more successful careers.

Addressing concerns raised by some stakeholders, Khunying Patama emphasised that the essence of badminton would remain unchanged.

"We know that change can raise concern, especially in a sport with such strong traditions. But this decision does not change the fundamental nature of badminton. The skill, the tactics, the physical and mental demands, and the drama of the sport will remain.

"What this change does is strengthen the sport by protecting what makes badminton special, and ensuring the world's best players can continue to compete, inspire and connect with fans globally for longer." AFP

## Sawe makes history with first sub-two-hour marathon

### MARATHON

SABASTIAN SAWE MADE history last Sunday (Apr 26) by becoming the first athlete to run a sub-two-hour marathon as Tigst Assefa smashed her own women's-only world record on the streets of London.

Kenya's Sawe came into the race predicting fireworks and delivered in spectacular style, crossing the line in 1 hour 59 minutes 30 seconds in a race for the ages.

Astonishingly, the top three men all finished inside the previous men's world record of 2:00:35 set in Chicago in 2023 by the late Kelvin Kiptum.

Defending London Marathon champion Sawe was locked in a tight battle with Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha in the closing stages but surged clear.

Kejelcha, running his first-ever marathon, notched a time of 1:59:41 – the fastest debut ever – with Uganda's Jacob Kiplomo third (2:00:28).

A delighted Sawe said



Sawe. Photo: AFP

he went into the race, run in warm spring weather, believing he could break the two-hour mark.

"I am feeling good. I am so happy. It is a day to remember for me," said the 31-year-old.

In the women's race, reigning Olympic and world silver medallist Assefa was locked in a three-way tussle with Kenyan pair Hellen Obiri and Joyciline Jepkosgei, but surged away in the closing stages to cross the line in a time of 2:15:41.

That time beat by nine seconds the Ethiopian's previous best, set on the same course last year.

"I'm so happy to win again," said Assefa, 29. "The happiness I feel is just swelling up inside me."

More than 59,000 people were expected to complete the 26.2-mile (42.2-km) course in the 46th London Marathon.

Marathon organisers said last month they are exploring holding the event over two days next year, allowing up to 100,000 runners.

The 2025 race raised a record £87.3 million (B3.8 billion) for charity, setting a new world record for the biggest annual one-day fundraising event. AFP

# Gunners fire to top

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Eberechi Eze fired Arsenal back to the top of the Premier League last Saturday (Apr 25) in a 1-0 win against Newcastle.

It was a must-win game for the Gunners with Manchester City involved in an FA Cup semi-final against Southampton.

Before the Gunners kicked off, the two title contenders were locked on 70 points each, with an identical goal difference. City topped the table on goals scored.

Arsenal could increase their advantage over City to six points when they face Fulham tomorrow (May 2), while Pep Guardiola's side play Everton on Monday.

The Gunners are desperate to shed their reputation as perpetual runners-up as they chase a first Premier League title since 2004. But they are up against a City juggernaut relentlessly hunting a seventh league title in nine seasons.

Earlier Saturday, the focus was on the other end of the table, where Spurs and West Ham are locked in a dramatic relegation battle, with Wolves and Burnley already down and Nottingham Forest having hammered Sunderland 5-0 to ease their fears of the drop.

Spurs won for the first time in 2026 to give themselves renewed



Eberechi Eze celebrates his goal. Photo: AFP

hope, with Joao Palhinha's late goal at Wolves seemingly enough to propel his team out of the bottom three.

However, West Ham substitute Callum Wilson scored a 92nd minute winner to seal a 2-1 victory against Everton and restore his side's two-point cushion, with just four games to go.

"We have to believe and to stay up and to win the games because we have the quality to win the games," Spurs boss Roberto De Zerbi said after his side's 1-0 victory, while West Ham manager Nuno Espirito Santo told the BBC he expected the relegation battle "to go to the wire".

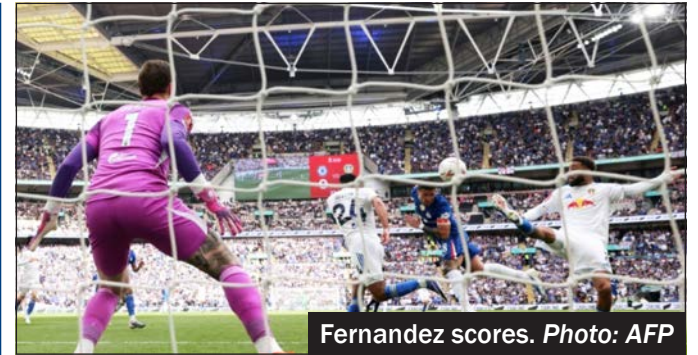
Liverpool beat Crystal Palace 3-1 to climb into fourth place above Aston Villa, who had earlier lost 1-0 at Fulham.

Alexander Isak, Andy Robertson and Florian Wirtz were on target for Liverpool although Mohamed Salah limping off in the second half holding his hamstring with less than a month of his glittering career with the Reds remaining somewhat dampened celebrations.

Arne Slot's men are now near-certainties to qualify for next season's Champions League, which would be some consolation after a miserable title defence.

They are level on 58 points with Villa and eight points clear of Brighton.

Manchester United meanwhile held onto third place after a 2-1 win against Brentford on Monday thanks to goals from Casemiro and Benjamin Sesko.



Fernandez scores. Photo: AFP

## Chelsea to face Man City in FA Cup final showdown

### FOOTBALL

ENZO FERNANDEZ fired Chelsea into the FA Cup final against Manchester City as the Argentine sealed a 1-0 win against Leeds in the Blues' first match after Liam Rosenior's sacking.

The 25-year-old midfielder emerged as a divisive figure towards the end of Rosenior's 106-day reign after he was dropped for two games for hinting in an interview that he was considering leaving at the end of the season.

Rosenior's handling of the incident undermined his already-fragile relationship with his squad as Chelsea's form spiralled out of control.

He was sacked on Apr 22 after a woeful run of five

successive defeats without scoring – the club's worst streak since 1912.

Now led by interim manager Calum McFarlane, eight-time FA Cup winners Chelsea are into the final for the 17th time in their history and can partially salvage a miserable campaign by winning the trophy for the first time since 2018.

They will face City in the final on May 16 after Pep Guardiola's team came from behind to beat second tier Southampton 2-1 on Saturday.

If Chelsea can beat City at Wembley, the inexperienced McFarlane would become one of the most unlikely FA Cup-winning managers after stepping up from his role with the club's Under-21 squad to assist Rosenior. AFP

## Sorry Foxes drop into third tier

### FOOTBALL

FORMER PREMIER League champions Leicester have been relegated to the third tier for only the second time in their history.

Gary Rowett's side needed a victory at the King Power Stadium against Hull on Apr 21 to keep alive their slender hopes of avoiding relegation but a 2-2 draw sealed their miserable fate.

It condemns the Foxes to League One just 10 years after they were crowned English champions in a fairytale triumph.

Leicester will play in the third tier for the first time since 2008-09 following an astonishing decline over the last five years.

"We have to learn. I think the club have to accept this is the horrible part of the journey of a football club," said Rowett.

"I think everyone saw the Premier League win as an amazing achievement. I



Photo: AFP

think we can be equally as disappointed with how poor this moment is," he added.

It is a third relegation in four seasons for Leicester, who dropped out of the Premier League in 2023 and 2025.

After Jamie Vardy, Riyad Mahrez, N'Golo Kante and company defied 5,000-1 odds by winning the Premier League in 2016, Leicester reached the Champions League quarter-finals the next season and won the FA Cup in 2021.

But the golden era is a distant memory as they face the unpalatable pro-

spect of playing the likes of Bromley, Mansfield and Wycombe next season.

Crashing out of the Premier League in limp fashion three years ago should have been a wake-up call for Leicester's Thai owner Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha and much-maligned sporting director Jon Rudkin.

However, the hierarchy were painfully slow to address numerous flaws on the pitch, while the club's ruinous finances have cost them with a six-point deduction this season for breaching spending rules.

AFP

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# Sport



**BWF confirms new scoring system > p14**



Team members from the Cup winners Bangkok Southerners and their final opponents The Hickey's line up ahead of the match. Photo: Jacob King

## TOUCH RUGBY

Jacob King

The Phuket Mixed Touch Rugby Tournament returned to the island for its second edition recently, bringing together teams from across Thailand for a day of fast-paced and competitive action at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalang.

Played in warm and humid conditions on Saturday, Apr 4, the event showcased the continued growth of the touch rugby community in Phuket.

The tournament opened with a round-robin group stage, where early results determined progression into the knockout rounds. Teams then advanced into a tiered structure of Cup, Plate and Bowl competitions, each featuring semi-finals and finals to decide

standings. While all three tiers were scheduled, the Bowl competition was ultimately not contested, with attention focused on the Cup and Plate finals.

The Cup competition provided a fitting conclusion to the day, with Bangkok Southerners crowned champions after overcoming The Hickey's, the previous tournament winners, 3-1 in a competitive final. Their tactical discipline stood out, particularly in their effective use of substitutions, allowing them to maintain control and consistency throughout the match.

### DROP-OFF

In the Plate competition, Pattaya Panthers secured the title with a narrow 1-0 victory over Hat Yai Pretty Mammoth in one of the closest matches of the tournament. The final was decided by a drop-off – an extra-time format

where teams play with reduced numbers until a winning try is scored – with both sides showing resilience and composure throughout.

The matches were well managed by official Chris Hallewell, ensuring a fair and controlled contest, while individual performances were also recognised, with awards presented for Male Most Valuable Player (MVP) and Female MVP.

The Southerners Rex Yi was named male MVP following a series of influential performances, consistently impacting games and contributing to his team's success, while The Hickey's Gracie Layard earned the female MVP award after a composed and effective tournament, delivering key performances at important moments.

Additional honours included the Golden Boy and Golden Girl

awards for outstanding junior players aged 14-16, along with the Super Senior award for players aged 45 and above.

Alongside the on-field competition, the tournament also supported a wider cause, helping to raise awareness for the Asia Centre Foundation (ACF), reinforcing the positive role sport can play in bringing communities together while supporting meaningful local initiatives.

### INCLUSIVE

Overall, the tournament was a strong success, combining competitive rugby with a positive and inclusive atmosphere. With growing participation and increasing interest, attention is already turning to the future, with ambitions to welcome international teams from across Asia and Australia.

This next phase aims to

elevate competition while positioning Phuket as an emerging hub for touch rugby, supporting the continued development of the sport in Thailand and the wider region.

The event was made possible through the support of its sponsors, led by Nomad Beach Club, alongside Go Fresh Fuel, Soho Pool Club, Simba Sea Trips, Delta55 Gym, Phuket Scaffolding Solutions, Tour de Phuket Hotel and Bangtao Boat Club, with additional support from the ACG, The Litter Club Network, DOPA Sauna and Wellness Club, Physio First Phuket and Radio Red Phuket.

For updates, highlights, and future events, follow Phuket Touch Rugby on Instagram and Facebook (@phukettouchrugby), and watch full match coverage on YouTube via Phuket Mixed Touch Rugby.

## Successful Sakhu Trail Beach Run passes trial

### RUNNING

THE RECENT INAUGURAL 'Sakhu Trail Beach Run' proved such a success that authorities are already planning for a further three editions of the event.

More than 1,500 people joined the occasion early on Sunday, Apr 19, to embark on a 10.5 kilometre route through Sirinath National Park in the northwest of the island. Starting at Nai Thon

Beach Park and ending at Ching Pla Market at Nai Yang Beach, the route was intended to provide participants a challenging workout while promoting the natural beauty of the local area.

The route was a combination of road, trail and beach through local communities and stunning natural environment including lush green mountains, which saw athletes of all ages and ability participate.

The race was divided into six separate age specific groups for male and female athletes, with the top three finishers in each category receiving a trophy and cash prize, while all participants received commemorative T-shirts and medals.

Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam oversaw the opening ceremony ahead of the race and was joined by: Sakhu Mayor Trin Panyawai; Phuket

Airport General Manager Monchai Tanode; Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob; head of Sirinath National Park Papawin Hang.

Mr Trin explained after the race that it had proven to be so successful that authorities and organisers were already making plans to organise three more in the coming years.

"The goal is to establish this event as a landmark

occasion in the international running world calendar that will attract many people to participate," Mr Trin said.

"It is not too difficult a trail, meaning it is accessible for all levels of fitness, while the stunning route offers participants an opportunity to experience nature up close, taking in trails across lush green mountain terrain, vibrant local communities and beautiful white sand beaches.



Photo: PR Phuket

"It can also help promote Phuket as an ideal sports-tourism destination for international clientele, which can help promote the local region while boosting its economy," Mr Trun concluded.

The Phuket News

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