



**MP URGES PARLIAMENT TO END FREE-VISA STAYS > PAGE 2**

# POWER PLAY

## PHUKET TOPS SOUTH IN DEMAND, ROLLS OUT B1BN SUBSTATION PUSH



Photo: PEA

**Natnaree Likidwatasakun**  
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket is committing more than B1.03 billion to expand its power grid, with five new electricity substations planned to meet demand expected to surge over the next decade – as the island already records the highest electricity consumption in Southern Thailand.

Wacharin Prapha, Manager of the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) Phuket office, reported current electricity use on the island at 573 megawatts (MW), the highest among the 14 southern provinces.

The figure puts Phuket ahead of Songkhla, which records about 555MW, followed by Surat Thani at 476MW and Nakhon Sri Thammarat at around 371MW. Total electricity demand across

Southern Thailand is estimated at roughly 3,100MW.

The figures underscore Phuket's position as one of Thailand's most energy-intensive provincial economies, with demand closely tied to its role as a major tourism and commercial hub, Mr Wacharin said.

According to Mr Wacharin, electricity demand on the island is projected to climb to around 900MW by 2036 – an increase of nearly 60% over current levels. The rise is being driven by continued expansion in tourism, real estate development and the services sector, all of which rely heavily on stable and high-capacity electricity supply.

**THE FIVE**

To support that growth, the PEA has outlined plans to construct five

new substations across Phuket over the coming years, alongside upgrades to the island's transmission network.

The first of the new facilities, located in Kathu near Prince of Songkla University, was scheduled to come online on May 8. Three more substations – in Kamala, Rawai and Laguna in Cherng Talay – are planned for completion in 2027, followed by a fifth installation in Phuket Town in 2029.

“Phuket currently operates 11 substations, but capacity is increasingly being stretched as demand rises,” Mr Wacharin said. “These new substations are essential to support future consumption and maintain system stability.”

Wissnu Masphermpong, Deputy Manager of the PEA Phuket office, said the expansion is

based on detailed projections of future electricity “load”, or demand.

“We forecast the load in advance, predicting how much it will increase each year. After COVID-19, business growth has accelerated significantly, which has pushed demand higher,” he said.

“We determine where new substations are required, particularly in areas where load is rising fastest.”

Mr Wissnu added that electricity capacity has become a critical requirement for business development on the island, with operators required to demonstrate adequate supply before receiving approval to operate.

“Businesses must obtain certification confirming that there is sufficient load capacity and a stable electricity system before...

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exeditor@classactmedia.co.th

# News



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## Power supply gets growth spurt

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...they can apply for licences,” he said. “This means we must continuously review usage data and overall system capacity.”

### RELIEVING PRESSURE

The Kathu substation will serve as a central hub in the upgraded network, redistributing electricity load from Patong and Phuket Town while also supporting future large-scale demand.

The facility is equipped with two 50-megavolt-ampere (MVA) transformers, providing a total capacity of about 100MW.

“Some of the Kathu load will support Patong, and some will support the city. We have also reserved capacity for future demand,” Mr Wissnu said.

The move is particularly significant given the strain already being placed on existing infrastructure. The Patong substation – which serves one of Phuket’s busiest tourism areas – is currently operating at more than 80% of its capacity.

“Operating at that level is risky and could lead to transformer issues,” Mr Wissnu warned. “The Kathu substation will help reduce that load. Initially, it will operate at around 30-40%

capacity, and then gradually increase as demand grows.”

A second major substation is planned for Kamala, positioned near the hill descent from Patong. The facility is intended to support Cherng Talay and Laguna, one of Phuket’s fastest-growing development corridors.

At present, much of the electricity supply to Cherng Talay is transmitted from Patong via long-distance lines.

“These transmission lines create risks due to terrain and potential natural disasters, which can affect system stability,” Mr Wissnu said. “By having a substation closer to the demand area, we can significantly improve stability and reduce flickering and outages.”

Further substations are planned for southern Phuket, including Rawai and surrounding areas such as Kata, Karon and Sai Yuan, where demand has surged alongside residential expansion and tourism growth.

“Chalong and nearby areas have seen a significant increase in load,” Mr Wissnu added. “We have already secured land and project approvals for new stations in these areas.”



Photo: EGAT

He confirmed that some of the new facilities – including those in Cherng Talay and parts of southern Phuket – may initially operate as temporary substations before being upgraded to permanent installations as demand continues to rise.

### BILLION-BAHT INVESTMENT

Oddly, Mr Watcharin and Mr Wissanu both declined to confirm details of the budget allocated to the huge power upgrade for the island, but procurement data highlights the scale of the investment required to deliver the expansion.

E-bidding documents published on Feb 28, 2024 show individual substation projects in Phuket carrying budgets ranging from more than B213 million to B472 million, although the documents do not specify which substations corres-

pond to each budget.

The multiple budget allocations highlight how the entire project has been “bolted together” through a multitude of piecemeal, lesser, budgets in order to make the upgrade a reality.

In addition, associated transmission works – including a 115-kilovolt (kV) line linking key substations – are valued at more than B353 million and are scheduled for procurement from November 2024.

Taken together, the projects represent a combined investment of just over B1.03 billion.

### UNDER PRESSURE

The current expansion builds on earlier upgrades to Phuket’s power infrastructure, most notably the completion in 2022 of a 500kV high-voltage transmission line linking the island to the mainland.

That project more than

doubled transmission capacity to Southern Thailand from 700MW to 1,600MW and increased Phuket’s available supply capacity to approximately 1,170MW, significantly reducing the risk of large-scale blackouts.

The upgrade followed years of mounting strain on the system. Electricity demand on the island rose sharply from around 455MW in 2018 to more than 500MW within a year, pushing supply close to its limits and contributing to voltage instability and localised outages.

Despite the improvements, disruptions still occur as infrastructure is continually upgraded and expanded to keep pace with demand.

Phuket also remains heavily dependent on electricity transmitted from the mainland, leaving it exposed to disruptions affecting the wider southern grid.

Past incidents – including the major blackout across Southern Thailand in 2013 – have underscored the risks associated with relying on limited supply corridors.

While recent investments have strengthened

resilience, officials acknowledge that the system continues to operate under increasing pressure as demand rises.

### GROWTH DRIVING DEMAND

Governor Nirat Pongsitthavorn said Phuket’s leading electricity consumption reflects sustained economic growth and investment across multiple sectors.

“The increase in electricity usage is in line with Phuket’s economic expansion,” he said.

High-density tourism areas such as Patong, Kathu and Cherng Talay account for a significant share of peak demand, driven by hotels, shopping centres and entertainment venues operating at high capacity, particularly during peak tourism seasons.

At the same time, population growth and urban expansion have added further pressure on the grid, especially in rapidly developing areas.

Electricity demand has historically tracked closely with tourism cycles, rebounding sharply following the COVID-19 slowdown as visitor numbers and business activity recovered.

## Phuket MP urges Parliament to end visa-free entry

PHUKET MP CHALERM-pong Saengdee has urged the government to abolish visa-free entry entirely and introduce stricter controls on cannabis, warning that current policies are damaging the island’s tourism image and creating social problems.

After presenting his address in Parliament, MP Chalermpong said in a post online that reducing the visa-free stay from 60 days to 30 days was “not enough” to resolve underlying issues, arguing that Thailand should prioritise quality over quantity in its tourism strategy.

“Visa measures are the first hurdle in screening tourists,” he said. “Accepting just anyone may cost more in the long run than the revenue figures being highlighted.”

His remarks follow a recent government decision to shorten visa-free stays to 30 days after feedback from tourism stakehold-

ers. While supporting the move, MP Chalermpong said the policy should go further by returning to stricter pre-existing entry criteria.

Phuket, often used as a testing ground for national tourism policies, has borne the brunt of unintended consequences, he said, citing both visa-free schemes and cannabis liberalisation as factors attracting “low-quality tourists” and contributing to illegal activities.

He warned that some areas are already seeing foreign groups settling long-term, competing with local workers and placing pressure on resources.

“This is a new problem that must be monitored before it escalates,” he said. “Otherwise it will become increasingly difficult to resolve.”

MP Chalermpong added that maintaining Thailand’s reputation as a world-class destination depends on attracting visitors with higher spending power who stay

longer and contribute more sustainably to the economy.

Alongside visa concerns, the MP criticised the lack of clear legislation governing cannabis, saying its widespread availability is affecting the experience of visitors and residents alike.

“Cannabis shops are still widespread in cities and along beaches, and the smell persists,” he said. “Families who encounter this may choose not to return, despite Thailand’s strong tourism potential.”

He called on the government to urgently regulate the sector, describing it as a “flagship policy” that has yet to be properly managed.

“The government must clean up and take responsibility for what it started, so it does not become a long-term burden on the people,” he said.

In a separate social media post, Chalermpong defended public criticism of tourism-related issues,

citing reports of foreign tourists engaging in fights, behaving arrogantly, taking jobs from locals and causing environmental damage.

“These are not minor issues,” he wrote, blaming what he described as a “hands-off” approach by authorities.

“The country is facing clear problems that are not being addressed, yet those raising concerns are being criticised,” he added.

During his parliamentary address, Chalermpong also raised several local infrastructure and environmental issues affecting Phuket residents.

He called for urgent action to ease traffic congestion at the boundary of Chalong and Wichit by expediting construction of a proposed bridge across Klong Mudong to improve connectivity between the two areas.

Water shortages were also highlighted, particularly at Klong



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

Kata Reservoir, the main raw water source for Chalong, Rawai and Karon, which he said regularly runs low and causes hardship for residents. He proposed securing additional water sources and implementing long-term water management planning.

In addition, he raised concerns over untreated wastewater being discharged into Klong Mudong in Wichit, warning of impacts on public health, local fishermen and the mangrove ecosystem. He urged relevant agencies to install proper wastewater treatment systems before further environmental damage occurs.

“The problems of our fellow citizens must be resolved through parliamentary mechanisms,” Chalermpong told the House.

The Phuket News

# Forest encroachment leads to charges

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Encroachment on public land within the Khao Daeng Protected Forest Area in Rawai has led to criminal charges, with police confirming that suspects have already been prosecuted following a complaint filed last year.

The action follows an inspection on Apr 28, ordered by the Phuket City District Chief, with administrative officers and personnel from the Volunteer Defence Corps (OrSor) joining Rawai Municipality officials to investigate complaints of illegal land use at the site in Moo 1, Rawai, near Laem Phromthep.

Officials found that rocks and soil had been used to level land for an access road, while machinery had been installed on-site, encroaching on public land within the protected forest area.

Chalong Police Chief Pol Col Surasak Jaidee confirmed that Rawai Municipality filed a formal complaint over the encroachment, citing trespassing on state land in violation of the Land Code. The offence carries a penalty of up to three years' imprisonment or a fine of up to B10,000, or both.

Pol Col Surasak said the complaint was filed last year and that legal action has since been taken.



Photo: Muang Phuket District Office

"Charges have already been filed," he said, but declined to name those involved, specify how many people have been charged, or confirm when the charges were brought.

He confirmed that the site falls within the Khao Daeng Protected Forest Area and that the investigation found clear evidence of encroachment.

"Rocks and soil were used to level the land to create an access road, and machinery was placed on public land. These actions clearly constitute encroachment on state land," he said.

However, he noted that the encroached area lies adjacent to privately owned land.

"The site is next to a private project, and the land beside it is privately owned," he added.

Rawai Municipality has ordered those responsible to

remove all rocks and machinery from the area and restore the land to its original condition.

Deputy District Chief Akkra Suwattikul said the district office had received complaints about the misuse of public land and confirmed the encroachment following an investigation. He noted that Rawai Municipality had previously filed the police report in 2024, with the case now progressing through legal channels.

"The business operator has been ordered to restore the area to its original condition and remove all machinery," he said. "If further encroachment is found, or if the order is not followed, additional legal action will be taken."

Officials stressed that enforcement would be strict, warning that any continued violations would lead to immedi-

ate arrests and further legal action without exception.

## LONG FIGHT

The case adds to longstanding concerns over encroachment on protected land in Rawai, particularly around the Laem Phromthep area.

In November last year, Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee called on then newly appointed Phuket Governor Nirat Phongsitthaworn and relevant agencies to urgently investigate alleged encroachment on public land and protected forest in the same area.

Speaking at a press conference in Parliament on Nov 19, Mr Chalermpong said local residents had reported the construction of seven prefabricated buildings on protected land, with workers and machinery preparing the site despite its protected status.

He alleged that a major private company was attempting to push ahead with development and had approached residents to acquire land for an access road, offering compensation packages of B1 million per household, with deductions for land purchase, house construction and registration.

"I inspected the area myself and found that encroachment was taking place," Mr Chalermpong

said at the time. "This has caused damage to public land and considerable suffering to local residents. The government should not have allowed this to happen."

He criticised what he described as inaction by responsible agencies and warned that preparations for further construction were continuing during his inspection.

Mr Chalermpong welcomed an order by Rawai Mayor Thames Kraiat to halt construction but insisted that legal proceedings must follow.

"Those encroaching on public land must be charged and brought to justice," he said.

He also called for a broader investigation into protected land across Phuket, highlighting the Khao Khad Forest Reserve in Wichit, which he said had shrunk from 2,000 rai to around 800 rai amid ongoing encroachment.

The MP urged provincial authorities to prioritise inspections of all forest and grazing reserves to ensure public land does not fall into the hands of private developers.

Phuket officials have reiterated that inspections will continue in Rawai and across the province, with further legal proceedings expected as authorities move to curb encroachment on protected land.

## Bang Tao restaurants cleared from beachfront

PHUKET OFFICIALS HAVE INTENSIFIED efforts to regulate beachfront activity at Bang Tao Beach, cutting off utilities to suspected illegal operators and ordering stricter monitoring as part of an ongoing campaign to reclaim public land.

The move follows a site inspection on Apr 30 led by Vice Governor Adul Chuthong under the direction of Phuket Governor Nirat Pongsitthavorn. The inspection targeted public areas along Bang Tao Beach in Cherng Talay, Thalang, where authorities have been conducting sustained enforcement over recent months.

Accompanied by Phuket Provincial Palad (Chief Administrative Officer) Rungruang Thimabutr and officials from multiple agencies, the inspection focused on progress in organising public spaces and ensuring compliance with land-use regulations. Participating agencies included the Cherng Talay Subdistrict Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor), the Phuket Forestry Office, the Land Department and other relevant authorities.

Officials confirmed that signage has now been installed marking 42 zones where construction is prohibited. These areas form part of a broader effort to clearly delineate public land boundaries along the coastline. However, some sections are still pending formal inspection and surveying by responsible agencies.

During the inspection, authorities visited a beachfront restaurant employing 15 staff – 10 Myanmar nationals, four Thai nationals



Photo: PR Phuket

and one Indian national – with business continuing as normal while officials carried out checks.

To curb encroachment and prevent further misuse of public land, officials have begun cutting off electricity and water supplies to locations suspected of violating the law. Evidence is also being gathered to support legal action against those found to be in breach of regulations.

Vice Governor Adul stressed that enforcement must be conducted carefully, transparently and fairly, while urging all agencies to accelerate inspections of remaining areas, particularly along the beachfront.

Phuket Province reaffirmed its commitment to ongoing enforcement, stating that reclaiming public beach areas is essential to ensure equal access for all and to strengthen the island's image as a well-regulated and sustainable tourist destination. *The Phuket News*





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## 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  
088 786 1615  
thai@classactmedia.co.th



**NATNAREE 'MILD' LIKIDWANASAKUN**  
Reporter / Translator  
082 295 3244  
reporter1@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**  
Graphic designer

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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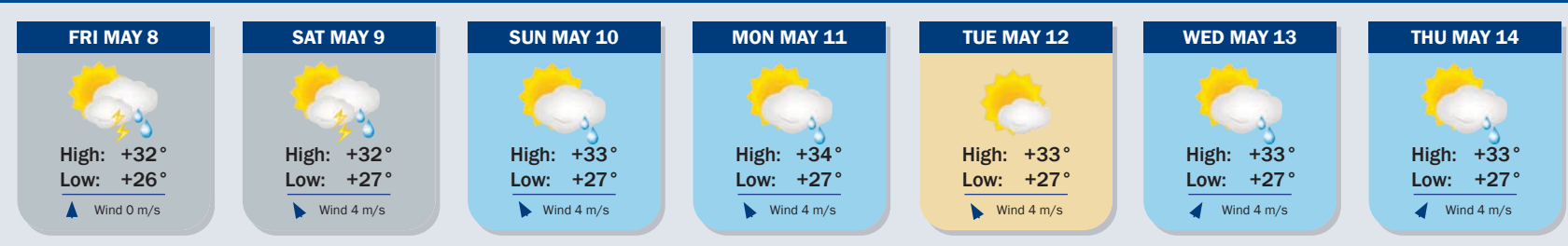


Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

## Slow loris tout nabbed in Karon

A MAN ACCUSED OF exploiting a protected slow loris for tourist photo opportunities in Karon has been arrested after allegedly attempting to attack officers during a late-night crackdown.

Officials from the Khao Phra Thaeo Wildlife Sanctuary, supported by Karon Police, local administrative officers and Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee, moved in on the suspect on Apr 27 following complaints about illegal wildlife being used for photos with tourists.

During the operation, officers found the man in possession of a slow loris – a protected species under Thai law – along with a shoulder bag containing two knives and a metal rod fashioned from a shark fin.

Authorities reported that the suspect resisted arrest and attempted to attack officers at the scene before being subdued.

The man, not named

by police, was taken into custody and informed of his rights. He now faces charges of illegal possession of a protected animal under the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act.

Under the law, offenders face penalties of up to five years in prison, a fine of up to B500,000, or both.

The rescued slow loris has been transferred to the Phang Nga Provincial Wildlife Breeding Center, where it will undergo rehabilitation before being considered for release back into the wild.

Officials reiterated that the use of protected wildlife for tourism, including street photography, remains a serious offence in Thailand. They added that enforcement efforts will continue, particularly in high-traffic tourist areas such as Karon, to curb illegal wildlife exploitation and protect natural resources.

The Phuket News

# Consuls consulted over bad tourists

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket officials have held high-level talks with foreign consuls and key agencies to address growing concerns over inappropriate behaviour by some international visitors, with Governor Nirat Pongsithithavorn warning that all foreigners must strictly comply with Thai law.

The seminar, titled 'Integrating Confidence and Safety for International Tourists and Consular Operations in Phuket Province', took place at the Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town on Apr 30.

Chaired by the governor, the meeting brought together Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum, consular representatives and officials from security, administrative and tourism-related agencies, along with private sector stakeholders.

Discussions focused on tackling behaviour by foreign tourists that disrupts public order and risks damaging Phuket's reputation as a leading global destination.

Governor Nirat stressed that while Phuket welcomes visitors from around the



Photo: Patong Police

world, all must respect local laws and social norms.

"Foreign nationals must abide by Thai law. There will be no special treatment," he said.

He instructed authorities to strictly enforce regulations, particularly in cases involving public disturbances, traffic violations, illegal work and other conduct affecting local communities.

The governor also addressed claims circulating on social media suggesting some foreigners believe legal problems can be resolved through financial means, firmly rejecting the idea.

"Authorities operate with transparency and accountability. No one can use money to avoid the law," he said.

Officials said managing tourist behaviour is critical not only to protecting Phuket's image, but also to

safeguarding the safety and quality of life of residents.

To improve coordination, Governor Nirat proposed regular monthly meetings between Thai authorities and foreign consulates to enhance communication, share information and respond more quickly to emerging issues.

The seminar also allowed consular officials to raise concerns and offer suggestions on handling cases involving their nationals, with the aim of reducing misunderstandings and strengthening cooperation.

Authorities reiterated that Phuket remains open to international tourism, but stressed that maintaining order is paramount, with stricter enforcement and closer coordination expected to play a key role in curbing disruptive behaviour.

## Van driver charged after knife attack

A VAN DRIVER HAS BEEN charged after a violent, jealousy-fuelled roadside attack near Wat Kata was caught on video and widely shared online.

The incident occurred at about 8pm on Apr 26 on Patak Rd, when the suspect, Prawit Englee, allegedly cut off a motorcyclist before confronting him.

According to Karon Police, the suspect punched the victim, Somsak Wongkanha, then escalated the attack by retrieving a knife about 50cm long and chasing him across the road in an apparent attempt to stab him.

The victim escaped with minor injuries and later filed a police complaint.



Photo: Karon Police

Video footage of the attack, showing the suspect pursuing the victim in public, sparked alarm and criticism online.

Police charged the suspect with assault, carrying a knife in public, drug use and driving under the influence. He later tested positive for methamphetamine and admitted using the drug prior to the incident.

Legal proceedings are continuing. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

## Shooting range raided in Bangla checks

FOUR EMPLOYEES WERE arrested and firearms seized during a late-night crackdown on Bangla Rd, as officials intensified efforts to tighten control over Patong's nightlife.

The Apr 30 operation targeted entertainment venues and businesses along Bangla Rd and Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, focusing on licensing, foreign employment and drug prevention.

Authorities uncovered multiple violations, including an unlicensed air gun shooting range and another operating with incomplete documentation while allegedly holding unauthorised firearms, some with serial numbers removed. Officials also noted the premises lacked a required construction permit.

All firearms and ammunition



Photo: Patong Police

were confiscated, and four employees were detained and handed to Kathu District Office investigators.

The raid formed part of a wider "social order" campaign aimed at improving safety in key tourist areas.

Officials said stricter inspections and enforcement will continue to maintain public confidence and protect Patong's reputation as a leading tourist destination.

*Eakkapop Thongtub*

# NACC probes Surin 'Skywalk' B6.4bn approved for 'Phuket Health Hub'

**The Phuket News**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) has launched a formal probe into the long-delayed Surin Beach 'Skywalk' project, now nearly a year behind schedule with only about 25% completed.

According to a statement this week, NACC officials, along with members of the STRONG-Sufficiency Economy Against Corruption Club, inspected the project on Mar 30 under the Empowering STRONG for Proactive Anti-Corruption (ESPAC) initiative.

The review focused on the high-profile glass viewing platform development at Surin Beach in Cherng Talay, overseen by the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO). PPAO President Rewat Areerob presented details on contracts, budget and progress.

The design contract was awarded in May 2022 for B6.31 million, with construction later contracted in August 2023 for B196.97mn. Work began



Photo: NACC Phuket

on Aug 26, 2023, with completion originally set for Feb 15, 2025.

However, as of Feb 17, 2026, construction had run for 907 days—367 days beyond schedule. Only three of 13 phases have been completed, with overall progress at 25.05%. Just B14.28mn has been disbursed.

Daily penalties of B196,975 have been imposed on the contractor, though enforcement has been adjusted due to earlier waivers and a brief suspension ordered by officials.

Construction has been fully halted since Feb 18 pending design revisions, particularly concerning

wind-load safety and soil stabilisation issues. The revisions are expected to take about 45 days.

With mounting delays and an anti-corruption probe underway, the project's completion timeline remains uncertain as investigators continue to monitor progress and compliance.

THE CABINET HAS approved a B6.43 billion project to establish the 'Andaman Health Center' at Prince of Songkla University (PSU), aimed at transforming Phuket and the wider Andaman region into a leading healthcare hub.

The project will run from fiscal year 2027 to 2030, focusing on strengthening healthcare services, addressing staff shortages and reducing the need to transfer patients with complex conditions elsewhere, Deputy Government Spokesperson Ploytalay Laksmisangchan said.

"The project is not just about building a hospital, but about creating a comprehensive health system for the Andaman region," she said.

The initiative includes four main facilities in Phuket: Songklanagarind Thai Traditional Medicine Hospital, Medical Technology Service Center, Digital Dentistry Center and the flagship Songklanagarind Hospital Phuket.

The new hospital, a tertiary-level facility scheduled to open in 2030, carries



Image: PSU Phuket

a budget of B4.85bn, funded by both government and non-budget sources.

Officials say the region faces ongoing shortages of specialised medical personnel, forcing many patients to seek treatment in other parts of Thailand. The new centre aims to expand local capacity, improve access to advanced care and support millions of tourists visiting the region each year.

The project also seeks to boost medical research, telemedicine and workforce training, while reducing healthcare inequality.

Aligned with Thailand's medical tourism strategy, the centre is expected to treat more than 170,000 patients annually and support Phuket's ambition to become a global "health city".

Construction is set to begin under the 2027 fiscal budget. *The Phuket News*

## Tourist caught 'coral walking' at Maya Bay

OFFICIALS AT MAYA BAY HAVE issued a stern warning after a tourist was filmed stepping on coral in protected waters near Viking Cave, prompting renewed calls for stricter enforcement and accountability.

The incident, captured on video and widely shared online, shows a man snorkelling before standing directly on coral – a practice known to severely damage fragile reef ecosystems. The clip, reportedly filmed on Apr 20 on Phi Phi Leh Island, has triggered an investigation by Hat Nopparat Thara-Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park.

Park chief Saengsuree Songthong confirmed officials are tracking down those responsible and preparing legal action against both the tourist and the tour operator involved.

He said the area is subject to strict zoning to protect marine life, with red buoys and rope barriers clearly marking no-go zones, particularly over shallow reef sections.

"Snorkelling in restricted areas, especially during low tide, risks direct contact with coral reefs, which can cause lasting damage," he said.

Despite clear signage and ranger patrols, the incident has raised concerns about ongoing violations and poor compliance among some visitors and guides.

The park is now investigating whether the tour operator failed to properly control or brief tourists, with penalties



Photo: MCOT Phuket

expected under national park regulations.

A tour guide who filmed the incident claimed such behaviour occurs frequently, particularly during busy periods, and criticised some operators for neglecting environmental guidelines.

Officials rejected any excuse of ignorance, stressing that rules are clearly communicated in multiple languages.

"All tourists must strictly follow instructions to help preserve the natural beauty of Thailand's seas," the park said.

The warning comes as visitor numbers surge following Maya Bay's rehabilitation and reopening. Authorities say enforcement will be intensified, with additional monitoring and stricter action against violators, as part of efforts to protect one of Thailand's most iconic marine environments. *The Phuket News*

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# Officials warn over '0% tax' claims

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Thai authorities have issued a formal warning after online claims that foreigners can buy luxury homes in Phuket with "0% tax" and secure unlimited stays in Thailand were found to be misleading and potentially in breach of the law.

The warning, issued by the Anti-Fake News Center (AFNC) on Apr 26, follows an investigation into a foreign real estate investor and financial content creator promoting overseas property opportunities. Officials said the content emphasised high returns and tax advantages, but risked misinforming viewers about Thai legal restrictions on foreign property ownership and taxation.

The Phuket Provincial Land Office moved to clarify the rules, stressing that foreign ownership of real estate in Thailand remains tightly regulated.

Under the Condominium Act, foreigners are permitted to own condominium units, but only up to 49% of the total floor area of all



Image: Anti-Fake News Center

units in a condominium building. Ownership of land, however, is largely prohibited for foreign nationals, except under limited provisions outlined in Chapter 8 of the Land Code or through specific investment promotion schemes, the AFNC said in its warning.

The Land Department also noted that while foreigners may legally own buildings or structures under the Civil and Commercial Code, this does not automatically confer owner-

ship of the land on which they stand. Claims of "freehold" house ownership must therefore clearly distinguish between ownership of the building itself and the underlying land, the warning added.

On taxation, local officials were unequivocal.

The Cherng Talay Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor) confirmed that land and building taxes are levied in accordance with the Land and Building Tax Act B.E. 2562 (2019), and apply to

all property owners or possessors as of January 1 of the relevant tax year, regardless of nationality.

"There are no exemptions based on whether the owner is Thai or foreign," the notice stated.

The clarification comes amid heightened scrutiny of foreign activity in Phuket's property sector, following a recent controversy involving claims made online by a foreign national regarding tax-free property ownership and residency privileges.

As previously reported, Minister of Tourism and Sports Surasak Panjaroenvorakul confirmed that authorities are investigating statements by an expatriate who claimed he had purchased a B56 million property near Bang Tao Beach and could remain in Thailand while paying "0% tax" on global income under a so-called "wealthy global citizenship" arrangement.

Mr Surasak said any such claim, if proven true, would be illegal and subject to enforcement.

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

He added that visa issuance must comply with strict regulatory requirements, including verification of financial status, investment sources and supporting documents.

The case is currently being examined by the Phuket Governor and relevant agencies.

The issue has also fed into broader concerns about the impact of foreign visit-

ors and investors, as the government reviews its tourism and immigration policies.

Authorities are considering revisions to the country's visa framework, including a possible rollback of the 60-day visa-free entry scheme introduced to boost tourism, amid reports of inappropriate behaviour and regulatory loopholes being exploited.

Officials have stressed that while Thailand remains open to foreign investment, particularly in the property sector, all transactions and residency arrangements must comply fully with Thai law.

The Anti-Fake News Center urged the public to verify information from credible sources before making investment decisions, warning that misleading online content could expose buyers to legal and financial risks.

Authorities reiterated that foreigners can legally invest in certain types of real estate and reside in Thailand under specific conditions, but are subject to the same tax obligations as any other property owner, with no special exemptions.

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## Food producers call for state subsidies

THE THAI FOOD PROCESSORS' Association has urged the government to cut energy costs, accelerate free-trade agreement (FTA) negotiations and open new export markets, warning that global pressures are driving up production expenses.

Association president Ongart Kittikhunchai said the conflict in the Middle East has pushed up energy, logistics and raw material costs, while also disrupting supplies of fertiliser, plastic pellets and packaging. The situation has been compounded by a weaker baht.

He called for measures to ease energy costs, particularly in the logistics sector, including subsidies to support businesses. As Thailand relies heavily on exports, the government should also improve market access and speed up FTA negotiations, while ensuring deals do not disadvantage the country.

The association also highlighted growing concerns over global food security, urging authorities

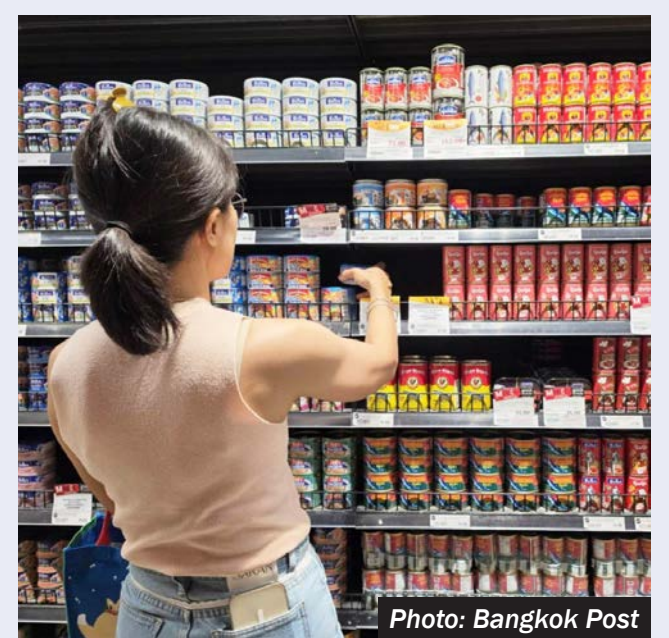


Photo: Bangkok Post

to leverage Thailand's agricultural strengths and support private sector players in expanding future food opportunities.

Vice-president Panusak Palawatpong said small and medium-sized enterprises are under increasing pressure from rising energy costs and could be further strained by higher labour expenses. He also urged action to address the gap between loan and deposit interest rates.

Other sectors are also

feeling the impact. Tuna and seafood processors face rising fuel costs, increasing both fishing and transport expenses, while pineapple producers are grappling with drought concerns linked to El Niño and low reservoir levels in key growing areas.

Packaging remains a major cost, accounting for up to 30% of canned pineapple production, with prices expected to rise further in the coming months. *Bangkok Post*

# Sihesak airs US frustrations

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangkitkeow has expressed frustration with the United States, saying the country has received no offers of help from Washington with the wide-ranging economic damage from the American-Israeli war against Iran.

"This war should not have taken place," Mr Sihasak told *The Washington Post* on Apr 27, as he explained why Thailand has been approaching Russia and China amid its economic crisis. "We don't want to condemn the US directly. But this is something that should not have started."

"I think they're aware that there are consequences from the war," Mr Sihasak said, referring to Trump administration officials.

"But they haven't come out to talk to us about how they can help. They haven't approached us directly saying, 'Oh, we understand that you have to endure the impact, and we can help you out.'"

The only gesture, he added, was President Donald Trump's offer for countries in need of fuel to buy American oil and gas.

Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries have struggled more than most with soaring fuel and fertiliser prices because of shipping disruptions caused by the Middle East conflict.



Sihesak Phuangkitkeow says the American-Israeli war against Iran 'should not have taken place.' Photo: AFP

Agriculture Minister Suriya Jungrunreangkit recently travelled to Moscow to negotiate with Russian officials for fertiliser. Thailand is also trying to procure Russian crude, though concerns over potential violations of US sanctions have held back Thai banks from proceeding, Mr Sihasak said.

The minister said he was not optimistic about a ceasefire in the near term and it seems the Trump administration's objectives "are shifting all the time". At one point, the goal appeared to be regime change. Now, it seems to be about ending Iran's nuclear programme.

"There's a lot of unpredictability in the US government policy," he said,

adding that it is not limited to the war. Trump's sweeping tariff campaign has surprised many allies. His rapid dismantling of US aid programmes has left poor communities across the world exposed to sickness and disaster.

In comparison, Mr Sihasak said, China has presented itself as a more consistent partner to countries in Asia.

"It doesn't mean that China doesn't also behave as a superpower when it comes to core interests, right? But we know what those core interests are," he said.

"This is not about us taking sides in the geopolitical competition. It's about what the US is doing, which is forcing us to rethink some relationships."

# Thaksin granted parole, set for May 11 release

## BANGKOK

FORMER PRIME MINISTER Thaksin Shinawatra has been approved for parole without the requirement to wear an electronic monitoring (EM) device, with his release scheduled for May 11.



Thaksin. Photo: Bangkok Post

The Ministry of Justice parole committee agreed on Apr 29 that Thaksin, currently held at Klong Prem Central Prison in Bangkok, qualified for parole and would not be required to wear an EM ankle bracelet as he is over 70 and has underlying medical conditions.

Thaksin, 76, has been behind bars since Sept 9 last year, when the Supreme Court ordered him to serve his one-year sentence for abuse of authority and conflict of interest while serving as prime minister prior to 2006.

The court said it did not recognise Thaksin's prolonged stay in a

VIP ward at the Police General Hospital in 2023-24 as qualifying for prison time.

As of May 11, he will have served two-thirds of his sentence, the minimum threshold required for parole eligibility. He will then remain under probation supervision for the remaining four months of his term.

Meanwhile, Pheu Thai leader Julapun Amornvivat has confirmed Thaksin will not take any formal advisory role or re-enter the party structure following parole, though did state the former PM remains a key ideological influence within the party.

Bangkok Post

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# Your Air Conditioner Could Save a Bird's Life

**Press Release**

**B**irds are not decorative extras in the urban frame. They are part of the mechanism that keeps urban nature functioning, helping hold the balance between insects, seeds, pollination and the fragile web of biodiversity that still survives between roads, towers and heat-soaked concrete. In Thailand, where extreme urban heat is becoming a sharper public issue, that warning suddenly feels urgent, not theoretical.

From the first line, this is a call to act. The Wild Animals Rescue Charity Fund and Save Wild Fund, the initiators of Drops of Life, are pushing a beautifully simple idea into public view in Thailand: stop letting air-conditioner water go to waste and start turning it into a lifeline for urban wildlife.

As heat intensifies, cities grow harsher not only for people, but for birds trying to survive in landscapes built almost entirely for human comfort. And when birds struggle, the whole urban ecosystem starts glitching. The balance between birds and insects shifts. Biodiversity weakens. The city becomes less stable, less alive, less natural.

**Sustainable hydration**

That is what makes 'Drops of Life' feel so sharp. It does not offer some giant techno-fantasy. It offers a fix hiding in

plain sight. The project is a 2026 environmental initiative by creative agencies Machine\_ and Leo Burnett Ukraine, part of Publicis Groupe Africa, that provides sustainable hydration to urban birds during extreme heat. It uses a 3D-printable, open-source bird waterer to collect waste water from air conditioners, helping birds survive in hot, dense urban environments where water sources are scarce.

The average air conditioner across seven to eight hours of work produces 10 litres of water. Every day, air conditioners release condensed water that usually drips onto pavement and disappears. The Drops of Life initiative captures that water and redirects it into small drinking points for birds and other urban animals.

Tiny intervention. Massive meaning.

**Untapped potential**

Because this is bigger than hydration. It is about restoring ecological balance in the places where people actually live. It is about rethinking waste as care. It is about making urban life a little less self-centred and a lot more intelligent.

And most importantly, this is not a project meant to stay on a website or inside NGO circles. It is something people can join.

Residents, property managers, cafés, offices, schools, architects, maintenance teams, landlords, developers, neighbourhood organisers: this is your cue.



The Drops Of Life bird waterer collects waste water from air conditioners, helping birds survive in hot, dense urban environments where water sources are scarce. Photo: Supplied

If your building has air conditioners, it has untapped potential. If your city has heat, it has a reason to act. Ask how condensation can be collected. Suggest simple dispensers. Help make these small water stations part of everyday urban infrastructure.

**Repeatable action**

That is how real eco-movements grow. Not only through awareness, but through repeatable action. Download the 3D printing model of the water dispenser here: <https://dropsoflife.city/>. Install it. Spread the word. Let's save birds together!

Drops of Life has the power to turn one overlooked urban by-product into a shared environmental gesture. A drop that once vanished into concrete can now help keep birds alive, support biodiversity and maintain the fragile rhythm between species that keeps nature in balance.

The sky is already giving us the water. Thailand now has a chance to decide what to do with it.

Join the initiative. Catch the drop before it disappears.

For more information visit: <https://dropsoflife.city/>



**The June/July 2026**  
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Distributed in resorts/hotels lobbies, in a high number of restaurants and coffee shops, plus inserted in one issue of *The Phuket News* each month, it is a great way to Talk to Phuket.

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# Here's looking – and dining – at YUE!

Amy Bensema

Featuring a unique design concept inspired by the elegance of Chinese culture and Phuket's industrial heritage, YUE Restaurant & Bar is an ideal spot for a casual lunch, special dinner or even a business meeting. With plenty of seating and exclusive private dining rooms, the venue is ridiculously charming.

YUE Restaurant & Bar promises Cantonese excellence in the form of its cuisine, which showcases handcrafted specialities and signature dishes in addition to classic favourites such as Dim Sum, Shu Mei and Har Gow. The menu here is extensive, so be sure to ask the friendly wait staff for their recommendations. My dining partner and I did, and trust me, those recommendations did not disappoint.

We started our meal with quintessential Chinese favourites including Crispy Roasted Duck Spring Rolls, BBQ Pork Buns and Xiao Long Bao with pork. While all these appetisers were delicious, the Xiao Long Bao with pork was the standout. These delicate, broth-filled steamed dumplings were full of flavour and a wonderful start to the remainder of our lunch.

As soon as the appetisers were devoured, we were served a satisfying mixed mushroom herbal soup and a heaping plate of crispy shimeji mushrooms. Deep-fried and served with a



Photos: Supplied



special soy sauce, the mushrooms were light and tasty and a perfect accompaniment to the warmth of the soup.

When the staff brought the main courses out, I was absolutely delighted because not only were they plated and presented beautifully, BUT the aromas wafting off of each dish made my mouth water. For our main courses, we chose Mapo Tofu, Wok-Fried Black Pepper Beef and the restaurant's Original Peking Duck.

### Fragrant

Mapo Tofu is one of my all-time favourite dishes, and the serving platter was loaded with minced pork, shiitake mushrooms, ginger, garlic, bean curd and Sichuan pepper sauce. The fragrant dish is full of intense flavours and was both savoury and silky with each bite. I can't wait to visit the restaurant and bar to eat it again.

The Wok-Fried Black Pepper Beef featured tender Australian beef striploin, spring onion, capsicum and black pepper sauce. This dish is extremely tasty and features a lot of different textures – from the melt-in-your-mouth striploin to the crunchy capsicum.

The Original Peking Duck was, without a doubt, the highlight of the entire lunch. It's no secret how iconic and well-loved this dish is around the world, and the one served at YUE Restaurant & Bar is one of the best I've ever had. Glistening, extremely crispy and tasty duck skin accompanied by thin pancakes, cucumber, spring onion and Hoisin sauce. Each bite was phenomenal and a complete multi-sensory experience.

The entire dining experience was marvellous.

YUE Restaurant & Bar is truly something special, and the refined

Cantonese cuisine the establishment is so popular for is incredibly tasty. In addition to the à la carte menu, there's also a family sharing and dim sum menu. The restaurant and bar also has a unique selection of premium teas, coffee, signature mocktails, a lot of classic adult beverages and an interesting wine list.

Located at the Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town, YUE Restaurant & Bar is open daily for lunch from 11am-2:30pm, and for dinner from 6pm-10:30pm. Reservations are recommended, dress is smart casual and there is plenty of parking available on-site.

YUE Restaurant & Bar  
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<https://www.yuephuketown.com/our-menu>

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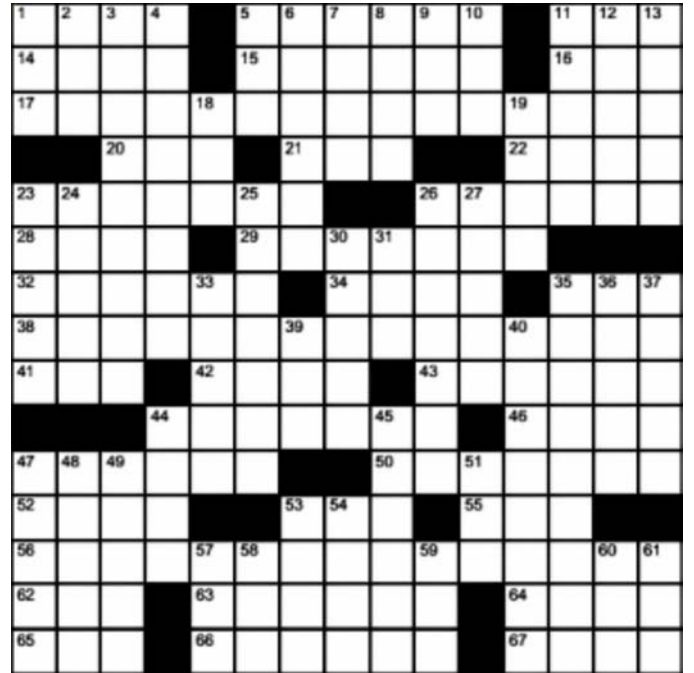
# POP QUIZ

1. What is a young pigeon called?
2. What is the deepest lake in the world?
3. Who is the patron saint of music?
4. What airlines' identification code is VS?
5. Anthony McMillan became famous as who?

Answers below, centre

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. From square one
  5. Marketplaces
  11. Cooking meas.
  14. Pastry dough
  15. Multiple car collisions
  16. Arthur Godfrey played it
  17. TV movie starring Dick Van Dyke
  20. Prospector's need
  21. Pantheon member
  22. \_\_\_-friendly
  23. Dope
  26. Blue moon, e.g.
  28. Bangkok native
  29. In a grand manner
  32. Performed an after-dinner chore
  34. Timber wolf
  35. Keep out
  38. During these modern times
  41. Dance bit
  42. Dungeonlike
  43. Closed in on
  44. Secured with a rope
  46. Distinctive quality
  47. Classify
  50. Takeoffs
- Down
1. Behind
  2. Fed. agency
  3. Animals with long memories?
  4. Feminine
  5. Visa statement abbr.
  6. Chinese tree
  7. This and that
  8. Divide
  9. See 5-Down
  10. Watering hole
  11. Rwandan people
  12. \_\_\_ shooting
  13. Matthew of "Friends"
  18. Warbler Yoko
  19. Wrath
23. New York \_\_\_
24. Some dinnerware
25. Tar
26. Gift-wrap decorations
27. Separate
30. Unreliable
31. Diversion
33. Where to get down
35. Peers of kingdoms
36. Go-between
37. Advises
39. \_\_\_ test
40. NBC news magazine
44. Stadium
45. Kind of egg
47. English race place
48. Get into \_\_\_
49. Hot sauce
51. Hoosgow
53. Tropical fever
54. Position
57. Pique
58. \_\_\_ de guerre
59. Plugs
60. With it, once
61. Sample



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

## SUDOKU

Easy

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

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:  
 (1) Squab; (2) Lake Baikal, Russia (1,642 metres deep); (3) Saint Cecilia; (4) Virgin Atiantic; (5) Robbie Coltrane

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

**30**

different Batman logos have been used since 1940.

**80**

percent of the 10.2 million annual visitors to the Louvre go solely to see the Mona Lisa.

**975**

psi is the average biting force of a grizzly bear – enough to crack a bowling ball.

**35,000**

museums are located throughout the United States.

**1**

**billion**

red blood cells can be found in just two to three drops of human blood.

Source: Uberfacts



## ISLAND VIEW

Phuket viewpoint, north of Patong. Photo by Colin Rowntree

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

## This week in history

### May 8, 1429

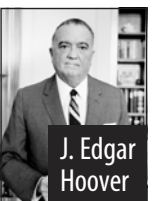
Joan of Arc lifts the Siege of Orléans, turning the tide of the Hundred Years' War.

### May 9, 1901

Australia opens its first national parliament in Melbourne.

### May 10, 1924

J. Edgar Hoover is appointed first Director of the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and remains so until his death in 1972.



### May 11, 868

A copy of the Diamond Sūtra is published, the earliest dated and printed book known.

### May 12, 2008

An 8.0 magnitude earthquake occurs in Sichuan, China, killing over 69,000 people.

### May 13, 1888

With the passage of the Lei Áurea ("Golden Law"), the Empire of Brazil abolishes slavery.

### May 14, 1796

Edward Jenner administers the first smallpox inoculation.

Source: Wikipedia

# Trades & Services

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**FRI 8 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

**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 8<sup>th</sup> 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)

**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



**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)

**TUE 12 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. 1<sup>st</sup> Tue each month - Fellowship dinner at different locations in Phuket, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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/RCoPB](https://www.facebook.com/RCoPB)

**THU 21 MAY**



**Skål Phuket - May Dinner**

We are delighted to invite you to our upcoming Skål Phuket networking evening, graciously hosted by Skålleague Bjorn Courage and his team at the InterContinental Phuket Resort, Kamala. This evening offers a unique opportunity to experience one of Phuket's newest and most exciting venues - Sipping Tiger. Networking drinks from 6pm followed by a curated selection of pass-around bites and canapés. Members B1300 - Non-Members B1700. Bookings - contact@skalphuket.org, more info at [facebook.com/SkalPhuket](https://facebook.com/SkalPhuket)

**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 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

**PROPERTY FOR SALE**



**Relocating Property must sell**

Urgent sale as owner relocating, Farang style house 300 meters from Heroines Monument, 2 bed, 2 bath, 1 office with safe, living/dining room, air con every room. Recently renovated. Partly furnished with oven, cook top, micro oven, washing machine. Undercover outdoor entertainment area. Plus 2,260 square metres land close to dream village on new 4 lane high way, ideal for big villa or 4 two bed rentable units, 10 min to International School, 15 min to airport, in small development, no common fees. Both house and land are priced for urgent sale. Interested parties call English 093 629 4400 thai 093 649 3583.

**PROPERTY FOR RENT**

**Four Bedroom Pool Villa**

4 Bedroom | 5 Bathroom at Phuket Boat Lagoon Full furnished with Marina View. Size: Land Area approx. 450 sq.m. | Indoor Area 250 sq.m. Amp, Boat Lagoon, Phuket, [pchaiyarak@gmail.com](mailto:pchaiyarak@gmail.com), +66 81 409 1835

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### ANZAC DAY 2026

The Australian Consulate-General Phuket hosted a remembrance gathering on April 24 at the Public house Restaurant in Kamala, with members of the Thai Navy and members of Phuket Veterans - IVA in attendance. More than 80 people gathered on Kamala Beach from 5am for the ANZAC Day dawn service. It was another moving, memorable ANZAC Day dawn service. Thanks to the Phuket Veterans - IVA for organising and to the representatives from the Australian Defence Force and the First Secretary and Consul New Zealand Embassy, Bangkok for attending. "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them." Lest we forget.



## Great Danes down Thais in Thomas Cup

### BADMINTON

THAILAND LOST TO Denmark 3-1 in the quarter-finals of the 2026 Thomas Cup Finals in Horsens, Denmark last Friday (May 1).

Thailand were in trouble early on after World No. 2-ranked Kunlavut Vitidsarn, who won all of his matches in the group stage, lost to Anders Antonsen in the opening singles contest by a score of 16-21, 21-11, 18-21.

Next up was Thai doubles pair Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Pakkapon Teeraratsakul who lost to Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen in another three-game battle, 21-15, 5-21, 17-21.

World No.26 Panitchaphon Teeraratsakul, who had shown great form all throughout the tournament, delivered once again for Thailand, beating Magnus Johansen 21-17, 21-12 to give Thailand a lifeline.



Kunlavut. Photo: AFP

However, Denmark again proved too strong in the doubles as Mathias Christiansen and Daniel Lundgaard eased past Chaloepon Charoenkitamorn and Worrapol Thongsanga 21-13, 21-17 to capture the third point for the hosts and a place in the semi-finals against defending champions China, who beat Malaysia 3-0 earlier in the day.

France claimed their first-ever medal by reaching the semi-finals after beating 2014 champions Japan 3-0 while India eliminated Taiwan 3-0.

China downed France 3-1 in the final on Sunday to emerge as overall winners and retain the Thomas Cup trophy.

Bangkok Post

# History in Miami for Kimi

### FORMULA ONE

AFP

Teenager Kimi Antonelli extended his lead in the drivers' world championship with a historic victory for Mercedes ahead of McLaren world champion Lando Norris in last Sunday's (May 3) dramatic Miami Grand Prix.

The 19-year-old Italian became the first F1 driver to claim his first three wins in a row from his first three pole positions, after triumphs in China and Japan had hoisted him to the top of the title race.

Driving with determination and elan, Antonelli struggled for ascendancy in the first part of the race before enjoying an undercut pit stop to win his duel with Norris in the closing stages.

In the first race following a five-week hiatus due to the conflict in the Middle East, Antonelli came home 3.264 seconds clear of Norris.

Norris's McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri finished third, 23.828 seconds adrift.

Mercedes driver George Russell, who began the season as championship favourite and won the opening race in Melbourne, finished fourth ahead of Red Bull's fiery and rejuvenated four-time champion Max Verstappen and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who spun on the penultimate lap.



Antonelli celebrates his historic win. Photo: AFP

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton was seventh in the second Ferrari ahead of Franco Colapinto of Alpine and the two Williams drivers, Carlos Sainz and Alex Albon.

Mercedes had dominated the opening three Grands Prix and arrived in Miami as the only top team without an upgrades package. But despite losing to Norris in Saturday's sprint race, they showed they remain on top.

"What a race, man, woo!" exclaimed Antonelli on team radio after winning.

"The team did a great strategy and we had a massive undercut – and I was able to bring it home. It was a tough race," he said after the race.

"I was a bit lucky when I locked

up at the start behind Charles and then I did a mistake with energy management."

"This is just the beginning," he added, shrugging off the mounting excitement and expectation in his homeland.

"I'm going to enjoy this one and then get straight back to work because Canada is in two weeks' time."

Norris described the result as "a mixed bag."

"We just got undercut. We should have boxed first, but Kimi did a good job and hats off to him and Mercedes," he said.

"A good race. He didn't make any mistakes and I'm gutted not to win, but I didn't have the pace."

## Joshua to face Fury in all-British grudge match

### BOXING

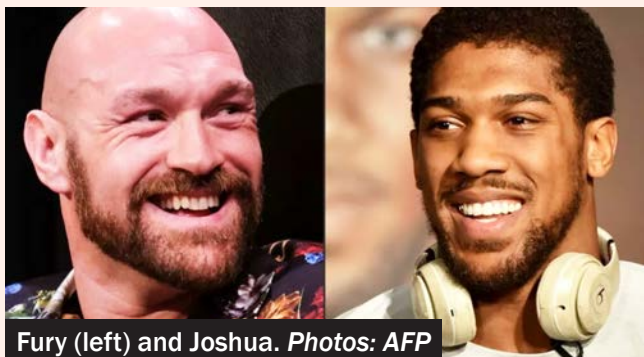
FORMER HEAVY-weight champions Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury are finally set to lock horns later this year in a long-awaited all-British grudge match.

Joshua, who has not fought since a car crash that killed two close friends at the end of last year, will first face Albania's Kristian Prenga in Saudi Arabia in July.

The 36-year-old will then fight fellow two-time world champion Fury after years of speculation and false starts.

No date or venue has been announced but the bout is expected to take place in November and be shown on Netflix.

Joshua escaped relatively unscathed after a collision that killed Sina Ghami and Latif Ayodele in Nigeria, shortly after his most recent fight in



Fury (left) and Joshua. Photos: AFP

December, a sixth-round knockout of YouTube star Jake Paul.

Joshua was ringside last month as Fury, 37, marked his comeback after 16 months spent in his latest spell of retirement with a unanimous points win over Russia's Arslanbek Makhmudov.

It was supposed to be the moment that ignited the build-up to a contest between the two British fighters, but instead Joshua remained in his seat despite being beckoned into the ring to face off with his rival.

Now negotiations have been finalised and after a

decade of circling each other and aborted attempts to agree a showdown while still in their prime, they will collide in a contest Fury has called "The Battle of Britain".

Both Joshua and Fury have lost twice to the current champion of the heavyweight division, Ukrainian Oleksandr Usyk.

Joshua has a record of 29 wins, including 26 by knockout, and four defeats, including two KOs, in his 33 fights.

Fury's record is 35 wins, including 24 KOs, one draw and two defeats in 38 bouts. AFP

## Saudi confirms end of LIV Golf funding

### GOLF

SAUDI ARABIA'S SOVEREIGN wealth fund will stop financing LIV Golf at the end of the 2026 season, throwing the future of the breakaway tour into serious doubt.

LIV Golf, founded in 2022 as a main rival to the PGA Tour, informed staff and players on Apr 29 that the Saudi Public Investment Fund will no longer bankroll the circuit beyond this summer.

The league, which spent billions of Saudi dollars to lure many of the world's top players including Bryson DeChambeau and Phil Mickelson, will "evaluate strategic alternatives" to continue operating, CNBC reported.

Both *The Wall Street Journal* and CNBC cited multiple anonymous sources. LIV Golf did not comment when repeatedly contacted by AFP.

Reports first emerged earlier this month that the breakaway tour was on the verge of collapse due to the possible withdrawal of Saudi financing.



Photo: AFP

LIV's deep-pocketed backers in Riyadh were rumored to have cooled on the extravagantly expensive project, which has reportedly cost them over US\$5 billion (B162bn) so far.

LIV Golf CEO Scott O'Neil refuted the reports, vowing to continue the season "full throttle," though he conceded the league would "probably" have to raise money going forward.

A collapse of LIV Golf could jeopardise the careers and earnings of its star players.

The likes of DeChambeau defected from the PGA Tour in acrimonious

circumstances, and may face severe penalties if they try to return.

"There were rules, and they were broken," PGA Tour chief executive Brian Rolapp told the Journal last week. "With rules comes accountability."

LIV Golf last week postponed its planned June tournament in New Orleans, with officials saying they hope to reschedule an event for later this year.

LIV's next tournament started yesterday (May 7) at Trump National in suburban Washington.

Its final scheduled tournament this season is set to take place in Indianapolis from Aug 20-23. AFP

# City come unstuck at Toffees

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Manchester City handed the destiny of the Premier League title back to Arsenal on Monday (May 4) after they could only draw 3-3 with Everton.

Pep Guardiola's side appeared to be cruising to victory when Jeremy Doku opened the scoring at the end of a dominant first half.

However, Thierno Barry scored twice for the Toffees, either side of Jake O'Brien's header, before Erling Haaland struck and Doku hit the 97th minute leveller.

The Gunners now just need to win their final three games to end a 22-year wait to become the champions of England after they easily dispatched Fulham 3-0 on Saturday.

City remain five points adrift of Mikel Arteta's team, with a game in hand. Arsenal visit relegation-threatened West Ham on Sunday (May 10) before hosting Burnley and visiting Crystal Palace on the final day of the campaign.

Elsewhere, Tottenham Hotspur climbed out of the relegation zone with a crucial 2-1 win at Aston Villa last Sunday.

Spurs had not won for 118 days in the Premier League until the scrappy 1-0 victory at already-relegated Wolves a week earlier.

But they are now back in the driving seat to avoid relegation as



Manchester City players left dejected at the end of their 3-3 draw at Everton. Photo: AFP

West Ham drop into the bottom three with three games remaining.

Conor Gallagher and Richarlison scored the vital goals as Spurs move one point ahead of West Ham who lost 3-0 at Brentford on Saturday.

Villa should still secure Champions League qualification, but Bournemouth closed the gap on the top five to six points with a 3-0 win over Crystal Palace.

Meanwhile, Manchester United beat Liverpool 3-2 to seal a return to the Champions League next season, with Kobbie Mainoo's late winner edging a thrilling encounter after Liverpool had battled back from 2-0 down.

The Red Devils raced out the blocks to score twice inside the first

15 minutes through Matheus Cunha and Benjamin Sesko. Dominik Szoboszlai and Cody Gakpo drew Liverpool level before Mainoo coolly slotted home the winner from outside the box 13 minutes from time.

Victory and the guarantee of Champions League football after a two-year absence further strengthens Michael Carrick's case to remain in charge of United next season.

Leeds all but guaranteed safety by beating Burnley 3-1, while Newcastle overcame Brighton 3-1 and Wolves and Sunderland drew 2-2.

Chelsea's challenging season continued as they lost 3-1 at home to Nottingham Forest on Monday, a result that all but ensured the latter's survival.

# FIFA unveils red card crackdown at World Cup

## FOOTBALL

FIFA HAS CONFIRMED law changes will be rolled out at the World Cup that will see players who cover their mouths during confrontations with opponents facing a red card as part of a new initiative aimed at combating racism.

The new rule follows controversy during a Champions League game in February when Benfica winger Gianluca Prestianni was accused of racially abusing Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior.

Prestianni was accused of calling Vinicius a "monkey" repeatedly while covering his mouth. Prestianni denied racially abusing Vinicius but was later banned for six matches – with three of those suspended – for "homophobic conduct".

FIFA also confirmed said that red cards would also be introduced for players leaving the field of play in protest at a referee's decision, while a team causing a game to be abandoned will forfeit the match.



FIFA WORLD CUP ORIGINAL TROPHY Photo: AFP

FIFA has also approved a change to the way sanctions are enforced during the World Cup.

From this year's tournament, single yellow cards issued to players in the group stage will be cancelled after the first round, and then again after the quarter-finals.

The move is aimed at ensuring that star players do not find themselves suspended for crucial games in the tournament after collecting two separate yellow cards.

The 2026 World Cup kicks off in Mexico City on June 11. AFP

# Big Four to kick-off Hong Kong pre-season 'Football Festival'

## FOOTBALL

ENGLISH AND ITALIAN football giants Manchester City, Chelsea, Inter Milan and Juventus have confirmed pre-season friendlies in Hong Kong in August.

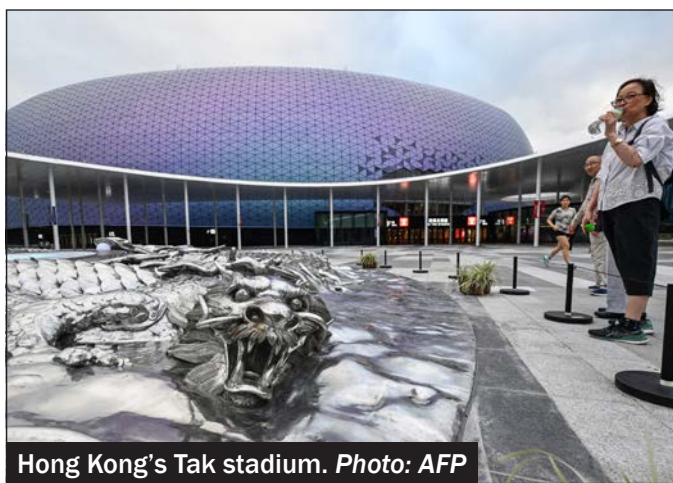
Pep Guardiola's Manchester City, currently arm-wrestling Arsenal for the Premier League title, will take on Serie A champions Inter Milan on Aug 1, spearheaded by their Norwegian goal machine Erling Haaland.

The match will kick off the "Hong Kong Football Festival" at the city's futuristic 50,000-seat Kai Tak stadium.

The gleaming arena opened a year ago, featuring a roof that can be closed and air-conditioning to combat the fierce summer heat and humidity in Hong Kong.

Chelsea will play Juventus on Aug 5 to round off the mini-tournament.

Inter, under former Romanian international Cristian Chivu, won their 21st title last Sunday, while



Hong Kong's Tak stadium. Photo: AFP

Juventus are fourth and looking to secure a Champions League spot under Luciano Spalletti.

Chelsea beat PSG to win the Club World Cup in the United States last year but have since parted company with then manager Enzo Maresca and their most recent coach Liam Rosenior, who was sacked on Apr 22.

All the teams will hold open training sessions ahead of the matches giving Hong Kong fans an extra chance to see star players such as City's Gianluigi Donnarumma, Chelsea's Cole Palmer, Inter's Lautaro

Martinez and Juventus's Dusan Vlahovic.

The action does not stop there for fans in the football-mad southern Chinese city, as Bayern Munich and Aston Villa have already announced they will play a friendly in Hong Kong on Aug 7.

During pre-season last year, 50,000 sell-out crowds in Hong Kong watched Liverpool play AC Milan and Tottenham face Arsenal in the first north London derby outside of the UK.

Tens of thousands also turned out to watch the teams' open training sessions. AFP

# Phuket United in futsal league return

## FUTSAL

PHUKET UNITED Futsal Club has officially confirmed its participation in the national Metropolitan Electricity Authority (MEA) Futsal Thai League 2026 following a 10-year absence.

A press conference was held at the Patong Bay Hill Hotel last Friday (May 1) overseen by Phuket United Futsal Club President Preachawut Kisin, who was joined by fellow board directors, staff, coaches and selected players.

Mr Preachawut confirmed 19 players have registered with the club for the 2026 season and the team's jersey will be adorned by the sky blue colours of the "Andaman Pearl".

Under the concept of "One Island, One Team", the goal is to finish in the top six places of the league in order to qualify for the knockout play-off round, Mr Preachawut said. The league has 14



Photo: PR Phuket

teams competing in total, including Bluewave Chonburi, Port ASM, Hongyen Thakam, Bangkok FC and Kasem Bundit.

Mr Preachawut explained the club is very much community focused and Phuket residents and sports fans can get involved directly by buying tickets to support the team at games and also by purchasing replica team shirts.

He added that vocal support from fans at all home games is very much welcome and will no doubt contribute to the team's improved performance on the field.

The return of Phuket United to the national futsal league is another

important step for the development of the game across the island by inspiring youngsters to take up the game, explained Mr Preachawut.

The team began their campaign with a strong performance last Sunday (May 3) at the Saphan Hin Sports Center, defeating Bangkok FC 3-2 in their opening game.

The game was broadcast live on TrueVisions True Premier Football Channel 5, as will all games throughout the season.

For more information visit the club's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61588626246083>.

The Phuket News

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

# Sport



Phuket United back in futsal scene > p15



## Dojo Phuket continue fine form

The Dojo Phuket team at the Penang Invitational Judo Championship on the weekend of Apr 17-19. Photo: Alexis Plantard

### COMBAT SPORTS

**Ben Tirebuck**  
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

As we approach the mid-way point of 2026 the team at Cherng Talay-based Dojo Phuket are continuing to demonstrate their sporting prowess and development.

Most recently the team competed at the Singapore International Judo Open last weekend (May 2-3) where they claimed the title of second best placed team out of the nine teams competing, sweeping to an impressive 16-medal haul in the process.

Claiming gold medals were students Kevin (who won two golds), David and Daniil, while the latter also scooped a silver medal and a separate trophy for best fighter in his class.

Elsewhere, silver medals went to Lea and Dima, with team silver medals going to Leo, Lea and Daniil in the under-9 age category, Johnatan, Daniil and Sagit (under-12) and Gleb, Dima and David (under-15).

In further individual contests bronze medals were awarded to Iroslav, Johnatan, Leo, Gleb, Sacha and Sagit.

It was a collective performance that illustrated the potential and ongoing development of the team under the guidance of Dojo

lead instructor Alexis Plantard, who, as usual, was glowing with praise for his students.

#### 'BEST KIDS TEAM'

The achievements in Singapore came hot on the heels of similarly impressive performance at the Penang Invitational Judo Championship on the weekend of Apr 17-19 where team Dojo once again collected 16 medals, including nine gold, two silver and five bronze among a highly competitive field of 850 athletes from 10 countries.

Gold medals were awarded to Lea, Kevin, Georgie, Leo, Dima, Nikolai, Daniil, Damir and Alexis, with Johnatan and Gleb picking up silvers and Aron, Sacha, Sagit and David (two) claiming bronze.

Furthermore, important belt promotions were achieved by the following: Sacha, white belt with yellow stripe; Nikolai, yellow belt; Georgie, yellow belt; Leo, orange belt; Kevin, yellow belt with two orange stripes; Johnatan, yellow belt with two orange stripes; Daniil, green belt with two blue stripes; and Damir, blue belt with brown stripe.

Rounding off the achievements in Penang was the award of the "Best Kids Team" for finishing 1<sup>st</sup> out of 57 teams.

#### STREAMLINED

On the weekend of Apr 3-5 a

streamlined Dojo team of three athletes competed at the Thailand Jujitsu National Championship in Bangkok and still managed to win five medals amid strong competition.

Competing in the Tachi Waza category, Dojo captain David claimed not only gold but the Thailand national title in his age group, while Alexis also claimed gold after contesting in three different divisions (Tachi Waza, No-Gi and Newaza) and receiving four trophies for his performance, including best overall fighter.

Rounding out the medals was Yuma who, representing Dojo Phuket in his first championship, reached the podium to claim a bronze medal, suggesting there is much more to come from him.

"It was a very strong performance from the team," Alexis told *The Phuket News*. "We only had a small team of three as the event was only confirmed a month prior and we already had teams registered for and focused on the Malaysia and Singapore Opens shortly afterwards."

"Despite that we were ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> out of 172 teams in Thailand Jujitsu this year and I am extremely proud of the team," he added.

Prior to this the team competed at the Hong Kong International Open on the weekend of Mar 20-21 and once again delivered an outstanding collective performance.

Serial medal winner Lea claimed another gold in her age group, as did Sagit and Alexis, while silver medals went to Gleb and Dima, with Shane claiming a hard fought bronze.

Belt promotions were achieved by the following: Sagit, blue belt with a second brown stripe; Gleb, orange belt with a second green stripe; and Daniil, green belt with one blue stripe. While Daniil did not win a medal for his efforts, Alexis was quick to point out that he was competing against very strong opponents much older than him which, ultimately, will prove to be an invaluable learning experience.

#### HARD WORK

It has been a period of significant progression since the team settled in their new environs last October.

"We are growing very fast and reaching an important new stage," Alexis told *The Phuket News* recently. "We now have four different locations those service over 100 students. As well as the main academy in Manik we are now present at three separate schools on the island, namely Headstart School, HEI and British International School, Phuket (BISP)."

"Furthermore, we have also built a hostel at the academy, allowing us to welcome athletes for full training camps and long-term development."

The progress and achievements at international level competition are only possible due to the hard work the team put in during numerous training sessions at the Manik-based Dojo, Alex explained. "That is where the real hard work takes place and where future athletes are crafted," he said.

This is evident in the case of student David who was recently selected for the Russian national cadet team. This will entail competing on the International Judo Federation circuit to earn points and qualify for the Cadet World Championships.

Helping David's cause is the fact that Alexis was recently accredited as a coach for the Russian cadet team, allowing him to travel internationally with the young student to prove invaluable guidance and support.

This is the second time Alexis has developed an athlete to national team level after he coached Kenneth Thongsong to the Thai national team and a 9<sup>th</sup> place finish at the World Championships in Bosnia in 2022.

"We are building something very special," a proud Alexis told us. "The future is very bright and the sky is the limit."

For more information on how to get involved visit the Dojo Phuket Facebook page.