

POLICE RAID NOMINEE TOURISM BUSINESSES > PAGE 3

# CRACKDOWN



Photo: Patong Police

## POLICE VOW MAXIMUM ENFORCEMENT IN SONGKRAN ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN

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Phuket Provincial Police have pledged a sweeping, no-exceptions crackdown on dangerous driving across the island during this year's Songkran holidays, as authorities race to prevent a surge in road deaths and injuries.

Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Pol Col Phatsakorn Sonthikun, who oversees traffic management and safety operations island-wide, confirmed that officers will "ramp up" enforcement efforts in the lead-up to and throughout the festival period, targeting the behaviours most closely linked to fatal accidents.

The move comes as Thailand enters full enforcement of stricter national road safety measures from Apr 1, marking the end of a three-month warning phase and the start of what officials have described as "real arrests and real fines" for serious traffic offences.

Pol Col Phatsakorn said officers will prioritise enforcement of the so-called "10 main offences", with particular focus on three key violations: failing to wear helmets, speeding, and drink driving.

The full list of offences under intensified enforcement includes speeding, driving against traffic, running red lights, not wearing a helmet, not wearing a seatbelt, driving without a licence, dangerous overtaking, drink driving, using a mobile phone

while driving, and unsafe motorcycle use.

Penalties under the nationwide crackdown have increased significantly. Fines of up to B4,000 apply for speeding and running red lights, while not wearing helmets or driving against traffic can result in fines of up to B2,000. More serious offences such as drink driving carry fines of B5,000 to B20,000 and potential jail terms of up to one year.

Pol Col Phatsakorn warned that there will be no leniency.

In addition to general enforcement, police will specifically target rental vehicles operated by unlicensed drivers, with maximum penalties to be imposed on both drivers and vehicle owners.

Officers will also crack down

on undocumented foreign workers found driving illegally, he said.

The measures come amid ongoing concerns over accidents involving tourists unfamiliar with local roads and riding high-powered rental motorcycles, particularly at night.

### CHECKPOINTS

As in previous years, checkpoints will be established across Phuket, with every police station ordered to operate at least two checkpoints within their jurisdiction.

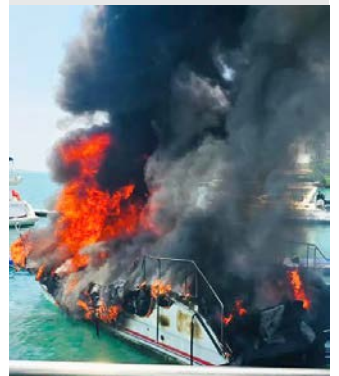
Each station will oversee enforcement in its designated area, while also coordinating with partner agencies to address high-risk locations.

Analysis of five years of accident data has identified 30...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

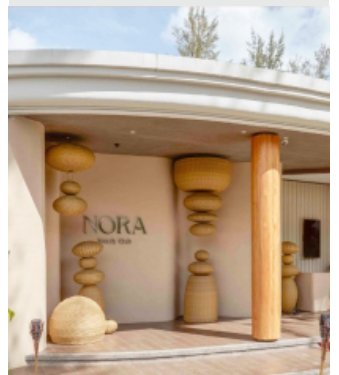
NEWS PAGE 3

Tour guide dies in Ao Makham boat inferno



LIFE PAGE 9

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# News



Mobile AI camera nets tourist for overstay > p4

## Safety drive for Songkran

Continued from page 1

...“blackspot” locations linked to fatal crashes. While police declined to disclose the specific sites, all stations have been instructed to urgently implement risk-reduction measures at each location.

Pol Col Phatsakorn acknowledged that this year’s Songkran campaign faces a significant challenge: maintaining Phuket’s “zero fatalities” record achieved during the 2025 festival period.

“All units must focus on preventing serious accidents resulting in fatalities,” he said.

Measures will include mandatory alcohol testing of all injured persons involved in road accidents, increased monitoring of high-risk behaviours, and close review of enforcement data and accident statistics.

Officers will also conduct field inspections of checkpoints and intensify oversight of public transport vehicles.

### ‘PHUKET EYE’

A key component of this year’s campaign will be the rollout of the ‘Phuket Eye’ smart surveillance system, which is set to go live this month.

More than 500 CCTV cameras have already been installed across the island,

with the system capable of behaviour detection, facial analysis, licence plate recognition and vehicle inspection.

Officials say the platform will allow for more targeted, data-driven enforcement, including tracking of rental vehicles and repeat offenders.

The system will be integrated with a provincial safety database compiling accident records, vehicle data and traffic offence histories, enabling authorities to better identify risk patterns and deploy resources accordingly.

The crackdown comes amid growing concern over rising road deaths in Phuket.

According to officials, 54 people were killed in road accidents between January and March this year, with those aged 15–34 identified as the most at risk.

High-risk areas include Srisoonthorn, Chalong and Wichit, while behaviour-related factors – particularly speeding, drink driving and helmet non-use – remain the leading causes of fatalities.

Public health officials have also warned that more than half of emergency room cases at Vachira Phuket Hospital are linked to road accidents, highlighting the scale of the problem.



Photo: Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation

### UNLICENCED

Despite the focus on enforcement, police statistics from last year’s Songkran period reveal persistent gaps in compliance – particularly among unlicensed drivers.

Of more than 5,000 cases prosecuted during the 2025 “Seven Days of Danger”, nearly 3,000 involved individuals operating vehicles without a valid licence, making it by far the most common offence.

Helmet violations ranked second, with 1,487 cases, followed by seatbelt offences and drink driving.

The figures have raised questions over the effectiveness of existing penalties, which remain relatively low.

Pol Col Phatsakorn himself acknowledged the issue, noting that fines for driving without a licence typically range from B500

to B1,000, with a legal maximum of B2,000.

“The penalties are quite light, so people aren’t afraid of it,” he said.

### NO POINT

Further complicating enforcement is the continued delay in implementing Thailand’s driver licence points system, which was intended to penalise repeat offenders.

Dr Wiwat Seetamanotch, manager of the World Health Organisation–Royal Thai Government Country Cooperation Strategy for Road Safety Programme and Vice President of Phuket’s Provincial Traffic Accident Prevention Support Plan, confirmed that the system has effectively been inactive since shortly after its launch in 2023.

“Actually, this system has been delayed for about

one to two years,” he said, citing procedural issues in data transfer between police and the Department of Land Transport.

Although improvements have been made, full implementation has yet to be finalised.

Dr Wiwat warned that public awareness of the system’s inactivity could undermine respect for traffic laws, but stressed that enforcement alone will not be enough to reduce fatalities.

### KIDS ON BIKES

Authorities are also continuing efforts to address the long-standing issue of underage motorbike use.

Police have launched awareness campaigns in schools and signed agreements with partner agencies to promote universal helmet use, but the problem persists.

Under Thai law, individuals must be at least 15 years old to obtain a driver’s licence, yet minors continue to ride motorcycles across the island.

Dr Wiwat warned that young riders face significantly higher risks due to limited driving skills and poor decision-making.

“Eighty to ninety percent of accidents involve head impacts,” he said, noting that helmets can

reduce the risk of death by around 40%.

He added that the risk of fatality increases sharply at speeds above 30km/h, and becomes “almost 100%” at high speeds without a helmet.

### MORE ON MOTORBIKES

With fuel prices rising, more people are turning to motorcycles as a cheaper mode of transport — a shift that may further increase accident risk.

Dr Wiwat noted that the likelihood of death in a motorcycle accident is approximately 80 times higher than in a car crash.

“Motorcycles are the highest-risk mode of transportation, especially during the upcoming Songkran festival,” he said.

“It is crucial that drivers exercise extreme caution.”

Police have urged all road users – residents and tourists alike – to strictly comply with traffic laws, warning that enforcement during Songkran will be consistent and uncompromising.

With checkpoints in place, CCTV monitoring expanding and penalties increasing, authorities say the message is clear: risky behaviour on Phuket’s roads will not be tolerated.

The ultimate goal, officials stressed, is simple – to save lives.

## Fuel prices surge as shortages hit pumps

FUEL PRICES HAVE SURGED nationwide, with diesel rising by B3.50 per litre and petrol also increasing, as Phuket officials have yet to announce any island-specific relief measures despite growing pressure on motorists and businesses.

The latest hike, implemented by state oil company PTT from 5am on Apr 2, has pushed the retail price of standard diesel in Phuket to about B48.23 per litre at most major service stations. Premium diesel has climbed as high as B67.39 per litre at some outlets.

Petrol prices have also risen, with Gasohol 91 now around B44.07 per litre and

Gasohol 95 ranging between B44.44 and B45.24 depending on the brand. E20 fuel is priced at about B39.44-B40.00 per litre, while some premium options exceed B50 per litre.

Despite the immediate impact, Phuket authorities have issued only confirmations of the price adjustments, with no targeted local measures announced.

Instead, attention has centred on national initiatives. Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul has launched the ‘Thai Helps Thai: Reduce the Burden, Reduce the Cost of Living’ campaign, offering discounts of up to 58% on more than 3,000 essential goods nationwide until the end of May.

Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Phipat

Ratchakitprakarn has also ordered agencies to ease Songkran travel, including freezing public transport fares until Apr 19 and ensuring sufficient fuel supplies. Thailand Post will hold shipping rates until Apr 15.

Meanwhile, fuel supplies at several petrol stations across Phuket have come under pressure, with temporary shortages reported following the price increases.

According to the Phuket Provincial Energy Office, most stations remain operational, but some have run out of specific fuel types, including Gasohol 95, Gasohol 91, E20 and premium diesel.

Bangchak, PTT (OR), Shell, Caltex and PT stations across



areas including Kathu, Wichit, Talad Yai, Cherg Talay and Thalang have all reported shortages of certain fuels, while independent stations were said to have full supply.

Officials stressed that disruptions are limited to specific fuel types at individual stations, with most outlets continuing to operate normally and offering alternatives.

No explanation has been given for the shortages, and officials have not indicated when full supply will be restored, though monitoring is ongoing.

With global energy volatility driving costs higher and Songkran approaching, residents and businesses in Phuket now face rising transport expenses without any confirmed local relief measures. *The Phuket News*

# Police hit 'nominee' firms

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A sweeping crackdown on suspected illegal foreign-run businesses has seen eight establishments raided across Phuket, as a visiting Senate committee simultaneously called for stronger action against nominee schemes and related economic crimes.

The coordinated enforcement operation, led by Phuket Provincial Police Chief Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum, targeted businesses suspected of using Thai 'nominees' to circumvent the Foreign Business Act.

The raids were carried out under court-issued warrants and involved officers from Phuket Provincial Police, the Ministry of Commerce and the Department of Provincial Administration, alongside officials from the Phuket Provincial Commerce Office and the Phuket Provincial Administration.

Authorities confirmed that eight locations spanning multiple sectors were



Photo: PR Phuket

inspected, including car rental businesses, real estate operations and a childcare centre.

The raids were conducted across several jurisdictions, with Patong Police searching one car rental business, while Chalong Police inspected both a car rental outlet and a childcare facility. Cherng Talay Police targeted a real estate company, and officers from Karon, Kamala and Sakhu police stations each raided car rental firms. Phuket Provincial Police's Investigation Division also carried out a separate operation on another car rental business.

Officials examined company registration documents, licences, declared capital, shareholder structures and financial records in a bid to determine whether foreign nationals were exercising unlawful control through Thai proxies.

Pol Maj Gen Sinlert said the operation focused on gathering evidence of illegal arrangements in which Thai nationals act as shareholders on behalf of foreign investors, enabling them to operate restricted businesses.

"Legal proceedings will be taken decisively," he said, warning that action would be pursued against

all parties involved, including companies, nominee shareholders and the foreign operators behind them.

Police confirmed that seven nominee-related cases have already been processed in Phuket, with some concluded and others still under judicial review.

Authorities also issued a public warning urging Thai nationals not to act as nominees in exchange for financial gain, stressing that such arrangements carry serious criminal penalties. Members of the public were encouraged to report suspected illegal business activities to police via local stations or the 191 hotline.

## SENATORS' TAKE

The enforcement push comes as a Senate Law and Justice Committee delegation visited Phuket to assess the broader impact of illegal business operations, nominee schemes and migrant labour issues on the island.

The committee, led by Pol Gen Boonchan Nuansai, held a meeting on Apr 2 at the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation offices in Phuket Town, bringing together Vice Governor Teeraphong Chuaychoo and senior officials from multiple agencies.

Discussions focused on the prevalence of illegal foreign-run businesses, the use of Thai nominees to bypass ownership restrictions, and the employment of illegal migrant workers. Officials reviewed current prevention and suppression efforts, as well as challenges limiting effective enforcement.

Tourist safety was also a key concern, with the committee and local authorities examining ways to strengthen security measures and maintain confidence

in Phuket as a safe destination.

Vice Governor Teeraphong told the meeting that Phuket Governor Nirat Pongsitthaworn has prioritised integrated cooperation among agencies, with an emphasis on improving coordination and data-sharing to tackle complex issues more effectively.

An official report noted that the meeting served as a platform to consolidate input from all sectors, with the aim of developing clearer strategies to combat illegal activities while enhancing public safety.

Phuket authorities reiterated their commitment to protecting the local economy and ensuring fair competition for Thai businesses, with further measures expected to be refined following the committee's findings.

Officials confirmed that enforcement against nominee-based operations will continue as part of a broader effort to curb illegal business practices and safeguard the island's long-term economic stability.

## Tour guide killed in boat fire

A TOUR GUIDE INITIALLY reported missing following a speedboat fire and explosion at Ao Makham on Monday (Apr 6) has been confirmed dead, authorities have reported.

The incident occurred at about 11am at Coco Pier in Wichit, where the tour boat \*Tequila\*, operated by Once Yachting, caught fire while undergoing engine repairs.

Officials from the Andaman Sea Traffic Control and Safety Center (CSCA) said the vessel was engulfed in flames following an apparent explosion during maintenance work. No tourists were on board at the time.

Emergency responders brought the blaze under control and towed the vessel away from the pier to prevent it spreading to nearby boats.

Six people were on board when the fire broke out. Five sustained injuries and were rushed to hospital, while one male tour guide was reported missing, police said.

Authorities later confirmed the missing man as Komphet Wanadee, 30, who died in the incident.

Others on board were named as Niwat Duangmani, 34; Chutidet Arischa, 27; Nattawut Poolkaew, 22; and Piyathida Pojin, 23.

Two of the injured men suffered serious burns, including one with injuries covering about 50% of his body. Others sustained moderate burns to the face and limbs.



Photo: PR Phuket

The injured were taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital, Dibuk Hospital and the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation Hospital for treatment.

Initial reports indicate the explosion occurred during engine repairs, but the exact cause remains under investigation.

Authorities also confirmed the boat's operating licence had expired on Apr 2, four days before the incident, although its passenger insurance remained valid until Apr 10.

Multiple agencies responded to the scene, including local disaster prevention officials, Wichit Municipality and rescue teams supported by fireboats.

Officials said a full investigation is underway to determine the cause of the fire and assess any regulatory breaches.

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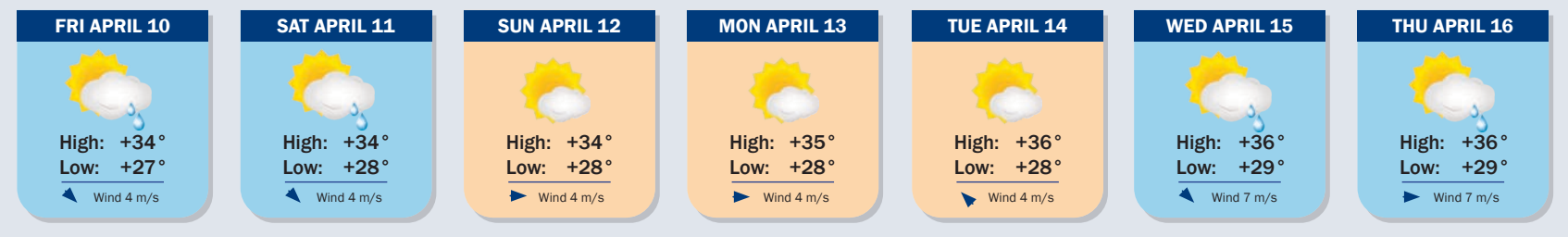
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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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## 'Mobile AI camera' nets overstay tourist

A FRENCH TOURIST has been arrested while walking along Bangla Rd in Patong after being identified by a mobile AI facial recognition camera for overstaying his visa by 42 days.

Tourist Police on patrol on Bangla Rd made the arrest on Mar 30.

Police confirmed the suspect, a 27-year-old French man (not named by police), was flagged by an AI-powered facial recognition system installed in a mobile patrol vehicle.

The system is linked to a database of foreign nationals with expired visas, allowing officers to detect overstayers in real time, Phuket Tourist Police explained.

Following the alert, officers moved in and apprehended the man.

The Frenchman has been charged with remaining in the Kingdom beyond the permitted period and was handed over to investigators at Patong Police Station for legal proceedings and deportation, Tourist Police confirmed.



Photo: Phuket Tourist Police

Tourist Police Division 2 Superintendent Pol Col Naraphon Wattanakornthavee said the use of AI and mobile facial recognition cameras represents a major upgrade in security operations, particularly in high-density tourist areas.

He said the technology enables officers to quickly and accurately screen individuals, enhancing enforcement efficiency while helping maintain safety and confidence among visitors to Phuket.

The case is being highlighted by authorities as a demonstration of how modern technology is being used to strengthen law enforcement capabilities in key tourist zones such as Bangla Rd.

The Phuket News

## Meth pills seized in air-cooler arrests

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Police have seized nearly 200,000 methamphetamine (ya bah) pills and arrested two juvenile couriers as part of an expanded operation targeting a drug network smuggling narcotics into Phuket hidden inside parcel deliveries.

At a press conference held at Phuket Provincial Police Headquarters last Saturday (Apr 4), Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum, Commander of Phuket Provincial Police, confirmed that a total of 197,800 ya bah pills had been seized in coordinated operations across Phuket City and Cherng Talay.

He was joined by senior officers including deputy commanders Pol Col Akanit Danpitaksat and Pol Col Kitipong Klaikaew, Phuket City Police Chief Pol Col Chatree Chukaew, Investigation Division chief Pol Col Ekalak Boonsangcharoen and Cherng Talay Police Chief Pol Col Ekkarat Plaiduang.

The crackdown follows earlier intelligence sharing



Photo: PR Phuket

between Phuket City Police and the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), after 19,892 ya bah pills were seized in Satun on Mar 30. The drugs in that case had also been concealed inside Aconatic brand evaporative air coolers and shipped via a private courier service.

Further investigation revealed a wider network using similar methods, with at least seven parcels sent from Bangkok to Phuket. Six were destined for areas under Cherng Talay and Phuket City Police jurisdictions.

On Apr 2, at about 7:30am, officers from multiple agencies – including Phuket City Police, Cherng Talay Police,

Narcotics Suppression Center Region 8 and ONCB Region 8 – launched a coordinated surveillance operation at parcel depots in Mueang Phuket and Thalang.

In Phuket City, four suspicious packages were tracked to a tattoo shop in Ratsada. Two parcels contained Venz brand Brezentry model coolers, while two others were disguised as boxes of milk.

When the delivery arrived, no one initially came forward to collect the items. Officers maintained surveillance until 12:53am on Apr 3, when two individuals arrived to inspect and retrieve the packages.

Police moved in and

## Woman killed in Pa Khlok crash

A 52-YEAR-OLD WOMAN was killed in a road accident in Pa Khlok on Mar 31, after a motorcycle and pickup truck collided on Baan Ao Por Rd.

Thalang Police were notified of the incident at 9:10am, shortly after the crash occurred in Moo 6, Pa Khlok.

Officers, led by Pol Lt Panya Chaiwichit, arrived at the scene to find the body of Thiparat Mingpicharn lying on the roadside. A black Honda motorcycle registered in Phuket was by the edge of the road, heavily damaged from the impact.

A black Toyota pickup truck, registered in Songkhla, was also at the scene with collision damage. The driver, identified



Photo: Thalang Police

as Adunan Maming, from Pattani, remained at the scene and identified himself to police.

A doctor from Thalang Hospital conducted a preliminary examination and confirmed that Ms Thiparat died as a result of injuries sustained in the crash. The time of death was recorded as 9am.

Thalang Police Superintendent Pol Col Nikorn Chuthong confirmed that further investigation is underway to determine the exact circumstances leading to the collision. Eakkapop Thongtub

## Fugitive Chinese fraud suspect arrested

A CHINESE NATIONAL wanted for fraud involving more than B5 million has been arrested by Phuket Immigration Police after allegedly fleeing to the island to evade prosecution.

The suspect, identified only as 'Mr Wang', 32, was apprehended at a condominium in Patong on Apr 1 following a request for cooperation from the Chinese Embassy in Thailand.

According to Immigration Division 6, Chinese authorities had issued an arrest warrant for Wang on charges of contract fraud. The warrant was issued by the Ministry of Public Security in Xinmin District, Shenyang City, Liaoning Province.

Investigators allege that Wang defrauded



Photo: Phuket Immigration

more than 30 victims by falsely claiming to have billiards equipment available for sale. He reportedly used fabricated delivery videos and false information to convince victims to sign contracts and transfer money. After receiving payments, he failed to deliver the goods, cut off contact and fled overseas.

Total damages are estimated at more than B5 million.

Phuket Immigration Police launched an investigation after receiving the request via the Royal Thai Police's Foreign

Affairs Division. Officers traced Mr Wang to a condo in Patong. The arrest team located Wang outside the building. After identifying themselves, officers questioned Wang, who admitted his identity.

Authorities confirmed that Wang had entered Thailand on a tourist visa that was still valid at the time of his arrest. However, Immigration Division 6 approved the revocation of his permission to stay in the Kingdom on the grounds that he was the subject of a foreign arrest warrant.

Wang was taken to Phuket Immigration Office, where he was formally notified of the revocation order and detained for further legal proceedings and deportation.

The Phuket News

# Health Minister opens Vachira ‘Alive’

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Public Health Minister Phatthana Phromphat was in Phuket on Mar 30 to launch the ‘Alive by Vachira-Phuket’ Wellness Center, which is aimed at positioning preventive and holistic care at the forefront of healthcare in Phuket.

The new centre, located on the 10th floor of the Emergency and Heart Centre building at Vachira Phuket Hospital, was officially opened in a ceremony attended by senior health officials, including Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam and hospital director Weerasak Lorthongkam.

The initiative marks a shift towards what officials describe as a “new dimension” of healthcare, focusing on prevention before illness through integrated physical, mental and lifestyle-based approaches, said an official report of the event.

“This centre reflects our commitment to modern healthcare that prioritises prevention and long-term wellbeing,” Mr Phatthana said.

Developed under the concept ‘Alive by VachiraPhuket’, the centre combines clinical medical standards with lifestyle-based interventions aimed at reducing the risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).



Photo: PR Phuket

Services include comprehensive health screenings, anti-ageing programmes, cellular health assessments, weight management, and personalised long-term care plans, all supported by specialist medical teams.

The approach places strong emphasis on behavioural changes such as balanced nutrition, regular exercise and stress management – key drivers behind chronic illnesses.

Officials said the centre also aligns with Phuket’s growing reputation as a wellness tourism destination, catering to both residents and international visitors

seeking preventative healthcare services.

Hospital administrators expect the facility to play a key role in improving quality of life while reducing long-term healthcare costs.

### THALANG BOOST

Later the same day, Mr Phatthana and his delegation travelled to Thalang Hospital to inspect operations and meet staff.

Welcomed by acting director Sakchai Na Wang-ang, the minister received a briefing on hospital performance before touring key departments, includ-

ing the Emergency Room, male general ward and dialysis unit.

The minister also visited patients, offering encouragement and presenting gifts, before inspecting infrastructure upgrades such as a central laundry facility currently being expanded into a three-storey building under a budget exceeding B100 million, designed to meet ‘Green and Clean’ standards.

Discussions were also held on plans to elevate Thalang Hospital to an ‘A-Plus’ level medical centre, aimed at enhancing services for both local residents and tourists.

Mr Phatthana concluded his visit by commending village health volunteers for their role in supporting community healthcare, particularly during times of crisis, describing their contributions as vital to Thailand’s public health system.

### OIL IMPACT

Before coming to Phuket, Public Health Minister Phatthana Phromphat announced urgent measures to ease the impact of rising oil prices, expanding telemedicine services, safeguarding emergency fuel supplies and ensuring adequate stocks of medicines nationwide.

The Ministry of Public Health said more than 1.37 million

patients accessed treatment via telemedicine between October 2025 and Mar 27, 2026, helping save an estimated B274.8mn in travel costs. The programme has been supported by medicine delivery services, with 3.6mn prescriptions distributed via Health Rider and postal systems since January 2024.

Authorities are also co-ordinating with the Ministry of Energy to secure fuel for ambulances and medical vehicles, with moderate impacts reported in 18 provinces but services continuing as normal, Mr Phatthana said.

Meanwhile, a central ‘War Room’ has been established to monitor medicine and medical supply levels, with current reserves deemed sufficient for between three and 12 months. A nationwide dashboard system is being used to track stock levels, while the Government Pharmaceutical Organization stands ready to procure supplies if shortages arise, Mr Phatthana explained.

In addition, he added, the Department of Mental Health has urged the public to manage stress linked to economic pressures, recommending relaxation techniques, planning and seeking support, with a 24-hour hotline available on 1323.

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# Culture Minister lauds Biennale B28bn

The Phuket News  
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Culture Minister Sabida Thaiseth says the Thailand Biennale in Phuket drew more than 2.4 million visitors and generated B28.97 billion in economic activity, as preparations began to hand over hosting duties to Rayong for 2027.

The minister hailed the event as a “global art phenomenon” that has reshaped Phuket’s image, attracting 2,413,980 visitors and delivering a major boost to the local economy through both domestic and international tourism.

However, exactly how the number of visitors who came to Phuket expressly for the Biennale was derived from the total number of visitors to Phuket since the art expo began was not explained.

Ms Sabida noted that the biennale has reinforced Thailand’s ambition to become a world-class art and cultural destination, with revenue generated from overnight stays, day trips and wider tourism spending across the island.



Visitors enjoy one of the Thailand Biennale art exhibits in Phuket. Photo: Thailand Biennale

International recognition has also followed, with coverage by *The New York Times* highlighting Phuket’s emergence as a hub for contemporary art and culture, Ms Sabida said, adding that such recognition reflects the growing strength of Thailand’s “soft power” and cultural diplomacy on the global stage.

“Through close collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and Phuket

Province, the concept of ‘Art Transforms the City’ has brought Phuket to the world stage,” she said. “The Thailand Biennale has united Thai and international artists to create works that tell the stories of local communities, culture and identity through contemporary art accessible to a wide audience.”

She added that beyond enhancing Phuket’s reputation as an international art

city, the event has delivered tangible economic benefits at grassroots level, generating income for communities, entrepreneurs and related businesses.

Ms Sabida is scheduled to visit Phuket in early April to review the event’s success, view exhibitions and meet artists, organisers and partners, said an official report of Ms Sabida’s comments.

The visit will also be used to gather feedback

aimed at strengthening and sustaining future editions, the report added.

With the biennale entering its final weeks, Ms Sabida urged the public and tourists to experience the exhibitions before they conclude at the end of April.

Following Phuket’s hosting, the Ministry of Culture is preparing to pass the baton to Rayong Province for the Thailand Biennale 2027, continuing efforts to expand contemporary art into regional areas and further develop the national cultural economy.

“The success of this Thailand Biennale demonstrates that art and culture can be a powerful driver of the economy, generating income and elevating Thailand’s image in a concrete way,” Ms Sabida said. “The Ministry will continue to promote Thailand’s soft power across all dimensions.”

Meanwhile, officials and artists in Phuket have begun formal knowledge-sharing with their counterparts from Rayong as part of preparations for the 2027 event.

A delegation led by Sathit Pitutecha, alongside Rayong provincial officials, visited exhibition sites and met organisers to study event management and exchange experiences.

The group toured key venues including Sukho Pavilion and other exhibition spaces, and travelled across Phuket to observe installations featured in the Thailand Biennale 2025.

Local representatives, including members of the Phuket Arts Association, including its president Anchalee Vanich Thepabutr, who has been instrumental in organising the Biennale being held in Phuket, and Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob and other provincial administration, welcomed the delegation and took part in discussions on organising large-scale international art events.

Officials said the visit marks an important step in building readiness and strengthening Rayong’s capacity to host the Thailand Biennale in 2027, noted the official report of the Rayong delegation’s visit.

## Tourist arrivals fall by 30%

THE TOURISM INDUSTRY is calling for urgent support measures after visitor numbers fell by about 30% in the first month following the start of the Middle East war, with operators warning of continued pressure into the second and third quarters.

Bhummikitti Raktaengam, vice-chairman of the Tourism Industry Council of Thailand (TICT), said the conflict has made many travellers reluctant to fly, particularly from the Middle East, while the Ramadan period, which ended on Mar 21, also dampened outbound travel. European arrivals were also affected, bringing the overall decline to roughly 30%.

He said Thailand had relied heavily on key markets including China, the Middle East and Australia, but the Middle Eastern segment is unlikely to return soon.

At the same time, rising fuel prices have pushed up airfares and operating costs, further weighing on demand.

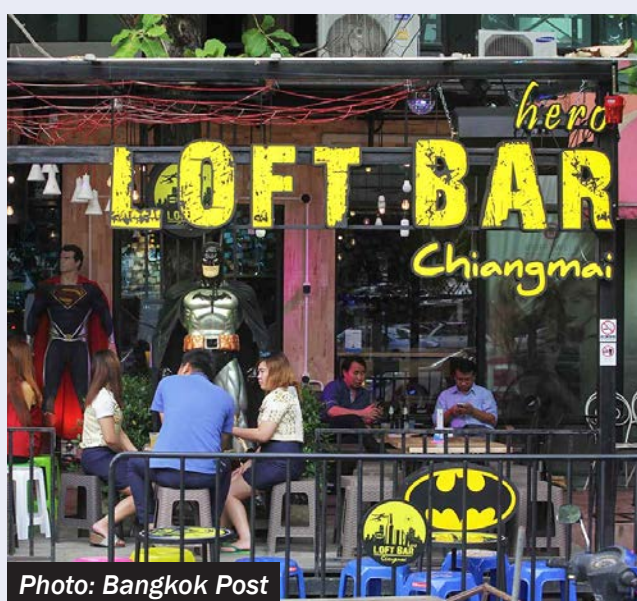


Photo: Bangkok Post

Despite the slowdown, domestic travel during Songkran is expected to remain a crucial buffer.

Mr Bhummikitti urged the government to stabilise fuel prices and boost travel sentiment to encourage Thais to travel domestically.

“Many people are hesitant because expenses have risen sharply. Confidence-building measures would help stimulate movement and spending,” he said, adding that tourism plays a key role in distributing

income across the economy. The private sector has proposed relief measures, including asking Airports of Thailand to delay new airport fees and seeking support such as a freeze on electricity tariffs.

Operators are also tightening costs while trying to maintain employment, he said, noting that short-haul markets will be critical in the coming months, though higher oil prices remain a risk.

Bangkok Post

## Phi Phi boat fares rise

MARINE OPERATORS in Phuket have agreed to increase fares and tour prices by up to B200 per person on routes between Phuket and Koh Phi Phi, with the new pricing taking effect last Sunday (Apr 5).

The adjustment follows a provincial-level meeting on marine safety and tourism standards chaired by Phuket Governor Nirat Pongsitthaworn at Phuket Provincial Hall last week.

The meeting brought together representatives from the Phuket Regional Office of the Marine Department, the Phuket Provincial Commerce Office, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket office, and private tour boat operators to address rising operational costs and safety concerns across the island’s marine tourism sector.

Officials confirmed the fare increase was not mandated by authorities, but rather a collective agreement among operators who said higher prices were needed to offset surging fuel costs and maintain safety standards.



Photo: Marine Dept Region 5 / file

Governor Nirat urged operators not to compete solely on price, stressing the importance of quality and safety in strengthening Phuket’s tourism image.

Operators highlighted mounting financial pressure, particularly from continued fuel price increases, warning that without fare adjustments, spending on essential boat maintenance could be compromised, posing potential safety risks.

In response, officials from the Phuket Marine Office said the meeting was intended to encourage collaboration and improvements in service standards and safety practices, not to impose pricing changes.

The meeting concluded with five key measures

to enhance marine safety: improved management planning and staff readiness, stricter inspections of vessels and piers, tighter legal compliance checks, better public safety communication such as weather alerts, and strengthened water rescue preparedness.

Authorities also outlined a zoning system dividing Phuket’s marine areas into seven zones, each staffed by officers overseeing more than 37 piers to ensure consistent enforcement and rapid response.

Officials said the fare increase reflects a broader shift towards a “quality over price” model aimed at sustaining long-term marine tourism.

The Phuket News

# PM pledges price cuts in response to energy crisis

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The government will cut fuel and electricity prices through price restructuring, though supplies may remain costly and occasionally tight, Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said late Monday (Apr 6).

Anutin made the statement after the first meeting of his newly appointed Cabinet, which attended a swearing-in ceremony before Their Majesties the King and Queen earlier in the evening.

"The government will adjust fuel and electricity price structures to bring costs down, and there will be other measures to help the people," the prime minister said.

"Fuel and related products may remain expensive and insufficient. The government will try its best to cushion the impact," Anutin said.

The prime minister said the government will soon implement other relief measures, including a co-payment scheme, discounted consumer goods and soft loans for farmers, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the industrial sector.

He also promised to cut government spending to support the public during the crisis.



PM Anutin Charnvirakul announces his government's plan at Government House on Monday (Apr 6). Photo: Bangkok Post

### WORK-FROM-HOME

The PM also advised the private sector to adopt work-from-home measures and support nationwide energy-saving efforts to weather the crisis.

Anutin said the Cabinet had already approved work-from-home arrangements for government agencies, and other energy-saving measures. He stressed that strict implementation was now needed.

He urged businesses and the public to follow suit, through work-from-home arrangements, reduced use of private vehicles, increased use of public transport and carpooling, and more electricity-saving efforts.

He also said that additional measures may be introduced as necessary, while stressing that the government was committed to alleviating the impact on the people.

"We are facing a global crisis and

we will get through it. I would like the people to cooperate," he said, attributing the crisis to the ongoing war in the Middle East.

The war has damaged petroleum and chemical production facilities in the region, and repairs could take time after the end of the war, Anutin explained.

"The shortfall in fuel and gas supplies in the Middle East has made it more difficult to source them elsewhere. The government chooses to announce this fact so that the people will understand and are ready to adjust and cope with the situation," Anutin said.

Anutin said that about half of Thailand's oil imports normally come from the Middle East, and the war in the region has driven up prices of energy, fertiliser and plastic pellets. The situation is having a global impact, he added.

## Human remains found aboard Mayuree Naree

### BANGKOK

HUMAN REMAINS have been found aboard a cargo ship struck by Iran while transiting the Strait of Hormuz last month, the vessel's owner said last Friday (Apr 3), after three crew members were reported missing following the attack.

US-Israeli strikes on Iran late February prompted Tehran to respond by effectively closing the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial artery for global oil supplies.

The Thai-flagged *Mayuree Naree* was struck in March while travelling through the strait after departing Khalifa port in the United Arab Emirates.

"Certain human remains were found within the affected area of the vessel," a statement from transport company Precious Shipping said, adding it could not yet confirm the identities or the number of individuals.



The *Mayuree Naree*. Photo: AFP

Twenty Thai crew members returned home in mid-March, while three of their colleagues were missing and presumed trapped in the damaged engine compartment.

A search was carried out under "challenging conditions" as the vessel's engine room had been flooded and damaged by fire, the company said.

Thailand's foreign ministry said it was "saddened" by the development and that families of the missing crew had been informed.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said in March they had struck the *Mayuree Naree*, as well as a Liberia-flagged vessel, in the strait because the ships had ignored "warnings". AFP

## Dispensaries given three-year timeframe

### BANGKOK

THE MINISTRY OF Public Health has begun implementing a full transition to cannabis use for medicinal purposes, allowing dispensaries a three-year timeframe to convert into medical clinics in order to continue operating.

Public Health Minister Pattana Promphat said on Apr 2 that the ministry is ready to enforce the government's policy permitting cannabis use solely for medical purposes.

Regulations will require cannabis shops to transition into medical clinics under the Medical Facilities Act, which governs how clinics operate, he said.

The move aims to ensure access to cannabis for medical treatment under the supervision of authorised personnel, including doctors, Thai traditional medicine practitioners and certified staff who have completed relevant training courses.



Photo: Bangkok Post

There are about 11,000 registered cannabis shops nationwide, with their permits set to expire over the next three years, Mr Pattana explained, adding that around 40% of permits expire each year.

This is expected to gradually phase out existing cannabis dispensaries unless they adapt their operations to function as medical clinics, he said.

"We cannot say exactly how many will convert into clinics, but we can say that we have entered

the full phase of cannabis being used for medicinal purposes only," Mr Pattana said in a statement shared with the media.

Mr Pattana added that the ministry is willing to work with private companies on the development of the cannabis industry.

He noted there is strong demand for premium unprocessed cannabis, or raw cannabis flowers, which can be used for further extraction or processing.

Bangkok Post

malaysia airlines

TIME FOR MALAYSIA AIRLINES

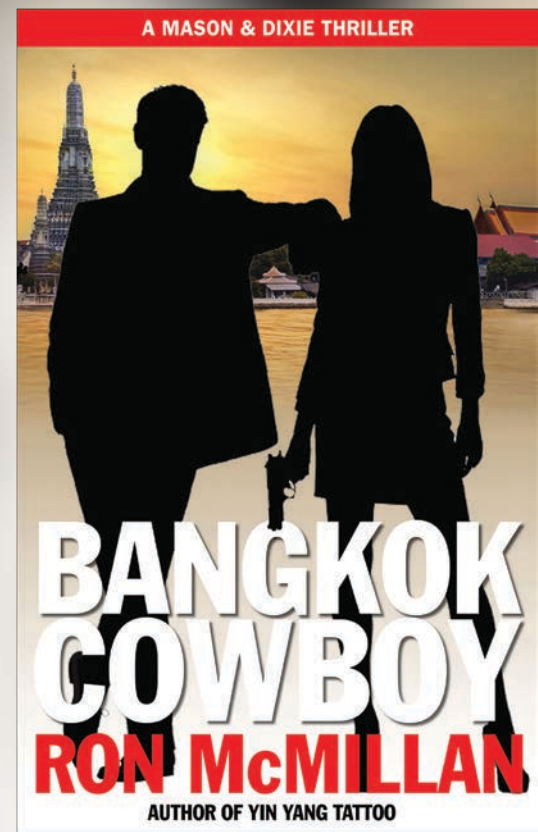
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# So you want to write a book...



## ALL ABOUT BOOKS

Ron McMillan

They say everyone has a book in them, and to add perspective to the claim, consider this: on the Amazon platform alone, so-called independent authors account for almost 4,000 new self-published books every day.

Note the term ‘independent author’, an industry catch-all for those who use self-publishing to see their work appear in print or as an eBook download.

When I first set out to be an author 30 years ago, there were no eBooks. The only way into print was by navigating near-impregnable barriers set up by industry sentinels protecting publishers from being overrun by hordes of wannabes like me.

Back then, a small number of publishers listed in the hallowed *Writer’s and Artist’s Yearbook* accepted printed

pitches from unknowns. Postal approaches were typically limited to an introductory letter, a one-page summary and a short extract from the manuscript.

Publishers’ mailboxes groaned under the weight of A4 envelopes that landed on the desks of lowly-paid interns. There, painstakingly crafted letters and summaries and sample chapters were mostly consigned to obscurity on the slush pile.

Other publishers made access even more difficult by dealing only with literary agents. This turned agents into gatekeepers tasked with filtering out dross unworthy of even interns’ attention.

In the late 2000s, as an editor for a vanity publisher, I suffered far too many manuscripts from people convinced they had a book in them. Vanity publishers exist to publish the unpublishable as a means of generating income from the gullible. My shameful task was to fillet and polish manuscripts until they approached a state worthy of publication that very few ever achieved.

An exception was by an Irish alcoholic who attended a remote temple in Thailand, where patients (or victims?) were treated with daily infusions of herbal concoctions that caused them to vomit uncontrollably. It has since been heavily revised and re-published as *Dead Drunk*, by Paul Garrigan – who turned out to be that rarity: someone who actually did have a book in him.

### Critical scrutiny

Almost overnight in 2008, Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) made it possible for anyone to become an independent author. Not so long after that new dawn, in 2013 I self-published *Bangkok Cowboy*, a crime novel a little ahead of the LGBTQ-friendly curve, featuring as it did an imposing transgender female who was half of the Mason & Dixie private eye duo.

I found myself in a world where only one person could influence *Bangkok Cowboy’s* success: me. I polished the manuscript to within an inch of its life and spent a mind-numbing amount of time on social media generating awareness of an unknown book by an author nobody had ever heard of. Most self-published titles sell 100 copies or fewer, which suggests *Bangkok Cowboy* out-

performed the market, selling over 6,000 downloads.

Since then, KDP has only made self-publishing easier. It remains a tiresome process of box-ticking taken on by an ever-growing number of aspiring authors, the ones who self-publish 4,000 new books every day.

One downside to all this is how the absence of critical scrutiny at literary agencies or publishers means enforcement of quality standards is virtually non-existent.

Yet while the majority of self-published works are at best weak, a small minority of independent authors succeed beyond most writers’ dreams. E.L. James, she of *Fifty Shades* fame, went on to sell 100 million books. Crime writer JM Dalgliesh sold more than 2mn self-published books before being signed up by mainstream publishers. And look out for American author, the late Scott Pratt, whose ‘independently-authored’ thrillers featuring Tennessee lawyer Joe Dillard read like John Grisham meets Jack Reacher, and have sold more than 7mn copies.

If you are really determined, the only option is to write the book, take obsessive heed of online guides on how to edit and proof-read the manuscript, and resist using a friend’s cover design that looks like it was cut from a breakfast cereal box.

Perhaps then you can bask in unexpected attention from movie insiders who lavish praise on your work and only request modest sums of money to prepare scripts and storyboards for producers to take it to the big screen. Sadly, news outlets nowadays are peppered with tales of new authors being separated from their savings in this way by scammers.

Writer, beware.

Just don’t, whatever you do, give up on those dreams.

*Ron McMillan’s first two books were released in the UK by Sandstone Press, and he has since taken four new books to market via the self-publishing route. All six titles remain available on Amazon. The second in his Call Me Rab crime series set in the 1990s and featuring Scotland’s only Sikh police detective is due out soon, and a third Bangkok-set Mason & Dixie crime thriller will be released later this year.*

# A delightful dining aura at NORA

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

The range of options to indulge one's taste buds at beach side venues in Phuket has increased considerably over recent years, with a dramatic surge in new restaurants and beach clubs emerging as the island's popularity continues to expand.

The Bang Tao area in particular has seen a sizeable uptick with a number of new venues popping up, each offering its own unique take on the beach side dining experience. One such venue that undoubtedly delivers on location, ambience and the quality of its culinary offerings is NORA Beach Club.

Nestled beachside behind the Amora Beach Resort, NORA Beach Club immediately welcomes you with a warm and stylish vibe, including a spacious outside dining area with sea views and a pristine interior restaurant offering diners the best of both worlds. We opt for the latter and, with expectant hungry stomachs, are quick to assess the merits of the extensive and varied menu.

For starters we select Gambas al Ajillo, Andaman prawns in homemade chili garlic butter. Having tasted numerous truly fine tapas over the years, our standards are high so we are delighted when we quickly realise this offering is genuinely on a par with some of the best we have ever enjoyed.



We also select the Thai Board, a smorgasbord of delights incorporating chicken satay, goong sarong, pla salmon, chicken wings and shrimp spring rolls. This dish truly shines. The range of flavours complement one another perfectly and provide an exciting and delicious tasting journey. A special mention must go to the homemade curry mayonnaise which is absolutely fantastic!

**Anticipation**

With our taste buds suitably warmed up we then eagerly wait in anticipation of our main courses: Risotto Lobster and an Australian Black Angus Ribeye.



Photos: NORA Beach Club

Both dishes deliver in impressive style. The Risotto of carnaroli rice, stracciatella, balsamic reduction, parmigiano and luscious lobster tail is divine. The rice is cooked perfectly, the flavours pop and, while some risottos can be stodgy and heavy, it is surprisingly light and very moreish.


The steak is sliced and cooked to melt in your mouth perfection, accompanied by a range of delicious fresh vegetables and homemade hand-cut fries. An especially nice touch is the provision of multiple sauces on the side, allowing the diner to experience a choice of chimichurri, bearnaise or peppercorn as opposed to being restricted

to just one, which is often the case. While we were delighted with our selection, it must be said it was not an easy decision as we were literally spoilt for choice, with an array of other mouth-watering options on the menu such as the Grilled Picanha Steak with Chimichurri, the Pulpo a Feira, the Lamb Shank, a plethora of Thai dishes and others all vying for our attention. Perhaps that justifies a return visit soon!

It is easy to see how NORA Beach Club's executive chef Pui boasts over 30 years of five-star culinary experience as all the dishes we savour are classy and are clearly cooked with passion. All staff are warm and welcoming, attentive and helpful, while the light decor and soothing background music make for a very relaxing vibe. Furthermore, there is the option to venture out to the terrace to take in the spectacular beach and sea views while enjoying a post-dining drink, or to slink into a sun lounger to snooze off the culinary delights just consumed.

In an increasingly competitive space NORA Beach Club offers a truly memorable dining experience in a relaxed environment at extremely reasonable prices. Recommended and one we will be returning to soon.


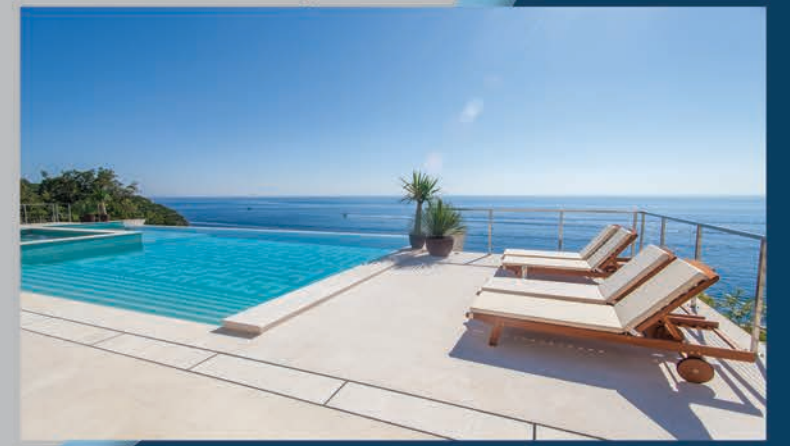

*NORA Beach Club*  
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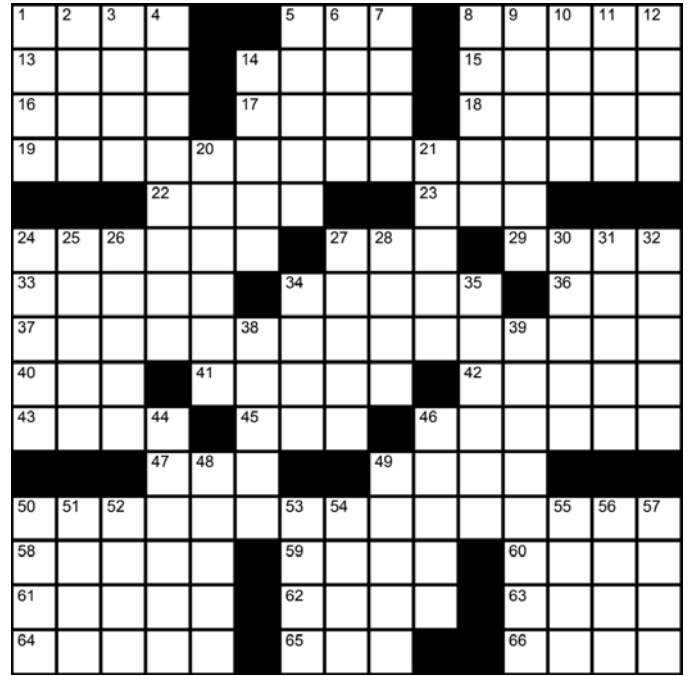
# POP QUIZ

- Whose music featured in the film *A Clockwork Orange*?
- The pica pica is what common bird?
- How many total islands does Hawaii have?
- What did Mege-Mouries invent in 1870, winning a Napoleon prize?
- What does 'ludo' mean?

Answers below, centre

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
- Embargoes
  - Paw
  - Nautical pole
  - On the safe side
  - Vice president under Jefferson
  - 747, e.g.
  - High time?
  - Crowning point
  - Hockey sites
  - Chopper cleaner
  - Offensive
  - Jump into a pool?
  - Drools over
  - Simpleton
  - Handle
  - Drupelets
  - Drive
  - Mud
  - Media snapper
  - Aquatic shocker
  - Informatory
  - Billiards move
  - "Nerts!"
  - Freelancer's enc.
  - Hip hop's Souljah
  - Cousin of an ostrich
  - Delighted
  - Blue Sky rep
  - Billy and namesakes
  - Clinched
  - Calculus calculation
  - Moorehead of "Bewitched"
  - Rocker Glenn
  - Polaroid
  - Circumspect
  - Disobeyed a zoo sign?
  - Priestly title
  - "A Doll's House" playwright
  - Dressed like Superman
  - Earthy pigment
  - "Twelfth Night" role
  - Charm
  - Light on one's feet
  - Old pay-to-graze arrangement
  - "All That Jazz" director
  - Schlepper
  - Hawkeye's home
  - Veneer
  - \_\_\_ Camp
  - Comics publisher
  - Penn's partner
  - Down at the heels
  - Chaotic
  - Knight mare?
  - Omani moolah
  - Sharpness
  - Top drawer
  - Bickering
  - One to grow on?
  - River to Donegal Bay
  - \_\_\_ East
  - Sticky fixer
- Down**
- Boston or Chicago, e.g.
  - Frostbite treater
  - Brightly colored
  - Subjective
  - Fief
  - General assembly?
  - Wine sediment
  - Jag
  - Statue base
  - Eastern royal
  - Signs, as a contract
  - Makeup, e.g.
  - Makes an illegal move on the mound
  - Film genre



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

## SUDOKU

Easy

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

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

- Ludwig van Beethoven; 2) Magpie; 3) 137; 4) Margarine; 5) 1 Play

### Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

**2**

out of 4 teenage girls feel depressed after looking at a fashion magazine for only 3 minutes, according to one study.

**40**

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

**750,000**

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

**220 million**

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

**318 billion**

US dollars is how much it would cost approximately per year to eliminate extreme poverty worldwide, based on reports from analysing data from 2025.

Source: *Uberfacts*

## ISLAND VIEW



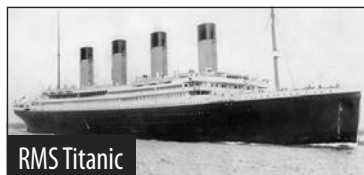
Sunset flotilla. Photo by Chris Pahlman

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to [editor3@classactmedia.co.th](mailto:editor3@classactmedia.co.th)

## This week in history

**Apr 10, 1912**

The British passenger liner RMS *Titanic* sets sail from Southampton, UK, on her maiden and only voyage.



**Apr 12, 1204**

The Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade breach the walls of Constantinople and enter the city, which they completely occupy the following day.

**Apr 11, 1868**

Former shōgun Tokugawa Yoshinobu surrenders Edo Castle to Imperial forces, marking the end of the Tokugawa shogunate.

**Apr 13, 1960**

The United States launches Transit 1-B, the world's first satellite navigation system.

**Apr 14, 1816**

Bussa, a slave in British-ruled Barbados, leads a slave rebellion, for which he is remembered as the country's first national hero.

**Apr 15, 1912**

The RMS *Titanic* sinks in the

North Atlantic at 2:20am, two hours and forty minutes after hitting an iceberg. Only 710 of 2,224 passengers and crew on board survive.

**Apr 16, 1947**

Bernard Baruch first applies the term "Cold War" to describe the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Source: *Wikipedia*

# Trades & Services

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**WINDOW ON PHUKET**

The map of PHUKET Карта Пхукета 普吉岛 地圖  
English 中文 Русский

Where to eat in PHUKET

LIVE 89.5 Phuket NEWS TV

Contact: gm@classactmedia.co.th

**MON 13 APR**



**Songkran Waterverse at Angsana Laguna Phuket**

There is a moment each April when all of Thailand pauses, exhales and begins again. This year, Angsana Laguna Phuket invites you to celebrate the Thai New Year with a thoughtfully curated program that honours centuries-old traditions before transforming into a vibrant poolside festival. Experience the Songkran Waterverse: a fusion of two worlds. Begin with the gentle rhythm of a long drum parade and the "One and Only" Buddha Image Lagoon Procession across our tranquil waters. As the day progresses, the atmosphere shifts to exhilarating joy with a poolside foam party, aqua challenges, and an authentic Thai Food Street. Celebrate the spirit of renewal with us: - Traditional Long Drum & Thai Dance Parade - Sacred Buddha Image Lagoon Procession - Buddha Water Blessing & Sand Pagoda Building - Water Fight & Foam Party at the main pool - Thai Food Street featuring local specialties Monday, 13 April 2026 09:00 - 15:00 hrs. At Poolside, Angsana Laguna Phuket Capacity is limited to 100 spots. Secure your place in this immersive celebration of renewal and prosperity. [www.angsana.com/thailand/laguna-phuket/songkran-festival-in-phuket](http://www.angsana.com/thailand/laguna-phuket/songkran-festival-in-phuket)

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](http://www.facebook.com/RCoPB)

**SAT 25 APR**



**ANZAC Dawn Service**

Hosted and presented by the Phuket Veterans, all welcome. Please arrive by 5am. Meeting point - Kamala beach, near Kamala police station. ANZAC breakfast will be held at the Devils Bar Kamala after the service. More info - [facebook.com/phuketveterans](http://facebook.com/phuketveterans)

**TUE 14 APR**



**Rotary Club of Patong Beach**

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# More bouts for ONE Samurai 1

## MMA

Bangkok Post

ONE Championship has added four more bouts to its increasingly stacked ONE Samurai 1 card, with atomweight Muay Thai champion Nadaka Yoshinari set to defend his belt against Songchainoi at Ariake Arena in Tokyo on Apr 29.

The inaugural event for the new monthly Japan-based series was further fleshed out at a press conference in Tokyo on Mar 30.

CEO Chatri Sityodtong also confirmed Hiromi Wajima will face Ricardo Bravo in featherweight kickboxing, Toki Tamaru will meet Toma Kuroda in an atomweight kickboxing bout, and Shimon Yoshinari will take on Malaysian teen star Johan Ghazali in flyweight Muay Thai.

The card now stands at 12 bouts – with more to come.

“We have a few more bouts to announce today, but also in the coming weeks as we lead up,”



Nadaka Yoshinari (left) will defend his ONE Championship atomweight Muay Thai title against Songchainoi at ONE Samurai 1 on Apr 29. Photos: Bangkok Post

Chatri said.

The title fight between Nadaka and Songchainoi gives the card a fourth world championship bout and adds another layer of Japanese interest to an event that is already shaping up as one of ONE's most ambitious in the country for years.

Rodtang Jitmuangnon will face Takeru Segawa for the interim flyweight kickboxing title in the main event, Jonathan Haggerty is set to defend his bantamweight kickboxing belt

against Yuki Yoza, and Yuya Wakamatsu will put his flyweight MMA title on the line against Avazbek Kholmirzaev.

Now Nadaka returns as one of the card's central figures.

Nadaka beat Songchainoi outside ONE in 2023 by third-round TKO, but the Thai has built himself into a very different proposition since then.

He went on an eight-fight run across ONE Friday Fights and ONE Fight

Night, earning a full-time contract in the process and putting himself on course for what many assumed would be a first crack at inaugural atomweight Muay Thai gold.

Instead, a surprise decision loss to Numsurin appeared to derail those plans. Nadaka then beat Numsurin by decision at ONE 173 in November to claim the title, while Songchainoi rebounded with a hard-fought win over Myanmar's Salai Htan Khee Shein.

## STATEMENT CARD

Songchainoi had been due to face Numsurin again earlier this month before being pulled from that bout without explanation and replaced by Pet Suanluang-grodyok. Numsurin went on to lose.

It now appears the promotion had already decided to give Songchainoi the title shot in Tokyo.

For the Thai challenger, the rematch carries obvious significance.

“I will treat him as a new opponent entirely,” Songchainoi said. “This is the biggest fight of my life and I will do it to the best of my ability.”

Nadaka, meanwhile, said he hopes the event will give Japanese fans a chance to see the highest level of Muay Thai amid the kickboxing-heavy card around it.

“I hope to show something different, a much faster tempo, and how great and beautiful Muay Thai is,” he said.

The announcements also continued ONE's clear effort to pack the event with

Japanese names and styles across multiple disciplines.

Wajima, a former K-1 champion, returns after losing to Nabil Anane in his promotional debut at ONE 173 last November. Tamaru, the former RISE champion, also joins the bill, with Chatri hinting that ONE Samurai could increasingly draw on talent from across Japan's domestic scene.

“ONE has partnered with Japan's greatest martial arts promotions, bringing the very best Japanese athletes across MMA, Muay Thai, kickboxing and submission grappling,” he said.

“We are very fortunate and blessed to have partners like RISE, like KNOCK OUT, Shootboxing, Pancrase, Shooto, and many other organisations across Japan.”

With four world title fights now confirmed, plus a growing list of domestic stars and crossover names from Japan's wider combat sports scene, ONE Samurai 1 is no longer just the launch of a new monthly series.

It is starting to look like a statement card.

## Smyth wins in Japan, Thai ace Pavit tied for second

## GOLF

TRAVIS SMYTH'S DREAM RUN continued last Sunday (Apr 5) when he made an eagle putt on the par-five 18<sup>th</sup> to sensationally win the International Series Japan by one shot.

In a riveting finish, he drained a 20-foot to narrowly avoid a playoff with Thailand's Pavit Tangkamolprasert and Ryosuke Kinoshita from Japan at Caledonian Golf Club, near Tokyo.

The Australian's brilliant final putt saw him shoot a seven-under-par 64 to move to 15-under 269, with Pavit and Kinoshita both in the clubhouse on 14-under.

Pavit and Kinoshita had earlier turned the tournament on its head by shooting scintillating rounds of 62 and 63 respectively to come through from much further back. The former was in the 10<sup>th</sup> from last group and Kinoshita the sixth.

The US\$2million (B65mn) event is the opening event of the season on The International Series, and it is Smyth's first success on the Series – the upper-tier level of events on the Asian Tour that provide a pathway to the LIV Golf League, via The International Series Rankings.

It is also his second victory on the Asian Tour, having won the Yeangder



Travis Smyth. Photo: Asian Tour

TPC in 2022, and comes during a remarkable run of form.

He claimed the ISPS Handa Japan-Australasia Championship last month which put him on course to win the Challenger PGA Tour of Australasia Order of Merit for the 2025/26 season.

The 31-year-old also finished third and fifth in the first two events of the season on the Asian Tour and now leads the Order of Merit, as well as The International Series Rankings.

Pavit's 62 was the lowest of the week and consisted of 10 birdies, and just the one dropped shot. His bogey came on the third, after which he burst into life making seven birdies in the next eight.

“Today I played pretty much like perfect golf. I drove the ball very well; I hit my irons very good and I was putting well. So, everything was like on momentum. I sunk putts and had like a streak on the first nine, so I gained confidence with my putting,” he said.

Asian Tour

## London plans mega 100,000-runner marathon

## MARATHON

THE LONDON MARATHON could be split across two days next year to reportedly allow up to 100,000 runners to participate and raise millions more for charity.

A world record 1.1 million people applied via a ballot to take part in the 2026 London marathon, taking place on Apr 26, nearly doubling the number of applications from two years ago.

The 2025 event set a world record for number of finishers in a single marathon at 56,640 and raised £87.3 million (B3.7 billion) for a diverse range of charities.

“The TCS London Marathon is the world's most popular marathon, and we are continually exploring innovative ways to enable more people to take part, while delivering positive benefits for London,” organisers said in a statement to AFP.

“Together with our partners and stakeholders, we are looking at the intention for the 2027 TCS



Over 1 million people have applied to take part in the 2026 London Marathon. Photo: AFP

London Marathon to take place across two days.

“No approval has been given at this stage.”

The Guardian reported that the elite men's and women's races would also be staged on separate days if that plan came to fruition with hopes an expanded event could raise £130mn for good causes.

A spokesperson for the Mayor of London, Sadiq Kahn, said: “London is the sporting capital of the world and the Mayor looks forward to working with London Marathon partners to consider if it might be possible to host an event that will run across two days next year.”

AFP

# Late joy for War Elephants

## FOOTBALL

Bangkok Post

As the clock ticked towards stoppage time and Thailand's Asian Cup hopes hung by a thread, Manuel Tom Bihr climbed highest in the 89<sup>th</sup> minute to meet Theerathon Bunmathan's corner with a thumping header, securing a dramatic 2-1 win over Turkmenistan at Bangkok's Rajamangala National Stadium on Mar 31.

The goal not only sparked jubilation among the 40,000-strong home crowd but also ensured Thailand leapfrogged their opponents to claim top spot in Group D, booking their place at the AFC Asian Cup finals in Saudi Arabia, in 2027.

For Turkmenistan, who had beaten the War Elephants 3-1 in Ashgabat and needed only a draw to progress, the late blow was devastating. For Thailand, it was redemption – a hard-fought triumph that reaffirmed their resilience and kept alive hopes of a deeper run on Asia's grandest stage.

Thailand had entered the contest knowing only victory would suffice.

For long spells, the hosts looked destined to fall short, particularly after Teymur Charyyev's thunderous equaliser on the hour cancelled out Suphanan Bureerat's early strike. However, Bihr's late intervention ensured Anthony Hudson's side will join Asia's elite once more.



Manuel Tom Bihr (right) celebrates after scoring the winner. Photo: Bangkok Post

### 'PROUD'

Hudson praised his players' spirit and tactical discipline.

"I'm proud of every one of them," he said. "This was not just about me or the staff, but about the fans and everyone at the Football Association of Thailand."

"We knew how much this game meant. Turkmenistan are strong, aggressive, and dangerous from crosses. We adjusted from a back three to a back four in the second half to add attacking numbers, and the players responded magnificently."

Hudson admitted Thailand had squandered chances in the first half but insisted qualification was the overriding objective.

"The main target was to reach the Asian Cup. We prepared all week to keep pressure off the players, because failure would have been damaging for Thai football. In the end, the team showed great spirit and achieved what we set out to do."

Thailand captain Songkrasin Chanathip said: "It was a tough game, just as it was away from home. I want to thank my teammates, the coach, and staff. Everyone gave everything. The coach picked the best squad, and all 23 players contributed. Today we made the Thai people happy."

The War Elephants will now prepare for Saudi Arabia 2027 with renewed confidence in the wake of the thrilling victory over Turkmenistan.



Photo: Bangkok Post

## Four provinces bid to host King's Cup

### FOOTBALL

FOUR PROVINCES HAVE submitted bids to host the 52<sup>nd</sup> King's Cup football tournament in November, the Football Association of Thailand (FAT) announced on Apr 2.

The four bidders include Sri Sa Ket (Sri Sa Ket Main Stadium), Khon Kaen (Khon Kaen Provincial Administrative Organisation Stadium), Ayutthaya (Ayutthaya Main Stadium), and Rayong (Rayong Main Stadium and PTT Rayong Stadium).

Staging the King's Cup tournament outside of Bangkok is part of the FAT's strategy to have the Thai national team play in other regions of the country to boost the sport's popularity, stimulate the economy and tourism, and

foster local pride.

The selection committee will choose a host province that is well-prepared in all aspects, including stadium standards, quality of competition, local football popularity, and the potential to promote the economy and tourism. The result will be announced in the middle of the year.

The last two editions of the tournament were held in Songkhla and Kanchanaburi respectively.

The 52<sup>nd</sup> King's Cup tournament is scheduled to take place during the FIFA Day break, from Nov 9-17, in a four-team tournament format.

Hosts Thailand will be joined by three yet to be confirmed teams, with the announcement of confirmation expected mid-year.

Bangkok Post

# Saints shoot down Gunners

## FOOTBALL

ARSENAL SUFFERED a shock FA Cup quarter-final exit as the Premier League leaders crashed to an embarrassing 2-1 defeat against second tier Southampton last Saturday (Apr 4).

Mikel Arteta's side were stunned by Shea Charles' late winner in a memorable quarter-final giant-killing at St Mary's Stadium.

Ross Stewart put Southampton ahead in the first-half and Viktor Gyokeres' equaliser couldn't save Arsenal from only their fifth loss in all competitions this season.

After losing the League Cup final against Manchester City before the international break, the Gunners have squandered another chance to end their six-year trophy drought.

Arsenal are still firm favourites to win the Premier League for the first time since 2004 thanks to their nine-point



Photo: AFP

lead over second-placed City.

That remains their primary target after three successive runners-up finishes in the top-flight, with the domestic cups lower down their list of priorities.

But Arteta will be concerned about Arsenal's sudden wobble, given their habit of choking away strong positions in the title race in recent years.

While Arsenal lick their wounds, Southampton celebrated one of the greatest results in their history.

Earlier on Saturday, Erling Haaland hit a hat-trick as Manchester City thrashed Liverpool 4-0 to reach the FA Cup semi-finals and increase

the pressure on Reds boss Arne Slot.

Haaland netted twice late in the first half of the quarter-final at the Etihad Stadium and completed his treble after the interval following an Antoine Semenyo strike.

With Liverpool trailing by four, Mohamed Salah had a penalty saved by City goalkeeper James Trafford to compound a miserable afternoon for the under-fire Slot.

Meanwhile, Chelsea crushed League One Port Vale 7-0 at Stamford Bridge to provide a welcome boost for Blues boss Liam Rosenior, while Leeds beat West Ham on penalties after the game finished 2-2 after extra time.

AFP

## WHITE COLLAR BOXING

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**Sport**



**Thailand make AFC Asian Cup finals > p15**

# BORN TO FIGHT

## Veronica finds her MMA home in Phuket



Veronica Galparoli came to Phuket for a holiday and never left. Photo: Supplied

**MMA**

Liv Arnold

When Veronica Galparoli arrived in Phuket, she had never thrown a kick. Two years later, she has 13 fights to her name.

Originally from Milan, Italy, Veronica moved to the UK at 18 to study criminal law. She spent four years there, balancing university with long hours as a restaurant manager. Fitness was always part of her life. She had a qualification in personal training but never worked in the field.

An active holiday brought her to Phuket, where she tried Brazilian jiu-jitsu and MMA. Muay Thai was the one that

stuck. Her first session was on Soi Ta-ia in Chalong, a one-and-a-half-kilometre stretch built around training, lined with Muay Thai and MMA gyms, CrossFit boxes, health cafés and recovery spots.

She decided to stay. Early on, she lived off rental income from a UK property while figuring things out. Two months in, she got her first Muay Thai tattoo from a kru at Tiger Muay Thai. By five months, she was working there as a fitness coach. In the afternoons, she trains at Rattachai Muay Thai, a family-run gym on the street.

**SHOCK**

Veronica's first fight was a shock. "I didn't know how it would feel to get kicked or to kick someone.

I was very anxious and scared," she said.

Now 25, she holds an 11-2 record, fighting forward with a clinch-heavy Muay Khao style. At Rattachai, she has built close bonds with younger fighters and started learning Thai.

With experience and support from the krus, Veronica's fear faded. "The krus genuinely care about your progress. Now it's almost fun," she says. "It's still a challenge, but I'm not scared anymore. I love the process."

Training has shaped her beyond the ring, she explains. "When you are preparing to fight, you eat better. You take care of yourself more. I'm more confident. Not just in training. In everything." Some days she

arrives in a bad mood. After training, she leaves lighter.

More women are stepping into Muay Thai, though self-belief can still be a barrier.

"Women shouldn't feel self-conscious about starting, especially about what they wear, like a crop top, or how they look," says Veronica. "Even I have days where I think maybe I should cover up more. But it's normal."

**FOCUS**

Soi Ta-ia has given her more than a sport. It has given her a life she hadn't planned. You run into the same people every day, even as new faces come and go.

"I've never been so social," she says. "I go out all the time

with people from the street. But I'm also comfortable on my own."

She met her now ex-partner, a Thai colleague at Tiger Muay Thai. They were together for a year and remain on good terms.

Still, she is cautious about mixing dating with training.

"If you're here to train, I wouldn't recommend dating on Soi Ta-ia," she says. "It can be a distraction. And if someone leaves, it can hurt."

For now, her focus is simple. Fighting. Training.

"I came here for a trip to concentrate on my health," she says. "I didn't expect to stay."

You can follow Veronica Galparoli on Instagram @coach\_verogalpa

## KIS Hawks swoop to impress at regional basketball tournament

**BASKETBALL**

BOYS IN TWO DIFFERENT age groups representing the Phuket KIS Hawks lived up to their team name recently by swooping to impress and receive acclaim at a leading regional 3x3 basketball tournament.

The boys from Kajonkiet International School (KIS) Phuket and Phuket Wittayalai School were competing in both the under-14 age group and the under-12 age group at the 14th Asia Pacific Cup 3x3 Basketball Tournament held last month in Malaysia.

The tournament was hosted at the International School of Kuala Lumpur between Mar 23-25 and saw a total of 36 teams from 10 countries competing against one another in boys and girls age-specific categories.

The tournament was organised by the Malaysia Basketball Association (MABA) and is recognised at international level, operating under global standards with professional courts, certified referees and official game statistics systems. The event also serves as a scouting platform, where young athletes are observed by coaches



Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

and academies for future opportunities.

The KIS Hawks from Phuket demonstrated exceptional skills on court amid intense competition against genuinely tough opposition, which almost saw them advance all the way to the final showdown

in their respective age groups.

The U-14 team, comprising of KIS Phuket trio Kant, Wansuk and Chiryu, who were joined by Patrick Adams from Phuket Wittayalai School, battled valiantly on court to just miss out on a place in the final and ultimately secure a third place finish.

Meanwhile, their younger counterparts, consisting of Prinn, Pat, Samy and Mete, all from KIS Phuket, performed in a similarly impressive manner to finish fourth in their age category, agonisingly close to the final match.

Regardless, it resulted in both teams receiving awards and widespread acclaim for their collective efforts, an achievement that school officials stated afterwards brought great pride, while highlighting the students' resilience, teamwork and determination.

Furthermore, it demonstrated that Phuket can produce and develop athletic talent that is able to compete impressively on the global stage against very strong and able opposition, something that with sustained commitment and hard work can only continue to improve in future.

In addition to the KIS Hawks from Phuket, teams competing across all age groups in boys and girls competition came from Australia, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Nepal.

The winners were as follows: U-12 boys, Skyflash (Indonesia); U-14 girls, LCMB (Malaysia); U-14 boys, SJBC (Malaysia); U-16 girls, Hanoi Girls (Vietnam); U-16 boys, Fastbreak (Singapore); U-18 boys, KIS (Kinabalu International School, Malaysia).

The Phuket News