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# CARNAGE



Photo: Chalong Municipality

## SPEEDING, DRINK-DRIVING BLAMED AS 92 KILLED, 14,102 INJURED ON ROADS

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**H**uman behaviour – not road conditions alone – remains the leading cause of death on Phuket's roads, with 92 people killed and more than 14,000 injured in just over six months despite years of infrastructure upgrades and road safety campaigns.

The figures highlight the continuing human cost of road crashes in one of Thailand's busiest tourism provinces, where residents, migrant workers and millions of visitors share roads increasingly dominated by motorcycles.

According to Ministry of Public Health road injury surveillance data (RTI-D), Phuket recorded 14,109 road crash casualties between Jan 1 and July 4 this year, including 7,238 outpatient cases, 6,871 inpatient admissions, and 92 fatalities.

The statistics reveal a persistent road safety crisis on the island, where experts say the greatest risks stem not from a lack of awareness, but from dangerous behaviour behind the handlebars and wheel.

"The main problem in Phuket is that we don't have enough public transportation. That's why motorcycles are the primary mode of transport for both workers and

tourists," said Dr Wiwat Seetamanotch, Manager of Thailand's WHO Road Safety Partnership Programme and Legal Development Programme.

While Phuket did not rank among Thailand's five deadliest provinces during the period, Dr Wiwat said the island continues to carry a disproportionately high road injury burden relative to its population, with motorcycle users accounting for the overwhelming majority of serious casualties.

Nationally, Thailand recorded more than 582,468 road injuries and 7,957 deaths over the same period, averaging about 44 road deaths every day.

But for Phuket, Dr Wiwat said the underlying causes of fatal crashes remain clear.

"As for injuries and fatalities, the primary cause is speeding. Another significant issue is drunk driving, especially at night and among tourists," he said.

The combination of excessive speed, alcohol consumption and low helmet use continues to fuel serious crashes across the island, particularly during night-time hours when enforcement becomes more difficult.

Patong remains one of the most challenging environments for road safety enforcement, with heavy traffic continuing well into the...

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# News



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## Behaviour fuels road deaths

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...early hours because of its role as Phuket's main entertainment district.

"The majority of fatalities still involve motorcycle users, and helmet use among those injured and killed remains low," Dr Wiwat said.

"This is especially at night or during times when traffic police have limited ability to fully enforce the law."

The result is a dangerous mix of risk-taking behaviour, alcohol consumption and inadequate protection that continues to claim lives despite ongoing efforts by authorities.

### DESIGN RISKS

While human behaviour remains the dominant factor, Dr Wiwat said Phuket's road network amplifies the consequences of mistakes.

Many of the island's main roads were designed decades ago for much lower traffic volumes and now serve densely populated communities, tourism centres and commercial corridors.

"Many roads are four-lane or six-lane, passing through urban areas with dense communities along the routes," he said.

"This results in constant intersections and mixed traffic conditions, with vehicles entering and exiting side streets through-out main corridors."

The situation creates frequent conflict points between motorcycles, passenger vehicles, delivery trucks and tourist traffic, particularly along major transport routes where development has expanded rapidly.

Unlike many provinces, Phuket's roads also present a more complex driving environment.



**Dr Wiwat Seetamanotch, Manager of Thailand's WHO Road Safety Partnership Programme. Photo: PPHO**

Dr Wiwat described the island's network as effectively "three-dimensional", with steep hills, sharp curves and frequent elevation changes creating hazards largely absent in flatter urban centres.

Heavy rain, slippery surfaces and mud washed onto roads further increase risks, particularly for motorcycle riders who have less stability and protection than occupants of larger vehicles.

Dr Wiwat said sudden braking while cornering or descending steep roads remains a common factor in serious motorcycle crashes.

"This remains a common mechanism behind serious motorcycle crashes on downhill and wet roads," he said.

Tourists and inexperienced riders unfamiliar with Phuket's terrain are particularly vulnerable.

### SAFETY MEASURES

Despite the grim statistics, Dr Wiwat said road deaths can be significantly reduced through a combination of stronger enforcement, safer road design and improved vehicle safety.

He estimated that effective enforcement of speed limits, helmet laws and drink-driving

regulations could reduce deaths and injuries by as much as 30-40%.

"If these laws are enforced effectively, it will significantly improve road safety," he said.

Measures such as speed tables, speed bumps and other traffic-calming infrastructure are also increasingly being introduced near schools, markets, communities and commercial areas to reduce vehicle speeds before drivers enter high-risk pedestrian zones.

"Traffic engineering tools like speed tables and speed bumps are being promoted in areas such as communities, schools, shopping malls and markets to slow vehicles before entering high pedestrian zones," he said.

Dr Wiwat pointed to improvements along a 15.6-kilometre section of Thepkasattri Rd, where redesigned U-turns helped reduce annual fatalities from an average of five deaths to one. Provincial officials this month reported no fatalities at the upgraded locations during the four months since the work was completed.

Similar interventions are now being considered elsewhere. "Small roundabouts are also

being considered at intersections such as Bang Thong in Kathu, where complex traffic flows and limited visibility make traditional signal systems less effective," he said.

While Phuket cannot eliminate steep roads, sharp curves or heavy rainfall, Dr Wiwat said wider adoption of motorcycles equipped with Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) could help riders maintain control during emergency braking and reduce skidding on wet surfaces.

He also warned of continuing risks posed by buses and heavy trucks on steep routes such as Patong Hill, where prolonged downhill braking can lead to brake failure.

Yet if forced to choose a single measure capable of saving the greatest number of lives, Dr Wiwat said the answer was simple.

"If everyone on the island wore helmets correctly and consistently, it could reduce fatalities by dozens per year," he said.

### LATEST RESPONSE

The renewed focus on road safety comes as Phuket officials continue to invest heavily in engineering and infrastructure measures aimed at reducing crashes across the island.

Just days before Dr Wiwat's warning, provincial authorities approved plans to continue funding road safety projects through the Phuket Road Safety Fund, with B4 million allocated for the 2026 fiscal year.

At a meeting chaired by then-Vice Governor Adul Chuthong last month, officials reviewed ongoing programmes and considered new funding

requests, including a public-awareness campaign targeting residents, tourists and tourism operators, and a project aimed at improving safety standards among public motorcycle taxi operators and passengers.

The meeting followed a session of the Phuket Provincial Road Safety Centre on June 9, where officials highlighted encouraging results from infrastructure improvements implemented under the province's 'Safe & Seamless Phuket' initiative.

Among the projects cited was the upgrading of temporary U-turn openings along Thepkasattri Rd into permanent concrete U-turn facilities, where officials reported no fatalities during the four months following completion of the work.

Authorities also outlined plans to expand traffic-calming measures, including raised pedestrian crossings, speed tables, mini-roundabouts and redesigned road layouts intended to naturally reduce vehicle speeds in high-risk areas.

Additional projects under consideration include improvements along Phra Baramee Rd, the Koh Siray Bridge approach, Pattana Rd and several roads in Patong, together with expanded CCTV monitoring and helmet-promotion campaigns.

The province is also exploring ways to reduce motorcycle dependence among workers by encouraging large employers to provide staff shuttle services.

Officials said future projects would continue to be selected using a data-driven approach based on accident records, hospital data and engineering assessments.

## Former governor faces charges over illegal hotel licence

CHAMROEN TIPAYAPONG-tada, who served as Phuket Governor 10 years ago, is to face criminal prosecution after Thailand's National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) ruled that he unlawfully approved a hotel licence for what is now the Zenmaya Oceanfront Phuket resort despite the project allegedly failing to meet environmental requirements.

The ruling, announced on July 2, comes less than four months after the NACC found Mr Chamroen had amassed more than B321 million in unexplained wealth while serving as a provincial governor.

The commission has resolved to forward the case to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) for prosecution and has also recommended disciplinary action.

The case concerns Hotel Business Licence No. 144/2559, issued on Oct 27, 2016, for a hotel project developed by Thewa Estate Co Ltd, originally known as U Zenmaya Hotel.

The investigation found the development was located in an environmentally protected coastal zone where an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was required before a hotel licence could legally be issued.

According to the NACC,



**Photo: NBT/file**

although officials repeatedly requested the necessary EIA documents, the developer submitted only reports describing

changes in the building's intended use.

Despite being informed that the application remained incomplete, Mr Chamroen signed the licence on Sept 27, 2016, only days before leaving Phuket to become governor of Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

The NACC said he had instructed subordinates to expedite pending matters before his transfer and concluded that he knowingly approved the licence in breach of the Hotel Act and Ministry of Interior regulations, providing an unlawful benefit to the developer.

However, the commission did

not identify any personal benefit allegedly received by Mr Chamroen.

The NACC found grounds to prosecute him for malfeasance in office under Section 157 of the Criminal Code and offences under Thailand's anti-corruption laws. The case will now be reviewed by the OAG before any prosecution proceeds through the courts.

The latest ruling is separate from the NACC's March decision seeking confiscation of B321.67 mn in unexplained assets allegedly accumulated by Mr Chamroen during his multiple postings as a provincial governor.

*The Phuket News*

# Schools hit in nominee raids

The Phuket News  
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International schools in southern Phuket have become the latest focus of the government's widening crackdown on illegal nominee businesses, as authorities expand investigations into hundreds of companies suspected of concealing foreign ownership.

The move comes as police confirm that at least one popular international school has already been searched under court-approved warrants, while the Interior Ministry has announced plans to investigate about 200 more businesses across the island.

Chalong Police Chief Pol Col Surasak Jaidee told *The Phuket News* that officers executed search warrants at the school on June 26 as part of a joint operation involving Chalong Police, Phuket Immigration, Mueang Phuket District officials and the Rawai and Chalong municipalities.

The inspections formed part of the nationwide campaign targeting businesses suspected of using Thai nationals as nominee shareholders to circumvent the Foreign Business Act.

"The searches were aimed at verifying the school's land ownership documents, business registration, establishment records



Photo: Chalong Police

and management structure to determine whether Thai nominees had been used to conceal foreign ownership or control of the business," Pol Col Surasak said.

He stressed that no action has yet been taken against the school as investigators continue examining the documents and evidence collected during the operation.

Pol Col Surasak also revealed that nominee business investigations remain a major focus for Chalong Police, with about 30 cases currently under investigation within the station's jurisdiction.

"This crackdown has not been widely publicised because cases like this are encountered quite frequently in Phuket," he said.

He declined to say whether

other international schools are also under investigation, explaining that police cannot comment while document checks remain ongoing.

Asked why the Phuket Provincial Education Office was not involved in the operation, Pol Col Surasak said investigating nominee offences falls within the responsibility of police regardless of the type of business involved, with education authorities to be informed if necessary.

The school investigation comes as the Interior Ministry significantly broadens its scrutiny of suspected nominee businesses across Phuket.

Deputy Interior Minister Polapee Suwunchwee announced on June 29 that 159 companies

suspected of using nominee shareholders had already been referred to an investigation committee. Legal proceedings have begun against 39 companies, while 34 businesses have been ordered to cease operations.

Authorities are reviewing more than 10,000 registered companies in Phuket, with more than 400 considered potentially suitable for further scrutiny. Around 200 additional companies are expected to be submitted to the investigation committee in the next phase.

Mr Polapee said investigators would examine each company's ownership structure to determine whether Thai nationals had been used to hold shares on behalf of foreign interests.

The investigation also extends beyond company registrations.

The Land Department has been instructed to review land ownership documents associated with the businesses, including when title deeds were issued and the legal basis on which they were granted. Business registration records are also being cross-checked against land ownership information.

Mr Polapee and Deputy Interior Minister Worasit Liangprakit, who were assigned by Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul to

oversee the operation, are expected to return to Phuket to review progress.

Political pressure has also intensified following a complaint lodged by Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee.

On July 3, Mr Chalermpong asked the Phuket Provincial Commerce Office to investigate a naturalised Thai citizen suspected of acting as a nominee shareholder for foreign investors through five companies operating in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector.

He also requested authorities investigate how the individual obtained Thai citizenship and a national identification card, while emphasising that he was not accusing the person of any offence but seeking verification that all legal procedures had been properly followed.

The Phuket Provincial Commerce Office confirmed it would investigate the allegations.

Commerce Office Chief Waranit Apiratjirawong said nominee businesses remain a priority for provincial authorities, with investigations being coordinated between the Commerce Office, Land Office and police under the supervision of Vice Governor Pol Lt Col Khetarat Chansilp.

## Underpass contractor seeks waiver

THE CONTRACTOR behind Phuket's delayed underpass smart-lighting project is seeking to have more than B7 million in late-completion penalties waived or reduced, but officials say no decision has yet been made.

The Phuket Highways Office confirmed that penalties have continued to accrue since the project's contractual completion deadline of April 24, with the total now exceeding B7mn.

Phuket Highways Office Chief Winai Kuemueang said contractor Better World Traffic Co Ltd had submitted a request under Comptroller General's Department Circular No. 240, which allows contractors to seek a waiver or reduction of penalties in certain circumstances.

However, he stressed the request remains under review.

"The contractor claims the delays were caused by the impact of conflict in the Middle East on the transportation of construction materials, but the supporting documents are still incomplete," Mr Winai told



Photo: Phuket Highways Office

*The Phuket News.*

"We cannot make a decision based on verbal explanations alone. Clear documentary evidence is required," he said.

Mr Winai also rejected claims circulating on social media that authorities had already agreed to waive the penalties.

"No approval has been given. The contractor is simply exercising its right to submit a request under Circular No. 240. The committee has not approved any waiver or reduction of penalties," he said.

He added that liquidated damages of more than B100,000 continue to accrue each day until the project is completed. Officials are expected to review additional evidence from the contractor later this week before making any decision.

The contractor has indicated the remaining work will be completed by the end of this month.

The B48.412mn project, funded through the Southern Andaman Provinces Group's 2025 budget, includes smart lighting, upgraded electrical systems, CCTV, speed cameras and remote traffic management systems at Phuket's major highway underpasses.

The contract was signed on Sept 27, 2025, with a 210-day construction period ending on April 24.

Work has been completed at the Airport and Bang Khu underpasses, while crews continue installations at the Samkong, Darasamut and Chalong underpasses. Overnight closures at those sites remain in effect from 8:30pm to 6am through July 15.

The project has faced months of delays. In March, provincial officials ordered an investigation after concerns that little or no work had begun for several months after the contract was signed. The findings have not been released publicly. *The Phuket News*

## Phuket officials trained to avoid disciplinary offences

AS PHUKET CONTINUES to grapple with a string of high-profile investigations involving alleged misconduct by public officials, the Provincial Office last week organised a training programme aimed at helping civil servants avoid disciplinary offences.

The six-hour seminar, held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel on July 2, was officially titled 'Strengthening Discipline and Preventing Disciplinary Offences Among Civil Servants in Phuket Province'.

The timing is notable. While the official announcement made no reference to the recent corruption, bribery or extortion investigations involving public officials in Phuket, the seminar comes as several cases have placed standards of integrity and accountability under intense public scrutiny.



Photo: PR Phuket

According to the Phuket Provincial Office, the training was organised to improve officials' understanding of civil service discipline, relevant laws and investigation procedures, with the aim of reducing disciplinary violations and promoting transparent public administration.

Governor Chotinrin Kerdson assigned Vice-Governor Suwit Phansengiam to open the event, which was attended by department heads and officials from provincial,

central and district agencies.

Mr Suwit told participants that discipline was the foundation of being a government official and helped ensure government work was carried out, in his words, "correctly, transparently and in accordance with the principles of good governance."

Lecturers from the Ministry of Interior's Office of the Permanent Secretary provided instruction on government regulations, disciplinary guidelines, prevention of disciplinary offences, and investigation and fact-finding procedures.

The Provincial Office said the programme was intended to equip officials with the knowledge needed to perform their duties correctly, reduce the risk of disciplinary violations and strengthen public confidence in government services.

*The Phuket News*

The Phuket News

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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High: +33°  
Low: +27°  
Wind 7 m/s

SAT JULY 11

High: +34°  
Low: +27°  
Wind 11 m/s

SUN JULY 12

High: +30°  
Low: +28°  
Wind 11 m/s

MON JULY 13

High: +30°  
Low: +27°  
Wind 4 m/s

TUE JULY 14

High: +29°  
Low: +27°  
Wind 7 m/s

WED JULY 15

High: +29°  
Low: +26°  
Wind 7 m/s

THU JULY 16

High: +29°  
Low: +26°  
Wind 7 m/s

Photo: Phuket Immigration

## Brit's visa revoked over tuk-tuk assault

A BRITISH MAN accused of assaulting a tuk-tuk driver in Patong after refusing to pay a B300 fare has had his permission to stay in Thailand revoked and now faces deportation, Phuket Immigration has confirmed.

The move came a day after Patong Police launched a manhunt following the alleged assault outside the Rak Elegant Hotel on Nanai Rd in the early hours of July 2.

Immigration officials identified the suspect as Shane Daniel Correia, 33, and said his temporary stay permit was revoked under Section 12(7) of Thailand's Immigration Act.

The revocation was approved on July 3. Mr Correia was to be transferred to the Phuket Immigration Detention Centre pending legal proceedings and eventual deportation.

The case stems from a complaint filed by tuk-tuk driver Chalong Kamplong, 48, of Trang, who told police he was punched after a dispute over a B300 fare outside the hotel at about 5am.

Police said Mr Chalong had been hired to transport three foreign passengers when the argument broke out.

One passenger assaulted him before fleeing in a Phuket-registered pickup truck, Mr Chalong said.

Immigration officials said the visa revocation was based on the assault investigation and was carried out before the conclusion of the criminal case under immigration powers allowing authorities to revoke the temporary stay of foreigners whose behaviour is considered a threat to society or public safety.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Man hunted down for huge fuel heist

The Phuket News  
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A 33-year-old petrol station employee wanted over the alleged theft of 4,000 litres of fuel from a Phuket petrol station has been arrested in Bangkok after months on the run.

Officers from the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB), working with the Crime Suppression Division (CSD), arrested the man, named only as 'Mr Panuwat', at a restaurant in Bangkok's Bang Phlat district under a warrant issued by the Phuket Provincial Court on April 28 this year.

He is wanted on charges of jointly committing theft using a vehicle to facilitate the crime, transport stolen property or evade arrest, as well as theft from an employer.

According to the CIB, the case relates to an incident on Oct 10 last year when a petrol station in Phuket ordered 18,000 litres of fuel, worth about B550,000.

After the fuel tanker completed the delivery, station staff carried out a routine inspection of the fuel tanks and gauges and found that about 4,000 litres of fuel were missing.



Photo: CIB

The shortage, estimated to be worth B110,000, prompted the station owner to conduct an internal investigation.

Police said the investigation found evidence allegedly showing that Panuwat, who was responsible for inspecting the station's fuel tanks before deliveries, had colluded with a fuel tanker driver to steal part of the shipment by exploiting weaknesses in the delivery process.

Investigators also believe the suspect had been involved in similar thefts on multiple occasions, causing significant financial losses to the business.

The station owner subsequently filed a com-

plaint with police, who gathered evidence and secured an arrest warrant from the Phuket Provincial Court.

Crime Suppression Division investigators later traced Panuwat to Bangkok, where they learned he had found work at a restaurant in Bang Phlat district. Officers conducted surveillance before moving in to arrest him.

Police said Panuwat denied all charges during questioning, insisting he had no involvement in the alleged thefts.

The suspect was initially taken to Bang Phlat Police Station following his arrest before legal proceedings to return him to Phuket.

## French Interpol organised crime fugitive arrested in Patong raid

A FRENCH NATIONAL wanted under an Interpol Red Notice for alleged organised crime, kidnapping and money laundering has been arrested in Phuket and is being deported to Luxembourg.

Police identified the suspect as Chirrane Yanis, 29, who is wanted by authorities in Luxembourg on charges including membership of an organised crime group, money laundering, kidnapping, unlawful detention, hostage-taking, armed robbery, extortion and blackmail.

Yanis was arrested on July 2 at Phuvaree Resort in Patong by



Photo: Phuket Immigration

officers from Investigation Bureau Region 8, the Immigration Bureau's Special Operations Division and Phuket Immigration.

Following his arrest, he was taken to Phuket Immigration Office to begin deportation proceedings and be returned to Luxembourg to face the charges, police said. Eakkapop Thongtub

## Patong restaurant destroyed as transformer explosion sparks blaze

A TRANSFORMER EXPLOSION sparked a fire that destroyed much of a restaurant in Patong on July 2, causing extensive property damage but no injuries.

Patong Police were called to the blaze at about 5:10pm after reports of flames engulfing the Zaap Rang Saeng Khong restaurant on Phra Metta Rd.

Firefighters from the Patong Municipality Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Division quickly brought the fire under control.

Initial investigations found the blaze began when an electrical transformer outside the restaurant exploded, sending flames into the four-unit building.

Tables, chairs and kitchen equipment were destroyed, while



Screenshot: Eakkapop Thongtub

two motorcycles parked outside were also damaged.

The Phuket Provincial Forensic Science Unit is investigating the cause of the transformer explosion and assessing the full extent of the damage. Eakkapop Thongtub

# Officials eye illegal construction

The Phuket News  
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Phuket authorities have launched a series of enforcement operations targeting illegal construction, land encroachment and environmental offences across the island, with investigations under way in Kamala, Rawai, Mai Khao and Koh Siray as officials step up efforts to protect public land and natural resources.

The highest-profile case is on the Kamala hills, where authorities have seized a backhoe and begun an investigation after discovering an illegally constructed mountain road and concrete paving inside a national forest reserve on the border of Mueang and Kathu districts.

Officials inspecting the Khao Nang Phanthurat area found evidence that heavy machinery had been used to clear forest and create the road, with sections already surfaced using prefabricated concrete panels. No suspects were found at the scene, but the abandoned excavator was seized as evidence while investigators



Photo: Mueang District Office

work to identify those responsible.

Authorities said those behind the project will face prosecution under the Forestry Act.

Meanwhile in Rawai, officials have filed criminal complaints against two suspects accused of illegally occupying about seven rai of protected public land in the Phromthep Animal Grazing Area.

A joint inspection on July 1 found buildings had been constructed on two

public land plots despite Rawai Municipality having previously ordered construction to stop. The municipality issued demolition orders on June 29 before filing complaints with Chalong Police two days later.

The suspects face charges of ignoring official orders, constructing buildings without permission and illegally encroaching on public and protected forest land.

In a separate operation

the following day, authorities arrested three people allegedly caught clearing and occupying another seven-rai section of protected public land within the Khao Daeng Wildlife Sanctuary area near Laem Phromthep.

Officials said the suspects were found installing concrete posts and ropes to divide the land into plots before being arrested and handed over to Chalong Police. They face charges under the Land Code and

Forestry Act for unlawfully occupying state land and clearing protected forest.

The latest arrests follow months of investigations into Khao Daeng, one of Phuket's highest-profile land encroachment disputes after allegations surfaced last year that protected forest land was being prepared for private development.

Elsewhere, authorities have also launched legal proceedings against the owners of two waterfront homes in the Baan Kho-En community in Mai Khao after inspectors found the buildings had been expanded beyond previously submitted plans during a review of disputed waterfront properties.

The alleged illegal additions were discovered while officials reconsidered applications from the owners of five homes seeking permission to remain on land bordering public waterways. Provincial officials stressed that accepting the applications for review does not guarantee approval and that legal action over the unauthorised construction will proceed separately.

Environmental enforcement has also been stepped up at Koh Siray, where officials ordered a company to immediately halt activities causing sediment to flow into the sea following complaints that runoff from private land was affecting coastal waters.

Authorities warned that sediment discharge can damage marine ecosystems and may constitute an offence under the Marine and Coastal Resources Management Promotion Act, adding that inspections and monitoring will continue.

Provincial officials said the operations reflect Governor Chotinrin Kerdsum's policy of intensifying action against illegal occupation of public land, forest encroachment and unlawful development across Phuket.

Authorities said investigations would continue and warned that anyone found illegally occupying public land, constructing without permission or damaging protected natural resources would face legal action in accordance with the law.

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# Hotel push fails to fire

The Phuket News  
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Another government campaign urging Phuket's thousands of unlicensed small hotels to register has highlighted a problem the industry says has remained unresolved for years: operators are still being asked to comply with laws that make legal registration impossible for many of them.

The Ministry of Interior this week extended its latest hotel licensing consultation programme until today (July 10), giving operators another opportunity to seek advice and submit applications while officials collect information on the legal barriers preventing businesses from obtaining licences.

The extension follows the launch of the 'The Last Call: Last Chance' consultation clinic on June 30, promoted by officials as a final opportunity for operators to enter the legal system.

However, despite repeated government campaigns over the past several years, little has changed for the estimated 3,000 to 4,000 small accommodation businesses operating across Phuket, many of which remain trapped between hotel licensing requirements and building regula-



Photo: PR Phuket

tions that they cannot realistically meet.

Speaking at the launch of the programme, Phuket Vice Governor Romdon Hayiauae stressed that the initiative was intended to help operators rather than prosecute them.

"This is not a measure aimed at arrest or prosecution," he said. "It is a collaboration between the government, the Ministry of Interior and the private sector to jointly resolve legal obstacles."

Officials said about 260 operators had registered for the programme by the end of June, a small fraction of the thousands of businesses estimated to be operating across the island.

The consultation clinic brings together officials from the Department of Provincial Administration, the Tourism Council of

Thailand, the Phuket Boutique Accommodation Association and other agencies to review individual cases and gather feedback from operators unable to secure hotel licences.

Authorities acknowledge that five key areas of legislation continue to prevent many businesses from becoming legal, including conflicts involving town planning regulations, building control laws and environmental legislation.

Many of Phuket's small hotels occupy converted commercial buildings or older properties that were never designed under modern hotel regulations. While many operators have invested heavily in fire safety systems and other improvements, structural requirements under existing laws often remain impossible to satisfy without extensive rebuilding.

Officials say information gathered during the consultation process will support proposals for amendments to ministerial regulations, help develop the proposed 'Phuket Place-Stay Sandbox' initiative and create transitional measures for smaller accommodation businesses.

Yet these proposals remain largely unchanged from previous government efforts.

Successive administrations have promised to examine legal reforms, while temporary regulatory measures introduced to help operators eventually expired without delivering a permanent solution. As a result, many businesses that had hoped to legalise their operations have found themselves back where they started.

Deputy Interior Minister Gen Polapee Suwunchwee, announcing the extension of the consultation programme, said the ministry remained committed to helping businesses comply with the law while continuing to investigate illegal foreign nominee businesses operating in the sector.

He urged operators who had not yet sought assistance to use the extended deadline and warned against individuals claiming they

could secure licences in exchange for payments or special treatment.

Officials also sought to reassure business owners that participation in the programme would not automatically lead to enforcement action or retrospective financial penalties, stressing that only legally prescribed fees would apply.

Meanwhile, inspections of licensed hotels have continued, with provincial officials this week visiting the Pullman Phuket Arcadia Karon Beach Resort as part of its licence renewal process to verify compliance with safety, hygiene and structural standards.

Authorities maintain that the consultation programme is intended to balance enforcement with assistance as the government continues its nationwide crackdown on unlicensed accommodation.

For many small operators, however, the central issue remains unresolved.

Until the regulations governing hotel licensing, building control and land use are fundamentally revised, industry representatives argue that repeated registration campaigns are unlikely to bring thousands of currently unlicensed businesses into the legal system.

## Phuket revives Japan tourism push

PHUKET TOURISM operators have stepped up efforts to revive the Japanese visitor market, completing the island's first tourism roadshow in Japan in more than a decade and securing 675 business meetings with travel industry partners.

The 'Phuket Roadshow to Japan 2026', held from June 22-26, saw representatives from the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), the Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) and local tourism businesses visit Sapporo, Osaka and Tokyo to promote Phuket as a premier destination for Japanese travellers.

Led by PPAO Deputy Chief Executive Anupap Vejvanichsanong, the delegation sought to rebuild confidence among Japanese travel businesses, strengthen long-term partnerships and create new commercial opportunities.

Japan was once one of Phuket's leading overseas markets, supported by direct flights between



Photo: Phuket Tourist Association

Japan and the island. Although those services ended more than 15 years ago, Thailand remains a popular destination for Japanese tourists, most of whom now visit Bangkok and surrounding areas.

The roadshow highlighted Phuket's transformation over the past decade, promoting its luxury hotels and resorts, wellness experiences, marine tourism, sporting events, cultural attractions and expanded lifestyle offerings.

The delegation also showcased Phuket's status as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, promoting the island's culinary heritage as a key tourism attraction.

Supported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the programme included destina-

tion presentations, tourism product updates, business matching sessions and networking events. TAT's offices in Tokyo and Osaka also provided market intelligence and travel trend information to help Phuket businesses better understand the evolving Japanese market.

Held in a table-top sales meeting format, the roadshow enabled Phuket operators to meet directly with Japanese travel agencies, tour operators, airline representatives and wholesalers.

Organisers said the programme generated 675 one-on-one business appointments across the three cities, reflecting strong interest in Phuket and creating opportunities for future cooperation.

The PTA described the initiative as an important step in rebuilding tourism ties with Japan and laying the foundation for sustainable long-term growth in one of Phuket's historically significant international markets.

The Phuket News

## Cannabis shops set to shrink as licences expire

THE NUMBER OF CANNABIS retail outlets in Phuket is expected to fall sharply over the next three years as businesses face tougher licensing requirements under new Ministry of Public Health regulations.

The changes were outlined during the fifth meeting of the Phuket Provincial Joint Public-Private Sector Committee for Economic Problem Solving (JPP Committee) on June 30, chaired by Phuket Governor Chotinrin Kerdsum.

According to the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO), there are currently 1,089 licensed cannabis shops operating across the island. Of those, 288 licences expire this year, 469 in 2027 and 322 in 2028, said PPHO Deputy Director Somsuk Samphanprathip.

Mr Somsuk said licences will no longer be automatically renewed. Instead, businesses wishing to continue selling cannabis must comply with new national regulations requiring them to operate as medical facilities or obtain appropriate drug sales licences.



Photo: Kathu District Office

Operators must also hold the relevant licence to produce Category 5 cannabis or hemp extracts, or be certified under the Thai Traditional Medicine Act. In addition, every licensed premises must have at least one staff member trained by the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine on duty throughout business hours.

Provincial officials said the stricter requirements are expected to significantly reduce the number of cannabis retailers in Phuket.

The changes follow a nationwide policy shift by Public Health Minister Pattana Promphat to return cannabis to a strictly medical framework while advancing the long-delayed Cannabis and Hemp Act.

Speaking in Parliament in May, Mr Pattana said cannabis retailers would increasingly be required to register as medical facilities with qualified medical professionals available during operating hours.

He noted that around 18,000 cannabis shops were registered nationwide by the end of 2025, but only about 11% of businesses whose licences expired at the end of that year had renewed them under the new rules.

Provincial officials said inspections of cannabis retailers will continue as authorities implement the tighter licensing requirements and enforce the government's revised medical-use policy.

The Phuket News

# Investigation into crash that killed 10 monks expanded

## MUKDAHAN

Bangkok Post

Police are investigating whether an adult taught an 11-year-old autistic boy to drive before he crashed a pickup truck into a group of monks on July 2, killing 10 people and injuring several others.

The accident took place at 11:55am as a group of 34 monks were walking along a road near the entrance to the Huai Sing area at Na Si Nuan village in Muang district of Mukdahan province.

According to local reports, the monks were travelling from Nam Khun district in Ubon Ratchathani province and had reached the area near the Na Si Nuan Market in Mukdahan when the crash took place.

Five monks died at the scene, while five others later succumbed to their injuries at Mukdahan Hospital, according to the provincial public relations office.

Investigators at Mukdahan police station are questioning witnesses and people close to the boy's family to establish whether he had driven before and whether anyone taught him or allowed him to practise. The findings will determine whether anyone else could face charges.

The boy's grandparents and class



The site of the incident in Mukdahan province on July 2. Photo: Wat Roi Phra Phutthabat Phu Manorom, Mukdahan

teacher have already been questioned. Police said they will review all available evidence before deciding whether to press charges.

The boy remains in the care of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

## DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFICULTIES

Watcharaporn Piewkham, director of the Mukdahan Provincial Special Education Centre, said staff only realised the boy was one of their students after police contacted the centre's Don Tan district service unit.

He had been absent from school on

the day of the crash after his mother told teachers he was ill.

Ms Watcharaporn said the boy enrolled at the centre in 2021 with significant developmental difficulties that affected his communication and ability to adapt. Over time, however, he learned to follow basic rules and interacted well with classmates.

She said his mother or grandmother always took him to school by pickup truck or motorcycle and that she had never seen him drive.

Ms Watcharaporn said he had a good memory for things that interested him, adding he may have memorised what he saw while watching his mother drive.

# Weerapong endorsed as Supreme Court chief

## BANGKOK

THE JUDICIAL COMMISSION unanimously endorsed the appointment of Supreme Court vice-president Weerapong Sudawong as Thailand's 52nd Supreme Court president during its annual meeting on Monday (July 6).

He will succeed Adisak Tantiwong, who is due to retire at the end of September. The appointment will take effect on Oct 1, subject to royal endorsement.

Mr Weerapong holds a law degree from Ramkhamhaeng University and a barrister-at-law qualification from the Institute of Legal Education of the Thai Bar Association.

He has served as chief judge of the Nakhon Sri Thammarat Provincial Court and the Nakhon Ratchasima Provincial Court, vice-president of the Narcotics Cases Division of the Court of Appeal, and



Weerapong. Photo: Bangkok Post

chief judge of the Region 5 Criminal Court for Corruption and Misconduct Cases.

Mr Weerapong later became president of the Consumer Cases Division of the Region 1 Court of Appeal, chief judge of the Central Criminal Court for Corruption and Misconduct Cases, president of the Region 5 Court of Appeal, and a Supreme Court judge and division head. He is a member of the Judicial Commission and chairs several bodies within the judiciary.

Bangkok Post

# British woman held after boyfriend found slayed

## PATTAYA

A 21-YEAR-OLD BRITISH woman has been arrested on suspicion of murdering her boyfriend, the operator of a cannabis farm in Chonburi, after a fatal stabbing at a luxury rental home in Pattaya.

Police were called to the house in Nong Prue on July 2 after reports of a violent incident involving a foreign couple, said Pol Col Nataphon Phongsuksakul, chief of the Nong Prue police station.

Officers found the body of Thomas David Powell, 34, lying in a bathroom with two stab wounds to his back, three to his torso and one to his left hand. He was believed to have been dead for at least six hours.

Investigators identified the suspect as Isabel Violet Carreras, the victim's girlfriend. She was found sitting near the body and appeared to be heavily intoxicated by cannabis, claiming she could not remember the events, said police.



The suspect. Photo: Supplied

Investigators noted cuts on her fingertips, and recovered a 50cm machete-like knife that had been washed clean in a sink.

Police said the woman claimed her boyfriend had injured himself. However, investigators found inconsistencies in her account.

The victim's body appeared to have been moved and arranged in the bathroom, with a pillow under the head, while bloodstains and signs of a struggle were found throughout the house.

A British friend of the victim, who discovered the

body, told police he had been alerted by a business partner in the United States who feared something was wrong. He went into the house to check then alerted the police.

Neighbours said the couple had rented the property only two weeks earlier and were frequently heard arguing.

Powell reportedly managed a cannabis farm in Bang Lamung Soi 14. Police said the couple had been together for about two years and planned to settle in Thailand.

Bangkok Post

# Eight jailed for illegal surrogacy

## BANGKOK

THE CRIMINAL COURT sentenced four obstetricians and four brokers to prison terms of up to 15 years on July 2 for their roles in a transnational commercial surrogacy network, ruling that they treated the human body as a commodity and deliberately circumvented the law.

Prosecutors charged 10 defendants with participating in a transnational criminal organisation, arranging commercial surrogacy, and illegally importing or exporting embryos, sperm and human eggs.

The case stemmed from a 2020 investigation by the Anti-Human Trafficking Division, which dismantled a surrogacy network allegedly financed by Chinese national Ran Zhao. The syndicate recruited Thai women to become surrogate mothers or sell their eggs for in-vitro fertilisation.



Police arrest a suspect in 2020. Photo: Supplied

Investigators said the women were paid B400,000-450,000 each and taken to Laos and Cambodia for embryo implantation to circumvent Thailand's ban on commercial surrogacy. They then returned to Thailand for prenatal care before travelling to China shortly before giving birth.

In its ruling, the court said the four obstetricians and gynaecologists knew commercial surrogacy and the sale of human eggs violated both the law and medical ethics, yet deliberately carried out the procedures abroad to evade Thai law.

The court also found that the four brokers played key roles in the operation, harming the

rights and welfare of children born through the scheme by separating them from their biological families and exposing them to potential long-term psychological harm.

The court convicted the doctors and brokers on multiple counts. Although it reduced their sentences by one-quarter because they cooperated, it imposed lengthy prison terms because of the seriousness of the offences.

The case is separate from the prosecution of Ran Zhao and three associates, who pleaded guilty to operating the surrogacy ring. They were each sentenced to 150 years in prison, later reduced to 75 years because of their guilty pleas.

Bangkok Post

# The Most Important Muscle You've Never Heard Of

## WELLTHWISE

Libby Heath

**T**he hairstyles changed. The workout gear changed. The exercises did not.

Looking through old fitness photos, I realised something: I have been teaching – and relying on – glute medius exercises to stay agile for more than 40 years.

In a previous article, I called muscle the organ of longevity. For good reason: muscle does far more than fill out a T-shirt or help you haul groceries. It helps regulate metabolism, steady blood sugar, support bone health, build resilience, and preserve independence as we age.

Most people fixate on the show muscles – the biceps, abs, and glutes. But one of the most important muscles for healthy aging is easy to miss: the gluteus medius.

The gluteus medius sits on the side

of the hip, tucked beneath the larger gluteus maximus. It is not sexy. It will not earn compliments at the beach. But it may be one of the hardest-working muscles in your body. Think of it as your body's suspension system.

Every time you walk, climb stairs, step off a curb, carry groceries, play golf, or balance on one leg to pull on your pants, the gluteus medius is on the job, stabilising the pelvis. Its key role is not to create movement. It is to control it. That matters.

### Real strength

Most people think strength means lifting something heavy. But real strength also means resisting motion you do not want. Can your body stay stable when force hits it? Can your joints stay aligned while your limbs move through space? The gluteus medius is built for this kind of strength.

When this muscle is weak, the pelvis drops, the knee caves inward, and the connective tissues of the lower body wind up absorbing forces they were never meant to absorb. Biomechanists



Libby in action over the decades. Photo: Libby Heath

call these twisting forces torque – rotational stress on joints, tendons, ligaments and cartilage. And torque does not care whether you are 25 or 75. Over time, it can contribute to everything from runner's knee and Achilles trouble to hip pain and low-back discomfort.

The gluteus medius acts like a brake, helping control these forces before they travel downstream and create trouble.

Researchers have linked poor hip abductor strength – which largely reflects gluteus medius function – to worse balance, altered gait, reduced physical function and higher fall risk. Falls may get framed as an aging issue, but nobody wants an unexpected meeting with the ground. Whether you are stepping off a curb while looking at your phone, navigating a slick floor, carrying a squirming toddler or hiking uneven terrain, your ability to recover depends heavily on muscles like this one.

And it trains well – so the payoff is real, regardless of when you start.

Clinical studies show that targeted hip-abductor training can improve balance, walking efficiency, and lower-body function. In plain English: stronger side hips help people move better. Sometimes exercise science really is that straightforward.

### Old-school

You do not need complicated equipment or trendy programming to train the gluteus medius. Some of the best exercises are old-school for a reason. Side-lying leg lifts still do an excellent job of isolating the muscle. Done slowly and with control, they require little more than a floor – and a willingness to look slightly ridiculous for a few minutes.

Lateral band walks – better known as “monster walks” – teach the gluteus medius to stabilise the pelvis while the body is in motion. Single-leg Romanian deadlifts add balance and coordination, forcing the entire lower body to work as a team.

But my personal favourite is still the step-up. The gluteus maximus helps drive the movement, while the gluteus medius works hard to keep the pelvis level. The result is strength, balance, coordination and confidence in one shot. And yes, it also helps build the larger glute muscle – the aesthetic payoff many people are after.

One of the most humbling tests of glute medius strength is the side plank. Add a top-leg lift and you will find out fast whether your hips are as strong as you think. Plenty of otherwise fit adults collapse like a cheap lawn chair.

What these exercises share is simple: they train stability – and they are within reach for nearly everyone. This matters because life itself is unstable. The dog lunges on the leash. A grandchild darts toward the street. The trail turns uneven. The suitcase shifts in your hand. Ageing well requires a body that can respond to those moments quickly and precisely.

Those old photographs reminded me of something else: the wellness industry thrives on novelty. Human biology thrives on consistency.

The best exercise is rarely the newest. Usually, it is the one you will still be doing years from now because it is safe, effective, and sustainable.

The gluteus medius may never become Instagram famous. You cannot exactly show it off at the beach. But it can keep you balanced, protect your joints, save your connective tissue some grief, and help keep you from getting reacquainted with the ground.

Some exercises are still worth doing 40 years later.

*Libby Heath recently became the first Mayo Clinic certified wellness coach in Asia. She shares her insights and advice through her column 'Wellthwise' here in The Phuket News. Please note that if you have a condition that requires medical treatment, consult your doctor. Contact Libby at: BeWellthwise@gmail.com.*

## The August/September 2026 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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

# Want to be in it?

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# Supergirl flies the DC flag with pride

David Griffiths

It seems that whenever a new comic book movie comes out these days fans get really nervous. With Marvel releases it is about whether or not the film will go back to the glory days of Marvel and with DC it's nervousness about what James Gunn is going to do with the DC universe next.

I'll admit that I was one of those fans that felt like I had a comic book ripped out of my hands unexpectedly when DC announced that the Snyder-verse was done and that Gunn would be moving it to creator's seat. But if you remember my review for *Superman*, I was more than impressed – however the final few minutes of the film made me a little nervous about his plans for the character of *Supergirl*.

For me growing up with the 1984 *Supergirl* film I always felt that Supergirl was simply a female version of Superman – there were no real differences in character other than the fact that one was male and one was female. But with Gunn's *Supergirl* (played by Milly Alcock – *House of the Dragon*) we suddenly had a character with a seemingly bad attitude so where this character would end up was anybody's guess.

Well here in *Supergirl*, directed by Craig Gillespie (*Cruella*) we soon find out that she is a hard-drinking 23-year-old who prefers to go off planet so she can feel the full effect of the alcohol on her body.

However, her plans of drinking herself into a stupor on her birthday are soon destroyed when she finds herself having a chance meeting with Ruthye (Eve Ridley – *The Witcher*) – a young girl on a mission to kill the ruthless Krem (Matthias Schoenaerts – *The Danish Girl*) in an act of revenge for the murder of her family.

At first Kara Zor-El/Supergirl is reluctant to get involved but when her beloved pooch Krypto's life hangs in the balance she too enters the chase across the galaxy in pursuit of Krem and his band of barbicans who are kidnapping young girls across the universe.



Milly Alcock as Supergirl. Photo: IMDb

While Kara and Ruthye find themselves coming up against obstacle after obstacle on their planet-hopping adventures they soon find themselves with a powerful ally in their corner – the motorbike riding, cigar smoking bounty hunter Lobo (Jason Momoa – *Aquaman*) who also happens to be chasing down Krem.

## Female clone

Perhaps the smartest idea that Gunn, Gillespie and first-time feature screenwriter Ana Nogueira had with *Supergirl* was to take the action away from Earth. Not only does it open up a whole galaxy of planets and characters for fans to explore – something we haven't seen since *Green Lantern* – but it also provides a good separation from Kara's cousin Clarke Kent (David Corenswet – *Pearl*) that prevents Supergirl simply becoming a female clone of Superman.

The film itself does it times feel like it borrows from a lot of different sources. Krem and his team feel like they have origins in *Farscape* while a lot of the planets that Kara follows him to feel like they have a basis from *Mad Max* or even *John Carter* – but still the film does more than enough to give itself its own identity.

It is a relief to see Nogueira's screenplay allow Kara to grow as a character but having said that at times it does feel like this is more of a Ruthye origins story than Supergirl's own story. Does that mean we will see Ruthye again? I'm not sure but the latter half of this film does see Kara's characterisation shine

through even if perhaps she isn't tested as much as they could of without her powers.

The highlights for me with *Supergirl* though was the brilliant fight sequence that saw Supergirl go up against Krem and his men in an ultimate do or die battle. The slow-motion sequence will remain etched in my mind despite the fact that I pretty sure we saw something similar in *Wonder Woman*.

Then there are also the performances of Schoenaerts and Momoa. Schoenaerts is sensational as Krem and once again he reminds us of just how evil DC villains can be, while Momoa seems to have a lot of fun playing Lobo – perhaps this is a sign that we are more than likely to see Lobo appear again in the Gunn-verse.

What I loved the most about *Supergirl* is the fact that it feels like Gunn is ready to take the DC universe and its characters into some dark places. While I won't spoil exactly what happens in the finale we do see Kara/Supergirl tested to how far she will go and what she does will probably surprise a lot of audience members. It does promise that we should have some interesting times ahead for the character and that has me excited for the future of DC.

*Supergirl* proves that perhaps DC is in safe hands with James Gunn. There are some unexpected moments here and I love the fact that it feels like perhaps once again we are going to see some darker comic book movies that will test the morals of the characters involved. This is a film for the hardcore DC fans.

*Supergirl* is currently screening in Phuket and is rated 13+

3.5/5 Stars

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



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# POP QUIZ

- Where are the Cliffs of Moher located?
- What is the phonetic alphabet word for letter P?
- If you suffer from cynanthropy what do you think you are?
- How was Alexander the Great's body preserved?
- Albert De Salvo was better known as who?

Answers below, centre

# SUDOKU

Hard

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

- Robin Cook thriller
- Makes simpler
- Exchange
- Crown
- Sag
- Mythical craft
- Edward R. Murrow and Paul Harvey
- Visionary
- Some alloys
- Flat
- British author of historical novels and ballads
- Piece of pipe
- Freudian topic
- Biblical prophet
- Great time
- Exceed
- Paula Zahn was one
- Ordeal
- Degree in karate
- MJ's sweetheart, in film
- Spicy Indian dishes
- Photo \_\_\_\_
- Smooths
- Boots
- Wilbur and Orville

Down

- Funny guys
- Eyeball bender
- Euripides drama
- Kind of skeleton
- Big WW II moment
- Mantel piece
- Back-to-work time: abbr.
- Child's bruise
- Gushes
- Bursae
- Usurp
- Be in harmony
- Group of pals, slangily
- Foreshadow
- Land
- Steady

- Lobster look-alike
- Dusk, to Donne
- Use a straw
- Take effect
- Scratch
- Samurai's sash
- Generous slice of the pie
- It's definite
- Family head
- Leftover
- Biblical prophet
- Lacking
- Black cuckoo
- Drum sound
- Boot part
- "Brave New World" drug
- Had
- Jabber
- Sticky sweetener: var. sp.
- Shoe part
- Crack
- Attribute
- Kind of manual
- Stick-to-itiveness
- Questionable
- Bird of myth
- "Sweet!"

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 22 |    |    |    |    |    | 23 | 24 |    |    |    |    | 25 |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    | 26 | 27 |    |    |    |    | 28 |    |    |    |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 |    | 33 |    |    |    |    | 34 |    | 35 | 36 | 37 |
| 38 |    |    |    |    | 39 |    |    |    | 40 | 41 |    |    |    |    |
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|    |    |    |    | 45 |    | 46 | 47 |    |    |    | 48 |    |    |    |
| 49 | 50 | 51 |    |    | 52 |    |    |    |    |    | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 |
| 58 |    |    |    | 59 |    |    |    |    |    | 60 |    |    |    |    |
| 61 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 62 | 63 |    |    |    |    |    |
| 64 |    |    |    |    |    | 65 |    |    |    |    |    | 66 |    |    |
| 67 |    |    |    |    |    | 68 |    |    |    |    |    | 69 |    |    |

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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | U | D | E | S |   | C | U | B | A |   | G | H | E |   |   |
| I | N | E | R | T |   | O | N | U | S |   | F | E | E | R |   |
| L | I | N | E | O | F | S | C | R | I | M | M | A | G | E |   |
| S | T | V |   | O | L | I | O |   | T | A | I | L | O | R |   |
|   |   |   | A | G | O | G |   | T | W | I | N |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   | B | E | T | W | E | E | N | T | H | E | L | I | N |
|   |   |   | L | A | V | E |   | E | I | R | E |   | E | V |   |
|   |   |   | I | T | S |   | S | C | A | N | N | E | D | H |   |
|   |   |   | N | E | E |   | T | A | C | O |   | A | R | C |   |
|   |   |   | I | N | T | H | E | L | I | N | E | O | F | D |   |
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| 6 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 1 |
| 9 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 8 |
| 7 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 7 |
| 5 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| 8 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 5 |
| 4 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 9 |

# GOT YOUR NUMBER

## 3

of the four smokestacks on the *Titanic* worked. The fourth (furthest aft) was added for symmetry.

## 40

percent of people in Vietnam have the last name 'Nguyen', making it nearly impossible for them to trace their heritage beyond a generation or two.

## 128

errors were found in the film *Armageddon* by NASA who ask managers to spot them as part of their training.

## 29,218

US dollars is the top prize in the Sri Lankan version of the TV game show 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire'?

## 5.5 million

Polish people, one-sixth of the population at the time, signed a card in 1926 as a gift to the US to celebrate 150 years of their independence.

Source: *Uberfacts*

# ISLAND VIEW



Tranquil Palm Beach at Koh Yao Yai. Photo by Olga Kozulina

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

**July 10, 138**  
Emperor Hadrian of Rome dies of heart failure at his residence on the bay of Naples, Baiae; he is buried at Rome in the Tomb of Hadrian beside his late wife, Vibia Sabina.

**July 11, 1889**  
Tijuana, Mexico, is founded.

**July 12, 1543**  
King Henry VIII of England marries his sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr, at Hampton Court Palace.

**July 13, 1930**  
The inaugural FIFA World Cup begins in Uruguay.

**July 14, 1902**  
Peruvian explorer and farmer Agustín Lizárraga discovers Machu Picchu, the 'Lost City of the Incas'.



Machu Picchu.

**July 15, 1849**  
The first air raid in history occurs; Austria launches pilotless balloons against the city of Venice.

**July 16, 622**  
The Hijrah of Muhammad begins, marking the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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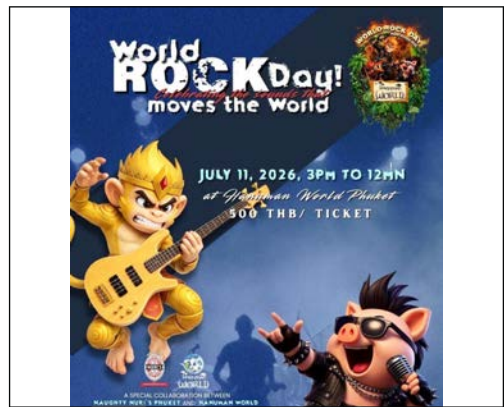
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31 JULY



**Grow Boating Phuket Evening - August 2026**

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Phuket Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm. We are delighted to announce that our drinks sponsor for the evening will be Alpha Revati Yachting - A Boutique Yachting Brand. Inspiring a lifelong love for yachting and maritime life in Thailand, Alpha Revati is your premier destination as a dealer of Jeanneau Boats and for private luxury cruises & boat charters. See <https://www.facebook.com/p/Alpha-Revati-100088142664440/> There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar 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. If you know anyone you think would be interested in coming, please invite them along. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket](https://www.facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket)

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Photos: Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villa



## THE MAI KHAO AS ONE INITIATIVE FORMALLY LAUNCHED

The event, held on June 25, saw over 100 participants from the governmental, private and community sectors unite for The Mai Khao As One initiative. This pioneering initiative supports a dedicated three-person field team to systematically collect and sort debris washed ashore by the tides along four kilometres of Mai Khao coastline. Spearheaded by the Sustainable Maikhaos Foundation in collaboration with the Mai Khao Subdistrict Administrative Organisation, the Sirinat National Park, the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources and the Phuket Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment, this program is funded by 12 leading hotels in the Mai Khao area: Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas, Anantara Vacation Club Mai Khao Phuket, JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, Le Méridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort, Maikhaos Dream Villa Resort & Spa, Maikhaos Hotel, Marriott's Phuket Beach Club, Meliá Phuket Mai Khao, Radisson Blu Resort Phuket Mai Khao Beach, Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa, SALA Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort and Splash Beach Resort Maikhaos Phuket. To find out more visit [facebook.com/sustainablemaikhaosfoundation](https://facebook.com/sustainablemaikhaosfoundation)



## GROW BOATING PHUKET EVENING - JULY 2026

Great turnout on July 3 for this month's Grow Boating Phuket Evening held at the Lock Coffee Bar at the Royal Phuket Marina. In true mariner style the rain did not deter the over 70 people from enjoying another wonderful evening. Thanks to the joint drinks sponsor Blue Paradise and Aqua Thrill. Blue Paradise design unique itineraries to show you the secret corners of the Andaman Sea and Phang Nga Bay - [blueparadisetravel.com](https://blueparadisetravel.com). Aqua Thrill offer a new way to explore the sea with you as the captain. Self-drive your own mini speedboat through the stunning Andaman waters - [aquathrill-thailand.com](https://aquathrill-thailand.com). There was a delicious buffet sponsored by Bluu Asian Kitchen & Bar for all attendees to enjoy. Looking forward to the next event which, for the first time, will be held on the last Friday of the month - July 31. Find more details at [facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket](https://facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket)



Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

## Phuket's annual futsal competition kicks off

### FUTSAL

THE PHUKET PROVINCIAL Administrative Organisation Futsal Cup 2026 officially got underway last Saturday (July 4) with a record 107 teams contesting the week long competition.

Thammawat Wongcharoenyos, President of the Sport Association of Phuket and Sports Authority of Thailand Committee Member oversaw the opening ceremony at the 4,000-seat gymnasium in Saphan Hin.

He was joined by Chinsich Chanarong, Vice President of the Sport Association of Phuket; Rewat Arerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO); Aomduen Phiwthong, Director of the PPAO Tourism and Sports

Division; and Phuket City Deputy Mayor Pibulsak Kittithorakun.

The competition is a collaboration between the PPAO, the Sport Association of Phuket and the Phuket Futsal Club, and sees 107 teams and 1,256 players participating. The competition is divided into two categories and seven age groups: boys and girls under 12, 15 and 18 years old, and the general public category for men and women over 18.

The tournament aims to help develop the standard of futsal players in Phuket while promoting a healthy lifestyle based on the merits of good sportsmanship, said organisers.

The opening match saw the PPAO team take on the Phuket Sports Lovers Club, with the former winning 3-2. *The Phuket News*

# Leclerc reignites F1 title race

## FORMULA ONE

AFP

Charles Leclerc beamed with pleasure and relief last Sunday (July 5) after his long-awaited first win since 2024 – and Ferrari's 250<sup>th</sup> – in an extraordinary British Grand Prix reignited the F1 championship.

As the race ended with a five-lap procession behind the Safety Car, a decision that cost seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton second and Ferrari a likely first 1-2 finish at Silverstone since 2002, the Monegasque cruised to his ninth career win.

"After all the work we put in to try and get feeling back into the car. I found something yesterday and confirmed it today and the feeling is back," said the winner.

The late safety car was deployed after four-time champion Max Verstappen crashed out in his Red Bull while championship leader Kimi Antonelli suffered a broken wheel shield on his Mercedes.

Ferrari had been running first and second before they pitted both cars under the late safety car – a move that saw Leclerc stay in the lead, but which cost Hamilton second as Mercedes' George Russell stayed out and took second place.

Hamilton shrugged off his personal disappointment after claiming a record



Charles Leclerc lifts the trophy on the podium. Photo: AFP

16<sup>th</sup> Silverstone podium and praised Leclerc and Ferrari despite criticism and heated debate about the stewards' decision to conclude the race without a final lap of racing.

Championship leader Antonelli made a poor start from his fifth pole, but fought back and looked set to challenge to win before his race was wrecked by car problems in the closing laps.

He finished 16<sup>th</sup> and pointless, but remains on top of the drivers' title race with 179 points – thanks to his record run of five straight wins earlier in the year – ahead of Mercedes team-mate

George Russell, who finished second, on 154 and Hamilton on 147.

World champion Lando Norris finished fourth in his McLaren with Isack Hadjar in the other Red Bull in fifth.

The Racings Bulls took the next two slots with Liam Lawson sixth and British rookie Arvid Lindblad, 18, coming in seventh on his British Grand Prix debut.

Audi's Gabriel Bortoleto and the Alpine duo of Franco Colapinto and Pierre Gasly rounded out the top 10.

In the constructors' championship, Mercedes have 333 points after seven wins ahead of Ferrari on 255.

## Thailand pledges strong squad at Asian Games

### ASIAN GAMES

THAILAND WILL FIELD A LARGE contingent at the Asian Games with 682 athletes confirmed to compete across 41 sports in Nagoya and Aichi, Japan, from Sept 19-Oct 4.

"The SAT and the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF), together with the national sports associations and the National Olympic Committee, have worked intensively to prepare our athletes. We expect stronger results than in Hangzhou," said Dr Gongsak Yodmanee, Governor of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) on July 1.

At the previous Games in China, Thailand secured 12 gold, 14 silver and 32 bronze medals. However, officials believe the experience of last year's SEA Games in Bangkok and the Asian Beach Games in Sanya has provided valuable momentum. With mere months remaining, training camps and support programmes are being stepped up to sharpen performance.

Funding has already been allocated not only for the Asian Games but also for the Asian Para Games, scheduled for Oct 18-24, and for live broadcasts to be carried on the T-Sports channel.

"We want the Thai public to cheer our team and share in their journey," com-



Gongsak. Photo: Bangkok Post

mented Dr Gongsak.

The Games will feature 43 sports and 469 medal events, ranging from athletics, swimming and boxing to newer additions including e-sports, skateboarding and breaking. Thailand's delegation will compete in everything from sepak takraw and taekwondo to rugby sevens, sailing and weightlifting, reflecting the breadth of the nation's sporting ambition.

The Asian Games, first staged in New Delhi in 1951, have grown into the continent's largest multi-sport event, second only to the Olympics in scale.

Nagoya and Aichi will host athletes from across Asia, with Japan promising state-of-the-art venues and a festival atmosphere. *Bangkok Post*

## Thai padel team set for historic debut at Asian Games in Japan

### ASIAN GAMES

THAILAND WILL SEND four padel athletes to compete at the 20<sup>th</sup> Asian Games in Japan as the sport has been included as a medal event in the regional tournament for the first time.

While the Thailand Padel Association is in the process of registering as a recognised national sports association with the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), the national team has received approval from the National Olympic Committee of Thailand (NOCT) and will now be able to participate in Japan.

"The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) had previously requested the participation of padel athletes from the National Olympic Committee of Thailand, citing the positive performance of Thai athletes at the Asia Cup in Doha, Qatar, last October," said Supalak Chairot, president of the Thailand Padel Association.

"Thai female athletes



Thai athletes at the Asia Cup in Doha last October. Photo: Bangkok Post

achieved a sixth-place finish out of 17 countries, and since the sport's Asian governing body is recognised by the OCA, there is a desire for Thailand to send athletes to this year's Asian Games.

"However, the Padel Association is in the process of registering as a recognised national body with the Sports Authority of Thailand and therefore our athletes cannot compete under the allocated budget. We thank the Thai Olympic Committee for its effort in finding a way to send our athletes to the Asian Games, but the association will be

responsible for all expenses," she added.

There will be two events – the men's doubles and women's doubles – and two gold medals up for grabs at the 20<sup>th</sup> Asian Games. The Thai team include two men and two women: Arnav Rawal, Stefano Mocchiola-male, Natalie Narkprasert and Darres Srirungreang. They are coached by Spaniard Miguel Melero Bernal.

Thailand's strongest competitors are hosts Japan, Iran, and Indonesia, added Supalak. The padel competition will be held from Sept 29 to Oct 3. *Bangkok Post*

# Drama builds at World Cup

## FOOTBALL

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Their World Cup journey may be over but tiny Cape Verde leave with their heads held high having produced one of the most astonishing stories in the tournament's near 100 year history in Miami last Friday (July 3).

Having qualified from their group unbeaten in their first ever appearance at the competition, the minnows were drawn against defending world champions Argentina in the first knockout round. Led by the irrepressible Lionel Messi, La Albiceleste were only one of three teams to navigate the group stage with a 100% record and it was deemed a mere formality that they would swat Cape Verde aside with relative ease.

As expected, Argentina took the lead in the 29<sup>th</sup> minute through a sublime Messi finish. However, the tenacious Blue Sharks refused to lie down and Deon Duarte equalised on the



Argentina's Lionel Messi and Cape Verde's Sidney Lopes Cabral battle for the ball during their epic World Cup knockout clash on July 3. Photo: AFP

hour mark to send the game into extra time.

Lisandro Martinez gave the champions the lead in the 92<sup>nd</sup> minute before Sidney Lopes Cabral produced one of the World Cup's greatest ever goals and most memorable moments 11 minutes later when he cut inside to the left of the box and whipped a curling strike over goalkeeper Emiliano Mar-

tinez into the top corner to make it 2-2, prompting scenes of wild celebration.

The greatest ever World Cup shock wasn't to be, however, as Diney Borges' 111<sup>th</sup> minute own goal meant the team ranked 64<sup>th</sup> by FIFA were heading home and Argentina progressed to face Egypt in the quarter-finals.

Egypt beat Australia 4-2 on penalties earlier Friday

after the game finished 1-1 and were scheduled to face Argentina on Tuesday (July 7), the same day Switzerland and Colombia play their round of 16 clash. The winners of these games will play in the quarter-finals on Sunday (July 12).

### FURIOUS ROW

The round of 16 knockout stage started last Saturday (July 4), with tournament

favourites France toiling to a 1-0 win against Paraguay thanks to Kylian Mbappe's 70<sup>th</sup> penalty. Their quarter-final match is against Morocco, who dumped co-hosts Canada out with a comfortable 3-0 win in their round of 16 clash.

There was huge controversy ahead of the United States game against Belgium in Seattle on Monday after FIFA cleared the red card awarded to star US striker Folarin Balogun in the previous round 2-0 win against Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A personal phone call from US President Donald Trump to FIFA chief Gianni Infantino saw the unprecedented move, with the fact a host government intervened to influence and enhance the host nation's chances igniting a furious row that rocked the tournament.

Ultimately the US lost 1-4 to Belgium, who now face Spain in the quarter-final after they won the Iberian derby against Portugal 1-0 on Monday.

An Erling Haaland-inspired Norway beat Brazil 2-1 on Sunday, with the

irrepressable Manchester City striker on target twice to take his tournament tally to six goals.

Norway face England in the quarter-final tomorrow (July 11) after The Three Lions produced a remarkable performance to defeat Mexico 3-2 last Sunday, the first time the home side had lost at the Azteca Stadium in almost 13 years.

A Jude Bellingham brace just 90 seconds apart and a Harry Kane penalty saw Thomas Tuchel's side progress in a pulsating match, with Julián Quiñones and Raul Jimenez replying for the hosts.

England had to dig deep in high altitude against a partisan home crowd, playing most of the second half with 10 men after Jarell Quansah was sent off for a dangerous tackle. A dubious VAR decision also saw the home side awarded a penalty that Jimenez converted, while 12 minutes of extra time further tested England's resilience although they managed to stand firm and progress to the quarter-final with Norway in Miami.

## Searching for the best club team in world rugby



### THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

I KNOW THE WORLD RUGBY calendar is stretched and there is major concern over player workloads. However, the quality of rugby on show in this year's domestic league finals suggests there could be huge global demand for an end-of-season competition to find the world's best club team.

Squads have grown in number, so player availability would not be a problem. The "Big Four" in world rugby could fill stadiums across the globe if space could be found in an already congested calendar. When they consider the revenue, they will find a place!

Leinster (URC), Hurricanes (Super Rugby), Northampton (Gallagher Premiership), and Toulouse (Top 14 champions) could play a semi-final on a Wednesday and a final on a Sunday somewhere in the world and fill any stadium. Supporters could feast on the world's best players.

The current football World Cup has opened the rugby world's eyes to the availability of fantastic stadiums capable of holding huge crowds. I had the good fortune to visit the Dallas Stadium when it was opened and it was mind-blowing. If you sat high in the stands, a 50-meter-



Super Rugby champs the Hurricanes. Photo: AFP

wide TV ran from left to right in front of you and down both sides of the pitch. It was far more than a pie and a pint promotion.

Three huge games in one week could generate significant global TV revenue. Sponsors, as well as tech billionaires, would no doubt be interested.

The All Blacks occasionally play Ireland in Chicago en route to a Six Nations tour. Every Irish person in Chicago wants a ticket – and usually gets one. We can't hold sport back. The English and Australian Rugby League organisations already have a pre-season tournament in Las Vegas. Yes, Las Vegas – and spectators from the north of England budget sufficiently to go.

I say let's do it!

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# Sport



**World Cup  
knockouts  
deliver > p15**

## TRAILBLAZERS

### Popular Phuket Trail race set for fifth year

Photo: Phuket Trail / Facebook



#### TRAIL RUNNING

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Organisers have confirmed that the Phuket leg of this year's Southern Thailand Trail Series will take place across the weekend of Sept 12-13, with over 1,000 local and international competitors expected to be involved.

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual edition of the increasingly-popular off-road running competition will be hosted at MIRA Valley in Si Sunthon, Thalang. The event features a variety of distances, including 100 kilometre, 75km, 55km, 40km, 25km, 15km and a 7km Fun Trail. All race categories are open to male and female competitors, with cash prizes and trophies up for grabs for the top three placed finishers in each.

The Southern Thailand Trail Series 2026 is a major five-race championship held across five

southern provinces between June and November. The 2026 season features scenic jungle routes, coastal views, and elevation challenges, attracting both elite and amateur trail runners. The races include: Kapong Trail in Phang Nga, which took place June 5-6; Ngorn Nak Trail in Krabi on July 11-12; Aokhanom Trail in Nakhon Sri Thammarat on Aug 15-16; Phuket Trail on Sept 12-13; and Samui Trail in Surat Thani on Nov 7-8.

The series is designed to allow each province to showcase a feature that is considered unique, with Phuket highlighting the natural beauty of its pristine forests and local environment at MIRA Valley, organisers said.

The course location at MIRA Valley will take runners through a challenging yet pristine landscape encompassing dense tropical forest, steep climbs, winding creeks, wetlands, and tranquil lakes.

#### NATURAL BEAUTY

An official press conference to disclose details of the Phuket event was held at Decathlon Phuket in Kathu on June 19, over seen by Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) Deputy Mayor Anupap Wechwanichsanong, who was joined by: Warin Khaothong, Secretary-General of the Phuket Provincial Sports Association; Anus Buanak, representative of the Phuket office of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT); Mahachart Suwannarat, Director of the Phuket Trail; and selected representatives from various public and private sector entities.

"On behalf of the PPAO we are fully prepared and happy to support this event to the very best of our ability," said Mr Anupap. "This includes a full commitment to providing all required services, including comprehensive safety, to ensure a safe, fun and memorable occasion for all involved."

"Additionally, we hope visitors are also able to experience more of what Phuket has to offer while they are here, including the wonderful beaches, local shopping and cuisine, natural landmarks and the historic old town."

#### VIBRANT

The event helps promote Phuket as a world class sports tourism destination and will help stimulate the local economy during the low season, Mr Anupap explained, adding that last year's event generated close to B10million for the local economy.

Meanwhile, Mr Warin explained how exercise is becoming increasingly popular among people in Thailand as more importance and focus is being attributed to improving overall levels of health. He further explained how trail running especially has surged in popularity in recent years with more and more people attracted

by the relative accessibility of the sport which still provides a sufficient fitness challenge.

"I would like to invite both keen, experienced runners and relative newcomers who have never undertaken this route or competed in this event to open their minds and get involved to have a new experience together," said Mr Warin.

Mr Mahachart explained the decision to switch venues from Bang Wad reservoir in Kathu to MIRA Valley was merely down to providing a fresh new route that offers an equally if not more challenging yet fun experience for participants.

"The event has grown each year and is surging in popularity," Mr Mahachart said. "We already have expressions of interest from runners from 36 countries and many from within Thailand so we expect a fun, vibrant occasion that will provide an unforgettable experience for all involved."

## Phuket packs a punch with jiu-jitsu training course

#### JIU-JITSU

A TRAINING COURSE aiming to enhance national proficiency standards in the combat sport of jiu-jitsu was held in Phuket recently.

The course, entitled "Jiu-Jitsu Coach Training Program for Professional Standards 2026", was held at the CIC Skills Development and Learning Center in Saphan Hin on the weekend of June 27-28 and saw

26 students of differing ages and levels take part from various southern provinces.

Thammawat Wongcharoenyos, President of the Sport Association of Phuket and Sports Authority of Thailand Committee Member, oversaw the certificate distribution ceremony on June 28 to all students who successfully passed the course.

"This training was specifically for students based in the southern region



Photo: Sports Association Phuket

of Thailand who want to develop and establish themselves as coaches within the sport of jiu-jitsu," commented Mr Thammawat.

"It is designed to share and impart knowledge and

technique in order to improve the overall standard of the jiu-jitsu industry nationally and to elevate the standards of sports personnel to an international level while creating a network of quality coaches nationwide," he added.

"I congratulate all the students here today who attended and passed the course and wish them all well in their future endeavours."

The latest training

course is part of the Jiu-Jitsu Association of Thailand's policy to develop coaches and athletes within the sport throughout the country. It came after the Association previously admitted a shortfall of quality in past coach development courses that failed to adequately meet the necessary standards, both in terms of quantity and quality.

Joining Mr Thammawat were: Dr Chanchai

Suksuwan, President of the Jiu-Jitsu Association of Thailand; Sumet Akrapong, director of the Phuket office of the Jiu-Jitsu Association of Thailand; Thachanon Angkhanapilas, President of the Phuket City Municipality Council; in addition to selected coaches, sports personnel and athletes from various jiu-jitsu gyms and academies based in a number of southern provinces.

The Phuket News