

STEEL BEAM PLUNGES FROM CONDO CRANE INTO HOME > PAGE 3

WASTE NOT



Photo: Phuket City Municipality

PHUKET TURNS TO RESORT-LED SOLUTIONS AS DAILY TRASH MOUNTS

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket's worsening waste crisis has pushed provincial authorities to look beyond conventional disposal methods, with officials now studying resort-based waste management systems as potential models for the island's long-term environmental survival.

Governor Nirat Pongsitthiwat last week led a high-level delegation to The Racha Hotel on Koh Racha Yai, south of Phuket, to examine its integrated waste and wastewater management systems, marking a renewed push to address the province's mounting rubbish problem at its source.

The visit followed a series of

environmental protection activities on Racha Yai Island, including the placement of mooring buoys and coral reef protection buoys, as well as a beach cleanup at Plub Pla Beach to highlight the focus on safeguarding fragile marine and coastal ecosystems.

Governor Nirat was joined by Vice Admiral Veerudhom Muangchin, Commander of Royal Thai Navy Region 3 and Director of Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center Region 3 (Thai MECC 3), along with senior provincial officials and representatives from relevant agencies.

The delegation was welcomed by Daniel Lim Teck Hock, Managing Director of The Racha Hotel, who guided officials through the resort's waste management

operations, which have been designed to function independently on the small tourist island.

During the visit, officials observed an on-site incinerator capable of disposing of approximately 800 kilogrammes of waste per day, alongside a biogas system that processes about 500kg of waste daily. The combined systems significantly reduce the amount of rubbish requiring external disposal, while limiting environmental impact.

Officials noted that the resort's approach reflects a systematic, closed-loop waste management model suited to island environments, where space, transport capacity and ecological sensitivity present ongoing challenges.

The Racha Hotel has placed particular emphasis on collaborative environmental management on Koh Racha Yai, working closely with local administrative organisations, neighbouring hotels and restaurants to address wastewater and solid waste issues collectively. The integrated approach covers waste reduction at the source, intermediate processing, and final disposal.

Governor Nirat said the model demonstrated at The Racha Hotel could be adapted for use across Phuket, particularly in island communities and key tourist destinations.

"Phuket Province places serious priority on solving waste problems in all dimensions," he said. "This includes reducing waste at the..."

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Birthday boy Baz turns 77 in cycling heaven



SPORT PAGE 16

ASEAN Para Games medal quest for Thais



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News



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Landfill pressure intensifies

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...source, proper separation, effective disposal, and building cooperation from all sectors to support sustainable tourism development.”

He added that study visits such as this play a crucial role in exchanging practical knowledge that can be applied across the province to create balanced, environmentally friendly tourist areas over the long term.

The urgency of Phuket's waste challenge is difficult to overstate. Provincial officials report that more than 1,200 tonnes of rubbish are generated daily, driven by tourism, population growth and consumption patterns. The Phuket City municipal landfill at Saphan Hin currently holds an estimated 1.2 million tonnes of accumulated waste awaiting disposal.

Despite these volumes, Phuket City's incinerators can process only about 500 tonnes per day, roughly 40% of the total daily waste generated. The remainder must be transported to landfills elsewhere in the province, many of which are nearing capacity.

Phuket Municipality has a registered population of about 72,000 residents, while the province as a whole has a recognised

registered population of only about 450,000 – despite estimates by some leading figures claiming that the island is currently home to nearly 2 million people. During peak tourism periods, the number of people on the island swells, dramatically increasing waste generation.

SEPARATION

According to the Pollution Control Department, only about 10% of Phuket's waste is recycled, while approximately 60% consists of organic or wet waste, highlighting the importance of waste separation at the source.

In a parallel effort, provincial officials and business representatives recently conducted a study visit to Katathani Phuket Beach Resort, regarded as a local benchmark for systematic waste and water management.

The resort operates a zero food waste system through on-site separation and treatment, significantly reducing the volume of waste requiring off-site disposal. Officials also examined Katathani's water management operations, which include natural water sources, raw water supply systems, and a wastewater treatment facility comprising five treatment ponds.



Photo: PR Phuket

Treated water is reused for irrigation within the resort grounds, while wastewater is fully treated before discharge into the sea. Sludge generated during the treatment process is further processed and converted into fertiliser.

Katathani Group CEO Sombat Atiset said the company has prioritised environmental management for nearly three decades.

“Our organic waste system can handle several tonnes per day without using fuel or heavy machinery,” Mr Sombat said. “Wastewater sludge is converted into fertiliser, meaning we rely very little on external disposal services.”

Governor Nirat said the province intends to draw on such models to strengthen waste management across Phuket, stressing that the problem cannot be solved by the government alone.

“Waste management is a major challenge that requires cooperation from all sectors,” he said. “Hotels, businesses, local communities and government agencies must work together.”

That message was reinforced last week with the launch of a wet waste separation initiative at Phuket Provincial Hall, part of a broader effort to promote waste management at the source.

The programme was formally introduced on Jan 16 during a meeting chaired by Phuket Provincial Office Head Narong On-in. Representatives from relevant government agencies were instructed to strictly separate wet or organic waste from other refuse and prevent mixing at the source.

Phuket Provincial Hall has been designated as a model site, with all

departments required to manage wet waste in a concrete and systematic manner in line with provincial policy.

The governor called on officials to lead by example, stressing that sustained cooperation is essential to achieving meaningful reductions in waste volume.

The wet waste separation system is being implemented simultaneously across all departments starting Jan 19, with the Phuket Provincial Office tasked with monitoring progress and reporting directly to the governor.

A designated wet waste disposal point has also been established outside Phuket Provincial Hall, complete with clear signage and separate bins, serving both officials and members of the public while encouraging correct waste sorting.

Later the same day, Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam chaired the first meeting of the provincial Working Group for Waste Management at Source for 2026. Attendees included heads of government departments, municipal officials, and Environmental and Pollution Control Office Region 15 Director Chanthira Duangsai.

The working group reviewed waste volumes at the Phuket Provincial Waste

Disposal Center and discussed enforcement of waste transport regulations issued by the Ministry of Interior in 2024.

Discussions focused on expanding organic waste separation among local authorities, businesses, hotels, markets, housing estates and schools, promoting environmentally friendly packaging, discouraging foam use, ensuring garbage truck readiness, and strengthening community waste banks and environmental volunteer programmes.

Officials said pilot inspections will be carried out in Patong and Kathu municipalities, alongside workshops aimed at improving waste management efficiency province-wide.

Taken together, the measures signal a growing recognition that Phuket's waste problem must be tackled at its roots – not merely managed at the landfill, Governor Nirat said.

As provincial authorities turn to successful resort-led models and demand stronger participation from all sectors, the challenge ahead will be turning policy, pilot projects and good intentions into lasting change for Thailand's most visited island, he added.

Phuket records 40 child violence, welfare cases in three months

A TOTAL OF 40 CHILD-related violence and welfare cases were recorded in Phuket in just three months, between Oct 1, 2025 and Jan 8, 2026, with officials warning that sexual abuse cases largely involved perpetrators within the child's own family.

The figures were revealed during a meeting of the Provincial Justice Administration Development Committee (PJADC), chaired by Vice Governor Adul Chuthong at Phuket Provincial Hall last week.

Data presented by the Phuket Shelter for Children and Families at the meeting showed that the cases included nine incidents of domestic

violence and two cases of sexual abuse committed by stepfathers.

Other cases involved children under the age of 12 committing offences, children running away from home, abandoned children, blackmail cases, undocumented migrant children and stray children.

The Phuket Shelter for Children and Families said 17 cases were linked to parental failure, with most involving parents imprisoned on drug-related charges. Of the total cases, 18 children were placed under protection outside child welfare centres, while 14 cases remain under legal proceedings.

For comparison, during the previous fiscal year from Oct 1, 2024 to Sept 30, 2025, the Child



Photo: Phuket Shelter for Children and Families

Protection Center handled 67 cases within its facilities and provided home-based protection and follow-up care for 157 children, bringing the total to 224 cases.

On the police front, Pol Lt Col Wicheth Suwanno of the Phuket Provincial Police, said officers were responsible for investigating cases and coordinating with partner agencies to address issues affecting children and families. He noted that last year police recorded 267 complaints related to abuse and domestic violence, with 241 cases leading to arrests involving 354 suspects.

Despite not all cases reported finding their way to court, Wichian Chaisorn, Director of the Phuket Provincial Justice Office, said sexual violence and abuse cases under court proceedings last year rose to 213 cases, an increase from 82 cases in 2024.

Officials at the meeting identified strained family rela-

tionships, drug abuse, divorce, lack of parental supervision and limited awareness of children's rights and self-protection as key risk factors contributing to abuse and violence against children.

The meeting also reviewed progress on youth-focused initiatives, including a Youth Leadership Camp aimed at building social resilience and a support centre for ex-prisoners and job seekers.

“The initiatives form part of a broader effort to strengthen child protection mechanisms, address violence at its root causes and improve long-term justice and welfare outcomes for vulnerable children in Phuket,” Vice Governor Adul said.

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

Hotel room break-in by staffer

The Phuket News

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Officials have warned that a well-known hotel in Cherng Talay could face licence consequences following an attempted room break-in by a staff member using a master key card, an incident that triggered widespread concern after a video went viral on social media.

An investigative team from the Phuket Provincial Office conducted a formal inspection at the Holiday Inn Resort Phuket Surin Beach on Monday (Jan 19), led by Phuket Vice Governor Rungruang Thimabutr. He was joined by Provincial Administration Chief Thanet Navalong, Provincial Security Officer Danai Sukskul and Thalang Senior District Officer Wisut Romint.

The inspection followed reports of an unauthorised attempt to enter a guest room using a key card, raising serious concerns over tourist safety. The room was occupied by a female DJ, Mirinda Nalinratanawadee, who filed an official complaint at Cherng Talay Police Station last Saturday after the incident.

News of the case spread rapidly after Ms Mirinda shared a video online describing how a man



Phuket Vice Governor Rungruang Thimabutr (centre, left) joins a hotel representative in talking to the press about the incident. Photo: PR Phuket

attempted to enter her room late at night, but was unable to do so because the door was locked from the inside.

Police later reviewed CCTV footage and tracked down the suspect, who subsequently surrendered. Initial reports widely but incorrectly identified the man as the hotel's head of security.

In response to the national attention surrounding the incident, Mr Rungruang said the inspection was ordered by Phuket Governor Nirat Pongsitthaworn to

establish the facts, verify legal compliance and assess the hotel's security systems to restore public confidence.

Preliminary findings confirmed the hotel is currently in the process of renewing its hotel business licence, which expired on Dec 31, 2025. The establishment is registered as a Category 3 hotel with 256 rooms, located in Moo 3, Cherng Talay Subdistrict, Thalang District, according to the official inspection report.

Mr Rungruang stressed

that under the Hotel Act, hotel operators and managers are directly responsible for maintaining guest registers for at least one year, reporting guest information to the registrar and complying with Section 38 of the law, which requires operators to prevent unlawful activity or concealment within hotel premises.

"This matter is of utmost importance to administrative authorities," Mr Rungruang said. "If it is found that the hotel was

involved in, or negligent in performing its duties, this may result in the non-renewal of its hotel business licence."

During the inspection, hotel representatives clarified details of the incident to correct earlier public reporting.

Thiramon Lapsawat, the hotel's Human Resources Manager and Group Director of People and Culture, told officials that the incident was caused by an individual who allegedly forged another employee's identification card and deleted some CCTV footage. The hotel said it immediately launched an internal investigation, gathered evidence and filed a police complaint for trespassing at night.

The suspect was identified as Kanisorn 'Bird' Nuanglab, who holds the position of LP Supervisor (Loss Prevention Supervisor). The hotel confirmed he was not the head of security, contrary to inaccurate information previously circulated online.

Mr Thiramon said the suspect has entered the legal process with police and is no longer employed by the hotel.

The hotel also confirmed it provided immediate assistance to the affected

guest, including arranging a room change, issuing a full refund excluding food charges, and maintaining ongoing communication and updates. It added that its security systems are now under review and being strengthened to prevent similar incidents.

Phuket provincial officials reiterated that enforcement action in this case was taken solely in the interest of public safety.

"These measures are for the safety of all citizens and tourists, without discrimination, whether they are celebrities or ordinary members of the public," Mr Rungruang said, adding that authorities would act swiftly to uphold safety standards and protect Phuket's tourism image.

Following the incident, the hotel issued a formal apology, acknowledging the impact on guest safety and confidence.

"The hotel deeply apologises for the incident that occurred, which has affected the feelings and safety of our guests," the statement said, adding that the hotel had filed a police report, was fully cooperating with authorities, and had conducted an internal audit with a strict review and upgrade of security measures.

Steel beam falls from crane, pierces home

CONSTRUCTION AT THE Petit Tycoon condominium project in Cherng Talay has been ordered halted for 30 days, after a steel beam fell from a crane and landed inside a house below.

The steel reinforcing beam fell from a crane at the construction site on Soi Surin 8/3 in Cherng Talay, at about 8pm on Jan 14.

The beam pierced the homeowner's house, narrowly missing residents inside, including children. Although no injuries were reported, the impact caused structural damage and cracking throughout the home.

"Cherng Talay Tambon Administrative Organisation [OrBorTor] issued an order suspending construction and prohibiting the use of the building to allow the project owner to carry out improvements and implement safety measures in line with relevant laws," explained Aphichat Deekongsiang, Director of



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub



Cherng Talay OrBorTor's Engineering Division.

"The measures are in accordance with the Building Control Act, announcements of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and the safety measures outlined in the project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report, which had been submitted to the OrBorTor for consideration prior to implementation," he added.

"If the project owner wishes to resume construction after the suspension period, they must report to and receive approval from Cherng Talay OrBorTor first, and must fully comply with all prescribed safety measures," Mr Aphichat noted.

Meanwhile, Cherng Talay Police confirmed that, as far as they are concerned, the case has been cleared with no legal action taken.

Cherng Talay Police Chief Pol

Col Ekkarat Plaiduang said The Petit Tycoon condominium project had paid compensation of about B70,000 to the affected homeowner, who subsequently withdrew a complaint filed with police.

"The payment was made the day after the incident, and the matter is now considered closed," Pol Col Ekkarat said.

He explained that the offence under investigation was property

damage, which is a compoundable offence that can be settled privately.

"Once the victim withdrew the complaint after receiving compensation, the police investigation was terminated," he said.

Pol Col Ekkarat also confirmed that no charges or penalties related to construction safety failures were filed.

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

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Indian tourist dies after erratic behaviour at EDC

AN INDIAN TOURIST has died after collapsing following erratic behaviour at the Electric Daisy Carnival Thailand 2026 (EDC Thailand) in Cherng Talay, Thalang Police have confirmed.

Police were notified of the death at about 3:15am last Sunday (Jan 18), the final day of the festival, after Thalang Hospital reported the incident to authorities, said Pol Lt Col Thanaphop Rattanaburi, an investigator at Thalang Police Station.

The deceased was identified as 28-year-old Jain Saksha. A preliminary examination found no visible wounds or signs of physical assault, police said.

Investigators found that Mr Saksha had attended the music festival earlier that night. After leaving the event, he reportedly became agitated and went on a rampage, damaging property in the surrounding area.

Police said a car linked to the incident was later found parked outside Wat Sompharong in



Photo: NBT Phuket

Cherng Talay. Emergency medical services were called to the scene, and Mr Saksha was taken by ambulance to Thalang Hospital.

Upon arrival, he was found to be in a state of shock. Despite medical treatment, he was later pronounced dead in the emergency room.

The attending doctor was unable to determine the cause of death, prompting police to order a further medical examination. The body has since been transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital, for a full post-mortem examination.

Pol Lt Col Thanaphop said there was no immediate evidence of foul play and that the death is being treated as non-suspicious pending autopsy results.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Man loses B700k ring to pickpocket

Eakkapop Thongtub
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A man who planned to surprise his girlfriend with a diamond engagement ring at the Electric Daisy Carnival (EDC) in Phuket has been left devastated after falling victim to a pickpocketing incident during the crowded music festival.

The incident occurred at about 9pm last Saturday (Jan 17) near the main stage area.

The victim, identified only as 'Mr Golf', said he and his girlfriend travelled from Chiang Rai to attend EDC Phuket after seeing a designated "proposal zone" advertised at the venue. The couple had already become engaged in October and hoped to take a commemorative photograph at the site.

To keep the ring safe, Mr Golf said he placed it inside his wallet, which he kept in a shoulder bag. He arrived later than usual after spending time at the beach and having dinner before entering the festival grounds.

Shortly after entering the densely packed main stage



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

area, Mr Golf said a large man bumped into both him and his girlfriend, causing them to stumble forward. At the time, he did not suspect anything was wrong.

About 10 minutes later, his phone began alerting him to multiple credit card transactions.

"I received alerts for 15 to 20 transactions in foreign currency, all in UAE dirhams," he said. "At first, I thought my cards had been hacked."

On checking his bag, he discovered his wallet was missing. The thief had taken six to seven credit cards from four to five different banks and attempted multiple transactions ranging from B50,000 to B80,000 each.

The total attempted fraudulent spending was estimated at B300,000 to B400,000, though Mr Golf said he contacted the banks in time to freeze the accounts.

However, he said the greatest loss was his girlfriend's engagement ring — a three-carat diamond valued at about B700,000 to B800,000 and engraved with both of their names.

Also stolen was a B500 banknote given to him by his grandmother shortly before she passed away.

Mr Golf said he had not consumed alcohol and was fully aware at the time. He later filed a complaint at Cherng Talay Police Station, where an investigation is ongoing.

Rawai illegal rentals shut down

POLICE HAVE ARRESTED two Belarusian nationals for operating an unlicensed car and motorbike rental business using Thai nominees, following a series of traffic accidents involving foreigners driving without valid licences.

The business was run entirely by foreigners who managed rentals and payments themselves, hiring out vehicles without verifying driving licences, Chalong Police said last Friday (Jan 16).

Thai citizens were listed as partners to circumvent foreign ownership restrictions, they said.

An investigation also traced multiple accidents to the rental shop on Saiyuan Rd in Rawai, they said.

Investigators last Wednesday (Jan 14) raided the rental shop and an accounting firm in Chalong to collect evidence. The



Photo: Bangkok Post

following day, the Phuket Provincial Court issued arrest warrants.

The two Belarusians, a man and a woman whose names were not released, were charged with operating a restricted business without authorisation and using Thai nominees to illegally conduct commercial activities reserved for Thai nationals.

Under Thai law, foreigners are prohibited from engaging in certain businesses listed in Schedule Three without proper permits. Using Thai citizens as nominee shareholders to evade these restrictions constitutes a criminal offence. *Bangkok Post*

Uzbek tourist dies after hotel plunge

A 25-YEAR-OLD UZBEKISTANI tourist has died after jumping from the fourth floor of a hotel in Cherng Talay, with police confirming marijuana was found in his system.

Thalang Police were notified at about 6pm last Sunday (Jan 18) by staff at Thalang Hospital that a foreign tourist had died after falling from a building in Cherng Talay. The man later succumbed to his injuries in the hospital's emergency room.

Pol Lt Col Niwat Timket, an investigator at Thalang Police Station, was assigned to the case and informed Thalang Police Chief Pol Col Nikorn Chuthong.

Hospital staff said the man, identified as Dilshod Obidov, had been transported earlier that afternoon from a hotel in Soi Cherng Talay 14 by the Cherng Talay Municipality rescue unit and a Thalang Hospital ambulance. Despite resuscitation efforts, he was pronounced dead at about 4:15pm.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Witnesses told police the tourist appeared normal earlier in the day, but at about 2:30pm became agitated, repeatedly calling out for his mother before opening a window and jumping from the fourth floor.

Police said preliminary drug tests detected marijuana in his system. A joint medical examination was conducted before the body was transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital for a forensic autopsy. The Uzbekistani Embassy has been notified.

If you or someone you know needs emotional support, contact the Samaritans of Thailand at 02-113-6789 (English & Thai) or the Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai).

Eakkapop Thongtub

Anutin promises road projects

The Phuket News
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Bhumjaithai Party leader Anutin Charnvirakul visited Phuket last week to explain government policy positions, address concerns over traffic and border security and campaign for the party's local candidates, as senior party figures insisted that key infrastructure projects, including the island's long-planned tunnel, remain on track and will not carry toll fees.

Anutin, accompanied by Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn and other senior party members, met residents and vendors at the Fresh Market in Phuket Town on Jan 14, drawing large crowds of supporters, tourists and locals eager to greet the delegation and take photographs.

During media interviews, Anutin rejected claims that problems involving foreign tourists driving recklessly were linked to Thailand's visa-free entry policy, insisting the issue lay instead with discipline and enforcement.

He said authorities,



Photo: PR Phuket

particularly traffic police, must strictly apply existing laws to all road users without exception.

"The problem is not visas, it is discipline," Anutin said, adding that law enforcement agencies had been instructed to act firmly and consistently.

Addressing questions on the Thai-Cambodian border situation, Anutin said national sovereignty remained a core issue for all Thais and reaffirmed the government's commitment to protecting the country's territorial integrity.

He stressed that Thailand would not allow

any encroachment on its land, saying his work was guided by principles of equality and duty rather than political advantage. He likened political responsibility to a golf competition, saying success depended on equal skill, rules and effort for everyone.

Mr Phiphat, meanwhile, focused on Phuket's long-standing traffic congestion, confirming that the tunnel project had not been cancelled and that there was a clear government policy against charging toll fees for its use.

He explained that the project was currently

undergoing legal procedures due to the caretaker government period, but remained part of the administration's transport plans.

Mr Phiphat also outlined short-term measures aimed at easing congestion, including increasing the number of traffic lanes where possible, adjusting the number of traffic lights, and expanding public transport options.

He said the government was also promoting the use of electric vehicles (EVs) as part of efforts to reduce traffic density and improve air quality on the island.

As part of the visit, Anutin actively campaigned for Bhumjaithai's Phuket candidates, particularly Ploytalay Laksmisangchan, who is contesting Constituency 1. He was joined by Mr Phiphat, the party's southern regional commander, and former Government Spokesperson Traisulee Traisaranakul, a party-list candidate.

The atmosphere at the market was lively, with vendors and residents calling out to Anutin, offering flowers and posing for photos. Several people remarked that it was their first time seeing him in person, while others wished him success in the upcoming election.

Some vendors raised questions about the party's economic policies, prompting Anutin to explain the 'Khon La Khrueng Plus' (Half-Half Plus) scheme, which he said builds on existing cost-of-living support measures by expanding coverage to more goods and areas.

He said the policy was designed to reduce household expenses while strengthening the grass-

roots economy. Residents also raised concerns about border issues during the walkabout. Anutin reassured them, saying he did not want to see border checkpoints reopened unnecessarily and urged people not to worry.

Later, supporters presented him with flower garlands and offered words of encouragement, expressing hopes that the Bhumjaithai Party would secure a strong election result.

Before leaving the market, Anutin briefly mounted a bicycle bearing the candidate's campaign signage, holding up his fingers to indicate the candidate's number, before cycling out to continue meeting residents in surrounding areas.

Anutin spent more than an hour engaging with the public during his Phuket visit, which also included paying respects at a local shrine.

The Bhumjaithai Party's Phuket candidates are Ploytalay Laksmisangchan for Constituency 1, Sanakorn Kisin for Constituency 2, and Wiwat Jindaphol for Constituency 3.

Mooring buoys installed to protect Racha Yai reefs

PHUKET GOVERNOR Nirat Pongsithavorn has joined the Royal Thai Navy's Third Naval Area Command in installing new mooring buoys off Koh Racha Yai as part of ongoing efforts to protect coral reefs from anchor damage and promote sustainable marine tourism.

The activities were carried out on Jan 13 at Plub Pla Beach on Koh Racha Yai, south of Phuket, with the governor accompanied by Vice Admiral Veerud Muangchin, Commander of the Third Naval Area Command and Director of Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Region 3 (Thai MECC 3).

Also taking part were Mueang Phuket District Chief Pairoj Srilamul, officials from relevant provincial agencies and officers involved in marine security and environmental protection.

According to the Phuket Provincial Public Relations Office, the operation followed formal approval from Thai MECC 3 and was jointly organised with the

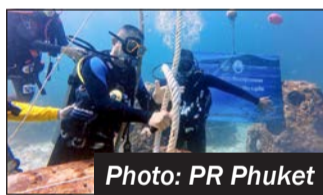


Photo: PR Phuket

Racha Islands Protected Area Management Center and related agencies.

A total of 35 mooring buoys were installed off Plub Pla Beach to provide safe anchoring points for boats and reduce the need for vessels to drop anchors onto sensitive reef areas.

In addition, three coral reef protection buoy lines, with a combined length of more than 1,200 metres, were laid to clearly mark protected zones and prevent encroachment by marine traffic.

Authorities explained that the initiative aims to prevent further damage to coral reefs caused by anchoring, support the sustainable use of marine resources, and raise public and operator awareness about marine conservation.

The project is also intended to reinforce Phuket's

image as a world-class marine tourism destination that balances economic activity with environmental responsibility.

As part of the programme, participating officials and volunteers also conducted a beach clean-up at Plub Pla Beach to remove marine debris and improve the natural environment of the island.

During the event, Governor Nirat and Vice Admiral Veerud jointly launched several of the mooring buoys into the sea, a symbolic gesture intended to boost morale among officers and personnel involved in the operation and to highlight the importance of cooperation between civilian authorities and the navy in protecting Phuket's marine ecosystems.

Provincial officials noted that similar conservation activities will continue in other key marine tourism areas around Phuket as part of longer-term efforts to safeguard coral reefs and coastal resources.

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Phuket boat shows 'double down'

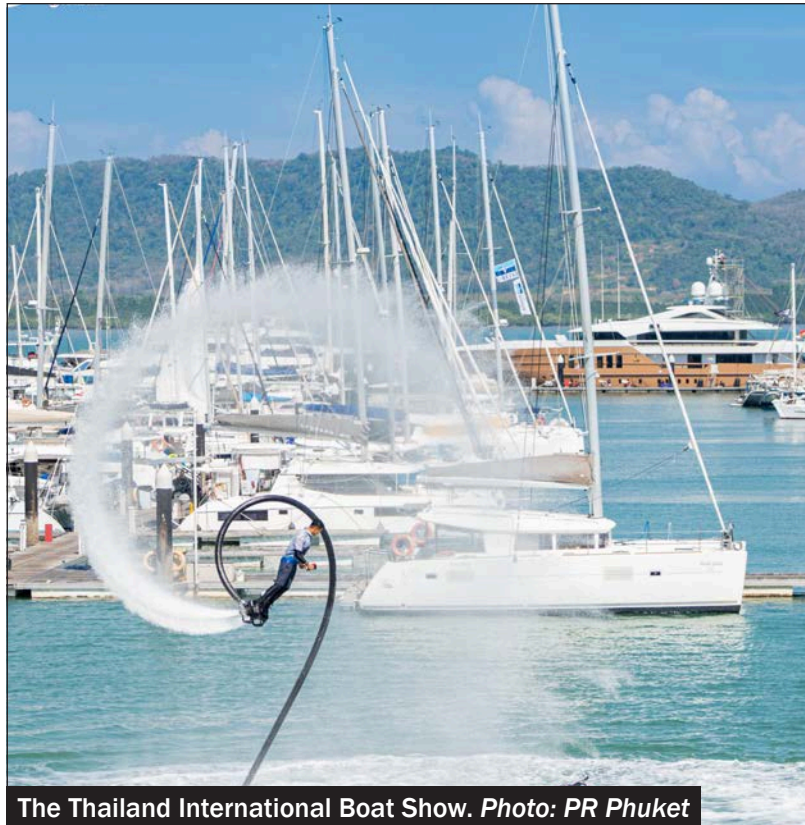
The Phuket News
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Two major international marine tourism events, each running over the same three days from Jan 15-18, opened in Phuket last week, reinforcing the island's push to position itself as a regional hub for luxury, yachting and high-value tourism.

The Thailand International Boat Show 2026 (TIBS) officially opened at Phuket Yacht Haven Marina, bringing together international yacht operators, marine technology firms, investors and tourism stakeholders from Europe, the Americas and Asia.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Natthariya Thaweewong, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, together with Phuket Governor Nirat Pongsitthaworn. Also attending were Manat Anawat, President of Thailand Privilege Card Co Ltd, and David Hayes, CEO of JAND Events, the organiser of the Thailand International Boat Show.

Officials said the event reflected Phuket's growing role in Thailand's strategy to shift tourism from volume-driven arrivals to higher-value, long-stay



The Thailand International Boat Show. Photo: PR Phuket

and premium travel segments.

TIBS 2026 was held in collaboration with the private sector, particularly Thailand Privilege Card Co Ltd, which operates the 'Thailand Privilege' membership card programme under the supervision of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). The programme targeted long-stay visitors, high-net-worth tourists and international investors through visa privileges

and premium services.

Organisers said Thailand Privilege Card's participation in TIBS formed part of a broader strategy to elevate Thailand's tourism offering, promote long-stay visas and support luxury lifestyles, in line with Phuket's development as a global marine and high-end tourism destination.

Phuket was identified as a key province in the Thailand Privilege Card programme, with one of the

highest membership numbers nationwide and continued growth, reflecting confidence among international residents and visitors in the island's quality of life, infrastructure and investment potential.

The continued hosting of the Thailand International Boat Show in Phuket was highlighted as a key driver of the marine tourism economy, providing an international platform for business networking, technology exchange and investment opportunities.

Authorities said cooperation between government agencies, international event organisers and private-sector partners would help strengthen Phuket's competitiveness, increase spending by high-end tourists, create employment and generate long-term economic benefits.

Meanwhile, a second major marine event, the Thailand Boat Festival 2026, also opened at Phuket Boat Lagoon Marina on Jan 15, further underlining Phuket's prominence in the regional yachting industry.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Kanit Yongskul, founder of Phuket Boat Lagoon Co Ltd. Also attending were Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation President Rewat Areerob, TAT Phuket Office Director Siriwan

Seeharach, TAT Director of Tourism Product Development Erblap Sripiraom, TAT Southern Region Director Vajanan Silpavoravivat, and other senior tourism officials, alongside Thai and international private-sector representatives.

Mr Kanit said the Thailand Boat Festival aimed to strengthen Thailand's image as a yacht tourism and marine industry hub in Southeast Asia, with Phuket playing a central role due to its world-class marinas and established marine tourism routes.

The festival featured yacht displays on land and in the water from leading global brands, along with marine equipment, water sports technology, tourism activities and premium lifestyle products.

In addition to exhibitions, the event included business and lifestyle networking activities, a gala evening and a fashion show by JASPAL.

As part of policy development, TAT held seminars focusing on the future of marine tourism on Jan 16 and 17.

Together, the two events attracted thousands of visitors, highlighting Phuket's ambition to integrate innovation, lifestyle and international business as a leading marine tourism destination in the region.

Award-winning Southeast Asia Pilot up for sale

THE SOUTHEAST Asia Pilot (SEAP), widely regarded as the definitive cruising guide to Asian waters, is being offered for sale in its entirety as part of a planned retirement by its publishers.

In continuous publication for more than 20 years, SEAP has built a strong global reputation as the go-to reference for yachts cruising Southeast Asia.

Owned and published by Phuket-based Phuket Publicity Services (PPS), the sale is being positioned as a rare opportunity to acquire a niche publishing asset with established brand equity, proven international demand and scope for digital growth under new ownership.

The offering includes full copyright to all editorial content, the complete photo library, the SEAP brand and goodwill, print and DRM-protected eBook editions, the

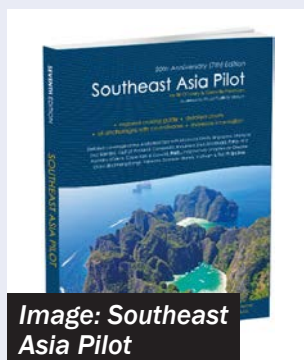


Image: Southeast Asia Pilot

official website and an established network of contributors. The business is currently run conservatively by a single individual and has no digital monetisation, yet still generates a consistent surplus, according to PPS.

SEAP is distributed in more than 40 countries through direct sales, international nautical book distributors, marinas, chandleries and charter operators. Resellers include Bookharbour and Imray Laurie in the UK and Europe, Boat Books Australia, Motion Smith in Singapore, the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club

and East Marine in Thailand.

Despite its long-standing presence on board both private and charter yachts – from cruising sailors to superyacht captains – the publishers say the title's online platform remains largely untapped, offering potential for content expansion, advertising, sponsorship and integration with marina, charter or publishing ecosystems.

Publisher and co-author Grenville Fordham said the decision to sell follows two decades of publication. "It's been a privilege to work with our contributors and to receive feedback from yachtsmen around the world. The time now feels right to hand the pilot over to a new custodian," he said.

Expressions of interest are invited from strategic industry players and publishers seeking established, high-quality niche titles. *The Phuket News*

EDC Thailand draws 30,000 visitors to Phuket

MORE THAN 30,000 Thai and international tourists attended the opening days of Electric Daisy Carnival (EDC) Thailand 2026 in Phuket last weekend, reinforcing the island's position as a key driver of Thailand's shift towards high-value, experience-led tourism, local officials have announced.

The three-day electronic music festival, held at Rhythm Park in Cherng Talay from Jan 16-18, generated a sharp uplift in hotel occupancy, restaurant trade and tourism services across northern Phuket, according to provincial officials.

The event is projected to generate over B10 billion in economic value for Phuket over five years and attract more than 460,000 international visitors during that period.

Provincial authorities noted that January arrivals linked to the festival are expected to lift inbound tourism "by more than 25%", providing a strong boost during the early part of the year and underlining the growing role of large-scale international events in



Photo: EDC Thailand

Phuket's tourism economy.

From daytime through late night, Cherng Talay and surrounding areas have remained busy since the festival opened, with sustained visitor spending reflecting both the purchasing power of festival-goers and Phuket's broader appeal as a holiday destination. Hotels and accommodation providers reported significantly higher occupancy rates, while food, beverage and transport operators benefited from increased demand.

Beyond its economic impact, EDC Thailand 2026 has been positioned as a showcase for Phuket's capability to host major global events safely and professionally. Provincial authorities praised the integrated cooperation between government agencies, police, medical

teams, public health officials and local administrative organisations in ensuring smooth operations, traffic management and emergency preparedness throughout the event.

Medical support was provided by a coordinated network including Vachira Phuket Hospital, Thalang Hospital, Patong Hospital, Chalong Hospital, Bangkok Phuket Hospital and Dibuk Hospital, alongside the Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation, ensuring on-site and off-site readiness for participants and staff.

Officials said the inclusion of Thai cultural elements, performances and themed activity zones within the festival has also helped strengthen Phuket's international image, while creating additional income opportunities for local communities and businesses.

Phuket officials said festivals such as the EDC demonstrate how global entertainment, when paired with strong safety standards and local collaboration, can deliver tangible economic returns. *The Phuket News*

Fatal accidents see poor safety contractors targeted

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The government is poised to halt state-owned construction projects or cancel contracts with contractors that fail to protect public safety after three accidents in a week, two of which were fatal.

Major road subsidence on Rama II Road in the Bangkok suburb of Samut Sakhon last Saturday (Jan 17) saw a pickup truck fall into a sinkhole, although with no injuries or fatalities.

This came after a launching gantry crane collapsed on Jan 15 at an elevated expressway project on the same road, which killed two people and injured five others.

The day previous, an accident in the Sikhiu district of Nakhon Ratchasima saw a crane fall onto a moving passenger train, killing 32 people and injuring 69.

As part of the investigation Police have questioned engineers and machinery personnel from



The Nakhon Ratchasima train accident. Photo: AFP

Italian-Thai Development Plc (ITD), the main contractor involved in the first two projects. No charges have been filed so far.

Authorities said forensic experts are examining whether the accident was caused by negligence or equipment failure, noting that cranes do not collapse “without cause”.

The road subsidence accident on Jan 17 was caused by a burst water pipe and human negligence, not by flaws in structural design or construction methods, officials said.

PROTECT THE PUBLIC

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said repeated accidents had left the

government with no choice but to rely on administrative orders, rather than civil contract mechanisms, to protect the public.

“When accidents happen repeatedly, pursuing civil remedies under contracts is simply ineffective,” he said.

“This is a legal matter. The government must use administrative power to order construction suspensions or contract terminations when public safety cannot be guaranteed.”

On Jan 15 Anutin ordered the Ministry of Transport to terminate two contracts with ITD. He also instructed the ministry to initiate legal proceedings, blacklist the contractor and hold an emergency meeting to review safety measures

across all transport-related construction projects.

The decisions were made following consultations with the Council of State and the Attorney General.

Anutin said the accidents had severely shaken public confidence and posed serious threats to lives and property, particularly on Rama II Road, a key artery linking Bangkok to southern provinces.

The PM acknowledged public concerns, adding the most serious risk lies in structural failures related to lifting operations and construction practices, which are preventable if proper procedures are followed.

Prof Amorn Pimanmas, president of the Structural Engineers Association of Thailand, warned that construction near roads built on soft clay layers requires robust earth-retaining systems to prevent soil displacement, citing a major sinkhole incident on Samsen Road last September linked to underground rail construction.

Thaksin ‘expected to be paroled in May’

BANGKOK

FORMER PRIME MINISTER Thaksin Shinawatra is expected to be granted parole in May, when he will have served two-thirds of his one-year prison term.

According to a source at the Department of Corrections, inmate classification reviews are normally conducted four times a year – in March, April, August and December – in accordance with the 2019 ministerial regulation governing inmate privileges and conditions for sentence reduction, parole and release.

Consideration is based on factors such as conduct during incarceration, participation in public service activities, certification of good behaviour, length of sentence and time already served.

Thaksin was sentenced by the Supreme Court to one year in prison and taken into custody on Sept 9, 2025. As he did not meet the qualifying period in time for the December review, his inmate classifica-



Photo: AFP

tion has not yet been upgraded from medium to good.

However, Thaksin met the criteria for general parole, said the source. For inmates serving a one-year sentence parole eligibility requires completion of two-thirds of the term, or eight months, meaning he is therefore expected to qualify for parole in May this year.

Thaksin, 76, returned to Thailand on Aug 22, 2023, after more than 15 years of self-exile abroad and was immediately sentenced to eight years in prison for abuse of authority and conflict of interest while serving as prime minister prior to 2006. This was later reduced to one year by royal clemency.

Bangkok Post

Thailand invited to join Gaza peace plan

BANGKOK

THAILAND IS REVIEWING an invitation from US President Donald Trump to join a US initiative to end the Gaza conflict.

The government said on Monday (Jan 19) it has acknowledged the US initiative which plans to establish a “Board of Peace” and is carefully considering the substance and implications of the proposals.

Analysts have likened the initiative to a pay-to-play version of the United Nations Security Council with members required to pay US\$1billion (B31.bn) for a permanent spot on the board, chaired by Trump himself.

The White House has invited various world leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Hungarian premier Viktor Orban and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

The board’s charter says that member coun-



Photo: AFP

tries will serve no longer than three years, subject to renewal by the chairman. That is unless they “contribute more than USD \$1,000,000,000 in cash funds to the Board of Peace within the first year of the Charter’s entry into force.”

The charter appears to take a swipe at the United Nations, saying that the new board should have “the courage to depart from approaches and institutions that have too often failed.”

The White House said there would be a main board, a Palestinian committee of technocrats meant to govern devastated Gaza, and a second “executive board” that appears designed to have a more advisory role.

Trump has named Secretary of State Marco Rubio, former British prime minister Tony Blair, and his son-in-law Jared Kushner as board members.

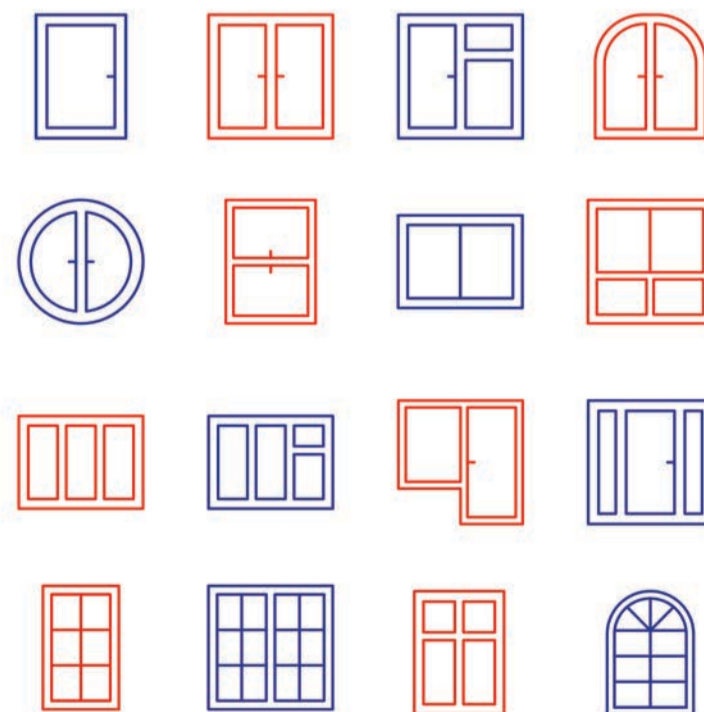
In principle, Thailand said it welcomes initiatives that could contribute to lasting peace in the Middle East and support humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people, emphasising that any process should reflect Palestinian aspirations and gain regional support.

Thailand reaffirmed its position backing a two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, in accordance with international law and UN resolutions.

Additional reporting by AFP



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Turning 77 in cycling heaven



BLAZING SADDLES

Baz Daniel
baz_gunner2000@yahoo.com

I turned 77 at dawn on Jan 10, which felt appropriate: a small, private moment before the island woke and began making its usual persuasive arguments for breakfast. The sea lay flat as a pane of glass, tinted the colour of old pewter, and the geckos were still negotiating the final clauses of their overnight treaties. I wheeled my bicycle out from under the bougainvillea, patted the saddle as if it were a reliable old dog, and pointed us south, toward Promthep Cape.

There are birthdays that insist on cake and candles and an audience, and there are birthdays that ask only for motion. This one wanted motion. Cycling, at my age, is an agreement with gravity rather than a challenge to it. You accept what is given, you take your time, and you remember that stopping is not defeat but punctuation. Phuket understands this. The roads at that hour are generous. The air still cool, faintly sweet with frangipani and last night's rain.

By the time I reached Nai Harn, the sun had begun to lift itself over the palm line, a shy thing at first, then bolder, warming my knees as I pedalled. A group of fishermen were already hauling in their nets, their sil-



Birthday boy Baz. Photo: Baz Daniel

houettes black against the pale water. One of them raised a hand. I raised mine back, a small ceremony that felt like a blessing.

The climb to Promthep Cape announces itself politely and then, halfway up, drops the politeness. I shifted down, settled into the rhythm I've learned over the years: breathe, pedal, don't look at the summit, don't argue with your legs. At 77, the legs have opinions. They complain about humidity and gradients and the foolishness of this entire endeavour. But they also remember things – schoolboy rides along hedgerows in Kent, the first rash confidence of youth, the longer, more careful miles of later life. Memory, I've found, is stored in the calves.

Gratitude

I stopped once, not because I had to – though I did – but because the view insisted. The Andaman spread out below like a folded map someone had forgotten to finish reading. Longtail boats left thin white sentences across the blue. A couple from Germany were already setting up a tripod. "Good morning," they said, with the cheerfulness of people who have not yet climbed a hill. "Happy birthday," I told myself, and laughed.

Over the crest, the road dips and rises again, a gentle teasing that Phuket excels at. I rolled past the viewpoint where later in the day buses would unload their enthusiastic cargo, and instead of stopping, I kept going,

following the narrow loop that skirts the cape itself. The wind there is different – saltier, more insistent – and it pressed against my shirt as if to check my credentials. I pedalled on, feeling absurdly pleased to be doing exactly what I was doing, here of all places, on this particular morning.

When I finally dismounted at the far edge, where the land gives up and becomes cliff, I leaned the bike against a railing and walked to the brink. The sun was fully up now, turning the sea a confident blue. Somewhere below, waves were rehearsing their eternal lines. I thought of the birthdays I'd had in England – grey skies, polite pubs, the well-meaning damp – and felt no regret, only gratitude. Life has a way of offering second acts if you're willing to accept a change of scenery.

On the ride back, the island had begun its day in earnest. Scooters buzzed like determined insects, the smell of grilling pork drifted from a roadside stall, and a dog slept with complete trust in the shade of a tamarind tree. My legs were tired, agreeably so, and my heart felt light in that unremarkable way that comes from having kept a promise to oneself.

I reached home mid-morning, salty and sun-warmed, and wheeled the bike back under the bougainvillea. Seventy-seven, I decided, suited me. It had brought me to a cape at sunrise, over a hill I did not rush, and back again with the day ahead intact. For a birthday, that felt like enough.



The March/April 2026
hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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Your Digital Eyes and Ears: Gemini Live



THE AI EDGE

Joe Smith

You are on holiday in Vietnam. You rented a motorbike and had an accident. You're now with the motorist you bumped and the rental guy, who is brandishing your contract. You don't speak each other's languages, but they are clearly unhappy.

Time was, you'd have been stuffed. But today you whip out your phone, open Gemini (with your US\$20 Pro subscription) and activate the new improved Live feature. "What are they saying?" is a question you can ask Google Translate. But you want more: what are they saying to each other? Are they colluding? The rental guy points at a clause in the contract – you point your camera at it. What does it say? Is it valid? Should you call the police or try to pay them off? The nice Gemini lady calmly talks you through it – and talks to them – acting as an informed interpreter with eyes and ears by your side.

Back home, you want to increase transfer limits on your banking app. You hit Gemini Live's Share Screen function and open the app. Gemini sits at the top of the screen as a small icon. You ask, "Where's the menu for that?"

Emboldened, you decide it's time to achieve your potential as a social media star. You ask Gemini what app to use



Image: Joe Smith

to edit your Vietnam videos. You open the app and say: "I've no idea what I'm doing. Show me how to make myself beautiful, stitch these together and post them on Instagram." Gemini sees everything on your screen and talks you through the process with infinite patience. Imagine asking your kids to do that. Scary face emoji!

Digital savant

In America, though not yet in Thailand, you can also share your laptop screen, bringing previously too-hard activities like coding into reach. It's one thing to upload screenshots to your chatbot and home in on your answer prompt by la-

borious prompt. It's quite another to have a rolling, interactive conversation with a digital savant where you can pivot, backtrack and get context and detail in real-time. It's a completely different experience.

Even mundane tasks like writing a document (remember that?) are transformed. With Gemini Live open as you compose, you can ask: "Is this too verbose? How will this land with the boss? Am I exposing myself legally here?" If you're cooking and your hands are full, you can tell it to read the next step.

This, at least, is the promise. Your correspondent tried all these tasks and managed to increase his bank limits

and avoid getting banged up in Vietnam. However, Gemini Live (and its human) still stumbled over the video editing ("Choose the video you want to upload." "I can only upload photos." "The app supports uploading videos." "No it doesn't." "Yes it does.").

Gemini on my Mac claimed that I would be able to schedule tasks with Gemini Live, like rounding up the morning's AI news and giving me a brief. Gemini on my phone disagreed – I would have to prompt it every time, it said.

The feature is not yet agentic, either. It would be truly game-changing to ask Gemini Live to open an app, apply effects, and post the video for you. It can't do that – yet. But it is a big step up from previous AI chat features.

Google has improved how you can interrupt the AI and request more succinct or detailed answers. It is a much less irritating interlocutor than ChatGPT's companion, which still lacks integrated screen-sharing features.

Gemini Live is a preview of what it will be to have an always-on AI companion with eyes and ears to help you navigate the real and digital realm.

Joe Smith is Founder of the AI consultancy 2Sigma Consultants. He studied AI at Imperial College Business School and is researching AI's effects on cognition at Chulalongkorn University. He is author of The Optimized Marketer, a book on how to use AI to promote your business and yourself. Contact joe@2Sigmaconsultants.com.

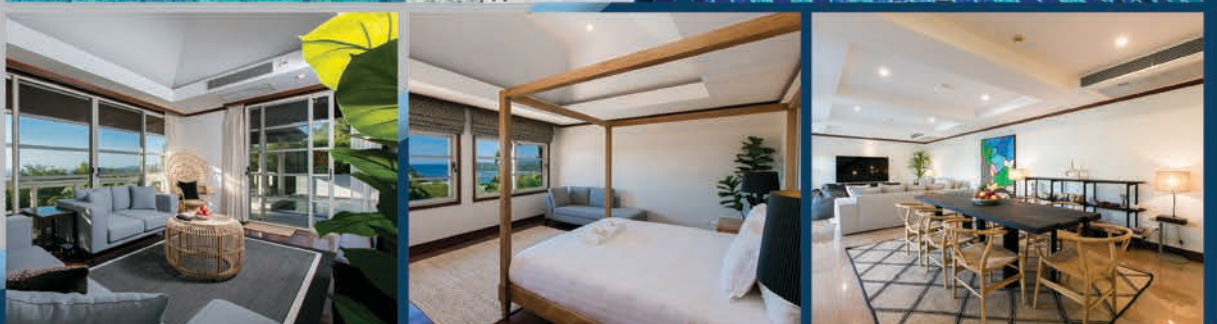
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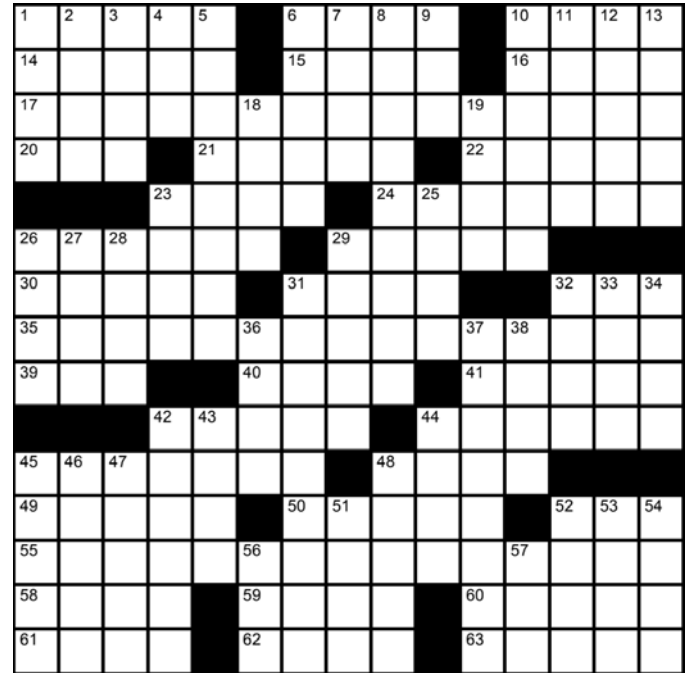
POP QUIZ

1. What is the first day of Lent?
2. Who wrote *The History of Mr Polly*?
3. Franklin D. Roosevelt won the 1932 US election – who lost it?
4. What two countries border directly north of Hungary?
5. What group of animals would be in a clowder?

Answers below, centre

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
1. Dish with seasoned rice
 6. Ready a gift
 10. Criticizes
 14. Consummate
 15. ___ de camp
 16. Hose hue
 17. Genesis story
 20. Wapiti
 21. ___ and blue (Wolverines colors)
 22. Brings home
 23. Numbers on letters
 24. Like unclean hair
 26. Kin by marriage
 29. Addict
 30. Bell sound
 31. Sour fruit
 32. Slip in a pot
 35. Genesis story
 39. Problem of the middle ages?
 40. Crew members
 41. Bridge seats
 42. Fissile rock
 44. Tailor
 45. Load
 48. Cut down
 49. Yellow-flowered cactus
 50. Actor Ken
 52. It's definite
- Down**
1. Word with apple or cone
 2. Murti
 3. Plumbing problem
 4. Sound of relief
 5. Florida lawn decoration
 6. Gullies
 7. Swiss hotelier
 8. Bonds
 9. OQ divider
 10. Put down new carpet
 11. Community organization in the news
 12. Antler point
 13. Like dishwasher
 18. Hair can be raised here
 19. Spore producer
 23. Brass component
 25. Like some golf balls
- 26. "Hamlet" has five**
27. Hopper
 28. Phyllis Diller's "husband"
 29. Distress signal
 31. Trifle
 32. Research facility: abbr.
 33. Comics canine
 34. Cold war initials
 36. ___ Gatto (custom-built coupe)
 37. Fruit tree destroyer
 38. "My Name Is ___"
 42. Says so
 43. Good sign?
 44. Bondman
 45. Prelim
 46. At all, in dialect
 47. ___ check
 48. They croak until they croak
 51. "Cogito ___ sum"
 52. Alpine transport
 53. Epitaph opener
 54. "The moan of doves in immemorial ___": Tennyson
 56. River in Wales
 57. "Take your pick"



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

- 1) Ash Wednesday; 2) H G Wells; 3) Herbert Hoover; 4) Slovakia and Ukraine; 5) Cats

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

7

years is how long orangutan mothers breastfeed their young, longer than any other mammal.

30

seconds is how long the gunfight at the O.K. Corral in 1881 lasted, leaving three of the five Clanton gang members dead and three of the four in Wyatt Earp's posse wounded.

1,200

times deadlier than cyanide is the poison found in pufferfish, which is served as the popular Japanese cuisine Fugu.

12,800

pounds is the estimated maximum bite force of a Tyrannosaurus rex. Humans have a bite force of about 200 pounds.

24,140

kilometres is how far Marco Polo travelled by land and sea over his 24 years of journeying.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Kamala Beach through the trees. Photo by Sutharat Khaodee

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to editor3@classactmedia.co.th

This week in history

Jan 23, 1368

Zhu Yuanzhang proclaims himself the Hongwu Emperor, beginning the Ming dynasty.

Jan 24, 1908

The first Boy Scout troop is organised in England by Robert Baden-Powell.

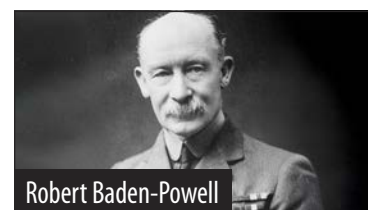
Jan 25, 1858

The Wedding March by Felix Mendelssohn is played at the

marriage of Queen Victoria's daughter, Victoria, and Friedrich of Prussia, and becomes a popular wedding processional.

Jan 26, 1905

The world's largest ever diamond, the Cullinan, which weighs 3,106.75 carats (0.621350 kg), is found at the Premier Mine near Pretoria in South Africa.



Robert Baden-Powell

Jan 27, 1965

South Vietnamese Prime Minister Trần Văn Hương is removed by the military junta of Nguyễn Khánh.

Jan 28, 1624

Sir Thomas Warner founds the first British colony in the Caribbean, on the island of Saint Kitts.

Jan 29, 1996

President Jacques Chirac announces a "definitive end" to French nuclear weapons testing.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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TUE 27 JAN



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FRI 30 JAN



AustCham Joint Chambers Australia Day Phuket Sundowners

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, CanCham Thailand, GTCC, NTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce, and SATCC, Joint Chambers Australia Day Phuket Sundowners. This event is scheduled to take place 18.00 - 21.00 hrs., at Bangkok Bob's Restaurant Phuket. We invite you to join us for an enjoyable evening of networking with members of the Australian-Thai business community at the newly opened Bangkok Bob's Restaurant Phuket. And supported by our corporate sponsor, The Australian Consulate-General Phuket. THB 650 for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members, THB 1,200 for non-members. To book contact - office@austchamthailand.com

FRI 6 FEB



Grow Boating Phuket Evening - Feb 2026

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm. We are delighted to announce that our sponsor for both the drinks and burgers will be the Malaysia International Boat Show (MYBOS) 2026. Building on the tremendous success of MYBOS 2025, the Malaysia International Boat Show 2026 will once again be held at the prestigious Royal Langkawi Yacht Club to celebrate Malaysia's growing prominence in the global yachting and marine industry. See mybos.my. 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

SAT 7 FEB



Carnival Cookout Market Phuket

Carnival Cookout is a new outdoor weekend market event in Phuket that brings together food, music, culture, and a lively open-air atmosphere aimed at locals and visitors. It's described as a monthly weekend market with good vibes, live music, diverse food vendors and cultural experiences in a social setting. Food & Drink: A variety of food stalls and cookout-style offerings – likely including street-food favorites, barbecue, local eats and more creative food vendors. Music & Entertainment: Live music and performances are part of the weekend market vibe. Community & Culture: A social outdoor gathering space that blends local culture with casual festival energy – essentially a lively food + music + social market event.

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Photo from Infuse Restaurant by Diamond Resort (p18)

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THE LITTER CLUB NETWORK IS ON THE MOVE

The Litter Club Network officially launched their 'Mobile Waste Learning Center' on Sunday, January 18, with the Rassada Pier Community. A huge thank you to the local volunteers and supporters for joining. Together, we're making waste education accessible and fun for everyone. Let's drive towards a greener future! For more information visit facebook.com/thelitterclubnetwork



DCH MARINE THAILAND OPENING CELEBRATION

On Wednesday, January 14, DCH Marine officially opened their Thailand office, located at Royal Phuket Marina, with a gathering of marine industry experts, partners and friends. DCH Marine has been a premier luxury yacht distributor in the Asia-Pacific for a number of years, representing the world's most prestigious brands, including Sunseeker Yachts, Saxdor Yachts and Williams Jet Tenders. See dch-marine.com for more details.

Dates confirmed for BWF Thailand Masters 2026

BADMINTON

DATES HAVE BEEN confirmed for the Thailand Masters 2026 HSBC BWF World Tour Super 300 international badminton tournament.

With total prize money of over US\$250,000 (B8.5 million), the competition is scheduled to take place from Jan 27 to Feb 1 in the Nimibutr Building at the National Stadium in Bangkok, organisers announced on Jan 14.

Over the course of six days of competition players from all over the world will be challenging for the Royal Trophy, which will be bestowed to respective winners by Her Royal Highness Princess Sirivanavari Nariratana Rajakanya.

The competition is one of the leading tournaments on the world badminton calendar, a World Tour Super 300 event that attracts top-level athletes to participate and accumulate world ranking points.

It also serves as an important platform to elev-



Photo: PR

ate Thai athletes to the international stage and promote sports tourism in accordance with government policy, explained Minister of Tourism and Sports Atthakorn Sirilatthayakon, who presided over a press conference in Bangkok to confirm the event on Jan 14.

Furthermore, the tournament is a great opportunity for Thailand to welcome athletes, coaches and officials from various countries with celebrated Thai hospitality and generosity.

"Badminton is one of the most popular sports in Thailand that has consistently brought joy and pride to the Thai people over the years," commented Mr Atthakorn.

"The Thai Masters is a unique event that is internationally recognised," he added.

The Phuket News

Project targets F1 equality

FORMULA ONE

AFP

The mission of the More Than Equal project is simple and fearlessly ambitious – to find and develop the first woman Formula One world champion.

F1 attracts legions of female fans, with the numbers turbo-charged by the behind-the-scenes Netflix show *Drive to Survive*.

However, there has not been a single woman on the grid since 1976 – when Italian Lella Lombardi competed.

The More Than Equal project aims to change that. Founded by Czech entrepreneur and philanthropist Karel Komarek and former F1 driver David Coulthard, the programme looks to develop elite female F1 talent; "shaping what the future of the sport can and should look like," says Coulthard.

Drivers are selected using a data-driven global talent ranking system, combined with in-depth assessments measuring driving performance, physical capability, psychological readiness and long-term development potential. Each receives tailored technical and tactical coaching, physical and mental performance support.

Zoe Florescu Potolea was among five new drivers picked for the programme in December last year.



Zoe Florescu-Potolea. Photo: AFP

The 17-year-old Romanian with US citizenship declared it was "about time" a woman was back in F1.

"One of the biggest things is, honestly, believing that you can do it or believing that you're wanted in the sport," she explained. "And to be honest I think it is very hard as women in the sport."

Florescu Potolea joins Sweden's Alexia Danielsson, Polish pair Amelia Wyszomirska and Julia Angelard and South Africa's Gianna Pascoal as the new kids on the block.

The existing cohort on the More Than Equal programme comprises Austrian Ivonn Simeonova, Lana Flack, from Australia, and Britain's Skye Parker.

'FEMALE TALENT'

At Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya in Spain recently the ladies were given technical briefings and went through various warm-up exercises, including

working on hand-eye coordination with tennis balls before being put through their paces in an F4 car.

"Motorsport is just a male-dominated sport. And I think that many girls don't think that they belong in this sport, but they do," Danielsson said.

"When I was growing up, I didn't really have any to look up to that was female and a driver. And maybe in the future I get to be that role person.

"In ten years, my dream scenario would be racing in F1," she added. "And just living my dream life."

Tom Stanton, chief executive officer of More Than Equal, said it is exciting to build on the work already done with the first group of girls.

"This intake reflects the growing depth of female talent worldwide, strengthens our global programme, and reinforces our focus on giving talented drivers the preparation they need to progress through the ranks," he said.

Thai duo strike gold in India

BADMINTON

MIXED DOUBLES PAIR DECHAPOL Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran claimed their first title of the year and eighth overall after winning the US\$950,000 (B30 million) BWF India Open in New Delhi last Sunday (Jan 18).

The third-seeded Thai pair, who were named the Mixed Doubles Pair of the Year in 2025, defeated Denmark's Mathias Christiansen and Alexandra Boje 19-21, 25-23, 21-18 in 82 minutes to claim the gold medal.

The Delhi win was their third Super 750 crown after the Singapore Open and the China Masters in 2025. They reached the quarter-finals in the season-opening Malaysia Open – a Super 1000 event.

Dechapol and Supissara, who took home \$70,300, now hold a 2-0 record against the Danish duo. They won their first meeting at the French Open semi-finals last year, also in three games.

The 12th ranked Christiansen and Boje upset China's world No.2 Jiang Zhenbang and Wei Yaxin in the semi-finals on Saturday.

Earlier, world No.1 and reigning Olympic champion An Se-Young continued her perfect start to the season with her second title in two weeks.

The Korean star defeated China's Wang Zhiyi again, cruising to her 21-13, 21-11 victory in 43 minutes to retain her



Dechapol (left) and Supissara. Photo: AFP

India Open title. It was her 36th World Tour crown.

An also beat Wang, the world No.2, in the final of the season-opening 2026 Malaysia Open, and seven other finals in last year and is on a 30-match winning streak.

Earlier, Chinese world champions Tan Ning and Liu Shengshu also sealed back-to-back titles after winning the women's doubles crown.

They defeated Japan's Yuki Fukushima and Mayu Matsumoto 21-11, 21-18 for their 16th World Tour title.

Lin Chun-yi was crowned the men's singles champion after the Taiwanese player defeated third seed Jonatan Christie of Indonesia 21-10, 21-18.

Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang took the men's doubles title, rallying to beat Japan's Hiroki Midorikawa and Kyohei Yamashita 17-21, 25-23, 21-16.

Bangkok Post

All Blacks fire coach Robertson

RUGBY

NEW ZEALAND FIRED coach Scott Robertson on Jan 15, less than two years before the World Cup, after a scathing 2025 performance review and rumours of a player revolt.

The 51-year-old led the team to 20 wins in 27 matches, below powerhouse New Zealand's expectations, while showing little improvement during his two years in charge.

New Zealand Rugby's internal review of performance found strong criticism from senior All Blacks, including a suggestion that star player Ardie Savea could walk out.

New Zealand Rugby chair David Kirk said it was the right time to make a change, with the 2027 Rugby World Cup the "key goal".

"We've taken an extensive look at the team's progress on and off the field and have subsequently had discussions with Scott on the way forward," Kirk said.

"Both NZR and Scott agree it is in the best interests of the team that he



Robertson. Photo: AFP

depart his role as head coach. On behalf of New Zealand Rugby I would like to thank Scott for his contribution to the All Blacks."

Robertson took over as coach in January 2024 with a contract through to the end of the 2027 World Cup in Australia.

His appointment was greeted with much fanfare after he led the Canterbury Crusaders to seven consecutive Super Rugby titles in 2023 with a reputation as a forward-thinking leader who had strong support from his players.

He endeared himself to fans with his winning re-

cord and his habit of break dancing on the pitch after his team's title wins.

But under his leadership, the All Blacks have been in a spin.

Otago Highlanders coach Jamie Joseph, the former Japan coach, or former Australia coach Dave Rennie could be potential successors to oversee a packed Test calendar in 2026 in the run-up to the World Cup.

The All Blacks travel to South Africa for an eight-match tour in August and September, playing the Springboks four times.

AFP

Carrick unites Red Devils

FOOTBALL

AFP

Michael Carrick made a flying start to life as Manchester United boss as his team defeated bitter rivals Manchester City 2-0 last Saturday (Jan 17).

Carrick's first game of his second temporary spell in charge of the Red Devils could barely have gone better in a dominant 2-0 win at Old Trafford.

The former United midfielder was appointed as head coach until the end of the campaign following the sacking of Ruben Amorim earlier this month.

The 44-year-old, who was also briefly United's caretaker boss in 2021, said ahead of his first game that there was still "magic" at United, and his team put on a memorable show.

Second-half goals from Bryan Mbeumo and Patrick Dorgu capped an energetic and incisive display by United, who could have won by a far more comfortable margin.

City manager Pep Guardiola admitted that his team – winless in four league games this year – were outplayed by Carrick's inspired United.

"The better team won," said the City boss. "We weren't at the level required to win this game."

Arsenal missed the chance to open up a nine point lead at the top of the table after they could only draw 0-0 with Nottingham Forest on Saturday, with frustrated Gunners boss Mikel



Manchester United's players celebrate Dorgu's goal. Photo: AFP

Arteta rueing a late penalty claim that was not given for his side.

Aston Villa could have leapfrogged Man City into second place but they surprisingly slumped to a 1-0 defeat at home to Everton on Sunday.

It leaves Arsenal top on 50 points with City and Villa both on 43.

Elsewhere, the mood at Tottenham darkened further after Spurs slipped to a 2-1 defeat against West Ham, who had not won a league match since early November.

Spurs fans turned on manager Thomas Frank and chanted "you're getting sacked in the morning" after Callum Wilson struck a stoppage-time winner for the Hammers.

Spurs, 14th in the table, have won just two home league games this season, leaving Frank, in his first

campaign in charge, under enormous pressure.

Elsewhere, defending champions Liverpool dropped two valuable points in a 1-1 draw against struggling Burnley at Anfield. Germany midfielder Florian Wirtz scored his third league goal since his arrival but the visitors drew level in the 65th minute through Marcus Edwards.

Chelsea boss Liam Rosenior watched as his side saw off high-flying London rivals Brentford 2-0 thanks to goals from Joao Pedro and Cole Palmer.

Sunderland beat Crystal Palace 2-1 while Leeds scored late on to beat Fulham 1-0 and remain eight points clear of the relegation zone.

Wolves and Newcastle drew 0-0 while the match between Brighton and Bournemouth ended 1-1.



Photo: FA Thailand Facebook

Thais bow out of AFC U23 Asian Cup

FOOTBALL

THAILAND'S HOPES OF reaching the quarter-finals of the AFC U23 Asian Cup ended in disappointment on Jan 14 as a goalless draw with China confirmed their elimination from Group D.

Head coach Thawatchai Damrong-ongtrakul admitted his side had fallen short despite their attacking intent.

"I'm appreciative and proud of our players as they tried their best. We tried to play an attacking game to get three points but we could not achieve this," he said.

Thailand had previously lost to Australia 2-1 and drawn 1-1 with Iraq in the group.

Meanwhile, Thailand were confirmed as top seeds in Group B of the 2026 ASEAN Hyundai Cup at the

official draw in Jakarta on Jan 15.

The War Elephants, who finished runners-up last year, were drawn to face Malaysia, the Philippines, Myanmar and Laos.

Thailand coach Anthony Hudson welcomed the challenge, saying: "It is a competitive group, but we embrace the opportunity. Every match will be tough, and we must prepare with full focus."

Defending champions Vietnam face a demanding path in Group A, drawn against Singapore, Indonesia, Cambodia and the winner of the playoff.

The group stage will run from July 24 to Aug 8 in a home-and-away format. The top two teams from each group will progress to semi-finals beginning on Aug 15 with the two-legged final scheduled for Aug 22 and 26. *Bangkok Post*

Senegal win AFCON after final walk-off protest drama

FOOTBALL

SENEGAL STUNNED hosts Morocco to win the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) final last Sunday (Jan 18) thanks to Pape Gueye's extra-time goal, ending a match marred by the eventual champions storming off the pitch in a lengthy protest following a controversial late penalty.

Brahim Diaz could have won the trophy for Morocco when he stepped up to take the spot-kick in the 24th added minute of added time at the end of the initial 90 minutes but Edouard Mendy easily saved the weak attempt.

Congolese match referee Jean-Jacques Ndala gave the penalty right at the end of the allotted eight added minutes following a VAR check for a challenge on Diaz in the box by Senegal defender El Hadji Malick Diouf.



Senegal celebrates. Photo: AFP

Diaz, the rest of the Moroccan team and their bench vehemently protested to the referee to check the images, but the decision to eventually give the spot-kick was met with fury by Senegal and their fans.

As most of their players walked off the pitch, some Senegal supporters in the small section of away fans at the opposite end of the stadium threw chairs and other objects and attempted to get onto the field of play.

The Senegal team had initially been riled by the referee's decision to disallow for a foul a goal

scored by Ismaila Sarr in the second added minute.

After Diaz's penalty miss, however, it felt almost inevitable that a galvanised Senegal would go on to score, and they did so in the fourth minute of extra time to stun the home fans in the crowd of 66,526 at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium.

It was Senegal's second Cup of Nations title and they can now look forward to the World Cup, hopeful of persuading star man Sadio Mane to carry on playing after he declared that the AFCON final would be his last ever game for his country. *AFP*

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Sport



Thai shuttlers strike gold in India > p14

GOING FOR GOLD

ASEAN PARA GAMES GETS UNDERWAY



MAIN: Thai para athletes will be looking to be among the medals at the 13th edition of the biennial multi-sport event that started on Tuesday (Jan 20) in Nakhon Ratchasima. INSET: Saysunee Jana. Photos: Thai Paralympic Facebook

ASEAN PARA GAMES

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The 13th ASEAN Para Games got underway in Nakhon Ratchasima earlier this week with hosts Thailand striving to be among the medal winners on home turf.

Under the creative theme “The United Heart of the Unstoppable”, the biennial multi-sport event runs from Jan 20-26 with organisers stating that upgraded broadcasting, public relations and private-sector collaboration will ensure it is the most successful and popular edition of the tournament yet, while serving as a historic celebration of equality, inclusion and sporting excellence.

The Thai para athletes do not need to look far or wide for inspiration. Thailand dominated the Southeast Asia (SEA) Games on home turf in Bangkok and Buriram between Dec 9-20 last year with a record-breaking 233 gold, 154 silver and 113 bronze medals won, earning athletes, coaching staff and associations a cash bonus from the government B487,365,000 in recognition of their efforts.

Officials have stated that this outstanding collective performance can serve as a productive motivation for the country’s para athletes to reach similar heights in Nakhon Ratchasima.

Further positive encouragement can be found by the fact that at the World Abilitysport Games

2025 in Nakhon Ratchasima last November, the Thai national team claimed the overall championship for the second time with 48 gold, 29 silver and 18 bronze medals. This achievement reflects the strength of Thai para athletes and reinforces the goal of achieving top results at the current ASEAN Para Games.

WITHDRAWAL

The opening ceremony was held at His Majesty the King’s 80th Birthday Anniversary Commemoration Stadium in Nakhon Ratchasima on Tuesday (Jan 20) with a total of over 2,500 athletes and officials from 10 countries involved. Athletes and team officials representing Thailand were joined by counterparts from regional countries including Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Myanmar, Indonesia and Laos.

Cambodia officially confirmed its decision to withdraw from the tournament on Jan 14 due to the ongoing political tensions between them and the host country. National Paralympic Committee of Cambodia secretary-general Yi Veasna stated that due to unforeseen circumstances, the Cambodian athletes are unable to travel to participate in the tournament, expressing regret for the decision.

Cambodia also pulled out of the SEA Games in December, citing safety concerns arising from the border conflict with hosts Thailand.

Notable officials present at

the opening ceremony on Tuesday included: Tourism and Sports Minister, Artthakorn Sirilatthayakorn; Permanent Secretary, Natreeya Taweewong; Sports Authority of Thailand Governor, Dr Gongsak Yodmani; Governor of Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Anupong Suksomnit; President of the ASEAN Para Sports Federation (APSF), Maj Gen Osoth Bhavilai; Vice President of the Paralympic Committee of Thailand, Dr Kittipong Photimu; President of the Thailand Blind Sports Association, Amnuay Klinyoo; President of the Sports Association for the Disabled of Thailand under the Royal Patronage, Maitree Khongruang; and Secretary-General of APSF, Col. Wande Tosuwan.

MASCOTS AND MEDALS

The tournament features competitions in 19 sports and 2 demonstration sports across 536 medal events. Key sports which will be contested in Nakhon Ratchasima include athletics, swimming, badminton, cycling, blind football, boccia, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair fencing, shooting, archery, table tennis, judo and powerlifting. Making its debut in the competition is lawn bowls, which will be held in Bangkok.

Medals and mascots associated with the Games were unveiled on Jan 13. Three official mascots were confirmed: the cheer mascot; The San; and game mascots Phahat (orange) and Sao

(purple). Their designs draw from the woven patterns of traditional Thai basketry, adapted into a modern style that represents connection and solidarity among ASEAN nations despite cultural differences.

Organisers said the strong, dynamic lines of the mascots represent the determination and perseverance of para-athletes who train intensively and overcome physical challenges. The characters are intended to inspire audiences while representing the collective spirit of the Games.

Gold, silver and bronze medals feature the official emblem of the 13th ASEAN Para Games, while the reverse displays the ASEAN Para Sports Federation logo and the event inscription.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Thai authorities have emphasised security, accessibility and athlete welfare, with test events conducted and all competition venues inspected prior to the tournament. Officials stress that safety and unity remain central to the Games’ delivery.

‘WELL PREPARED’

One Thai athlete looking to mark her mark is legendary wheelchair fencer Saysunee Jana, who confirmed prior to competition that she is targeting two gold medals in the categories of epee class B and foil class B.

At Paris 2024 Saysunee, 51, made history after becoming the first woman to win three gold medals (in epee, foil and sabre) at a single Paralympics. The

tournament in the French capital was Thailand’s most successful overall team performance at a Paralympics with 30 medals won, six of which were gold.

However, Saysunee has never competed in the ASEAN Para Games as the sport has not been included in the tournament since the 2008 Games in Thailand which, coincidentally, were also held in Nakhon Ratchasima.

“It’s great that the sport is returning this year,” said Saysunee. “I’ve been training continuously since the 2024 Paralympics, so I’m very well-prepared. I want to win gold medals in both events in front of my Thai fans so I hope there will be a lot of support.

“I also plan to use this competition as preparation for the world ranking tournaments in February in Italy, and the 5th Asian Para Games in October in Japan,” she added.

Saysunee is Thailand’s most decorated wheelchair fencer. She won gold medals at all major tournaments including the Paralympics, Asian Para Games, World Championships and Asian Championships.

The 13th ASEAN Para Games will feature men’s and women’s wheelchair fencing in epee, foil and sabre.

For more information on the 13th ASEAN Para Games visit the official website at: <https://www.aseanparagames2025.com/>

Additional reporting by the Bangkok Post and the National News Bureau of Thailand.