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'SET UP'



Photos: Supplied

TRANSFERRED PHUKET OFFICIALS PUSH BACK AS PATONG PROBE DEEPENS

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
 reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

Rungruang Thimabut, the Phuket Provincial Palad (Chief Administration Officer) transferred amid Patong bribery and extortion allegations has questioned whether the move was retaliation for recent crackdowns on illegal beach encroachment at Freedom Beach and Bang Tao Beach.

"56 days of reclaiming Freedom and Bang Tao beaches, returning billions to the state. Is this justice?" Mr Rungruang wrote on Facebook after his transfer order was issued.

The remarks came after the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) transferred five senior Phuket officials to temporary posts on May 20 following complaints by Patong entertainment operators alleging bribery, extortion and unfair treatment linked to entertainment venue licensing.

But as the investigation widened, the controversy rapidly expanded beyond Patong nightlife disputes into allegations involving influential figures, public land enforcement, zoning conflicts and accusations of double standards inside Phuket's administrative structure.

Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) Director-General Narucha Khosasilai rejected suggestions that the transfers were connected to recent Freedom Beach and Bang Tao Beach enforcement operations.

"Good conduct is one issue. Investigation is another," Mr Narucha said, clarifying that the recent enforcement operations at Freedom Beach and Bang Tao Beach were unrelated to the Patong bribery and extortion allegations.

The transfer order affected Mr Rungruang, Mueang Phuket District Chief Siwat Rawangkul, Thalang District Chief Wilailak Rueangphol, Kathu District Chief

Akkarapol Sutthirak Jitsupap and Phuket Provincial Defence Officer Danai Sukskul.

"They were called to assist in further questioning within 30 days. Currently, no wrongdoing has been found," Mr Narucha said.

Mr Narucha also addressed criticism over the inclusion of Thalang District Chief Wilailak Rueangphol in the order, amid claims she had only recently taken office and was not directly involved in Patong matters.

"A report was submitted for investigation," Mr Narucha said. "Whether she is in the area or not, and whether it relates to Patong, needs to be investigated first..."

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Phuket-based Malykhin lays down gloves



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exeditor@classactmedia.co.th

News



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Graft blame game begins

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The widening dispute comes amid increasing pressure from the Interior Ministry to target influential groups, alleged corruption networks and public land encroachment linked to Phuket's tourism sector.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who as with previous governments continues to serve as Interior Minister, publicly ordered action against influential figures following disputes surrounding Freedom Beach land issues.

SPEAKING OUT

The transfer order followed weeks of mounting complaints from Patong entertainment operators, led publicly by Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA) President Weerawit Kreuasombat.

Mr Weerawit accused officials of selective enforcement, prolonged licensing delays and unofficial pressure connected to entertainment venue approvals.

However, he said the current focus on transferred officials risked overshadowing deeper structural problems surrounding Phuket's zoning and licensing systems.

"If all five individuals are innocent or have never engaged in the alleged misconduct, they should be able to return to their jobs," Mr Weerawit said.

"However, if anyone has been found guilty of

misconduct, and there is in-depth information and evidence, the matter will proceed according to due process."

Mr Weerawit argued that laws governing entertainment venues nationwide were no longer suitable for Phuket's tourism-driven economy.

"One thing that must be acknowledged is that the laws applied throughout Thailand to Phuket are not suitable for the island's current situation," he said.

"Some tourism areas no longer match the legal zoning framework, creating ongoing problems for entertainment venue permits."

He also criticised what he described as superficial public responses by senior officials.

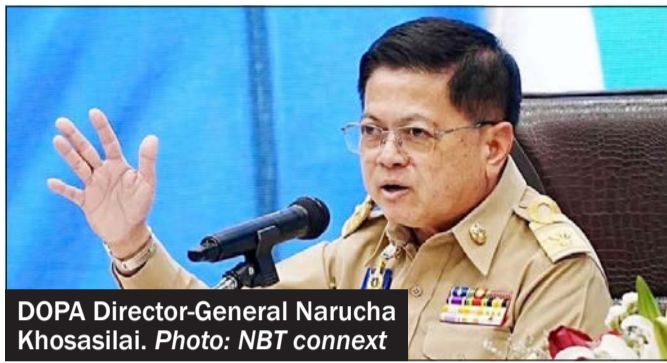
"The media appearances of some senior officials are just for show. In reality, they don't help at all," Mr Weerawit said.

PROVINCIAL DEFENCE

Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong defended the province's handling of entertainment licence renewals and denied allegations that unofficial payments or conditions were attached to approvals.

"This was a transfer, a call to investigate the facts," Mr Adul told *The Phuket News*. "It wasn't an accusation, but a request to assist in further fact-finding."

"Most of the valid applications are being issued gradually. We've



DOPA Director-General Narucha Khosasilai. Photo: NBT connect

already issued a considerable number," he said.

Mr Adul added that Phuket Governor Nirat Phongsittithaworn had repeatedly instructed officials that no benefits or payments were connected to licence approvals.

"The Governor has long emphasised that there are no criteria, conditions, or benefits related to licences whatsoever," Mr Adul said.

While acknowledging complaints involving businesses operating outside permitted zones, Mr Adul said further details were still needed regarding disputed locations and application procedures.

"Regarding zones, I don't have the information yet. We need to see how the application was submitted, and where the province inspected," he said.

'SETUP'

Among the transferred officials, Mr Rungruang issued the strongest public defence against the allegations, claiming the complaints were politically motivated and linked to his role in beach and public land enforcement operations.

"I see it as a setup by influential people who want to transfer me out of the area," he said.

"On the day I went to arrest those encroaching on public land at Bang Tao Beach, a former deputy minister called me, demanding that I release the suspects, threatening that he knew high-ranking officials in the Ministry of Interior," he continued.

"When I refused, he called the vice governor. I must have interfered with their interests," he added.

Mr Rungruang also denied allegations circulating online claiming he demanded B100 million connected to Bang Tao Beach or Freedom Beach raids.

"Yes, there have been contacts. They wanted to invite me to dinner and get to know me, from both Bang Tao Beach and Freedom Beach areas, but I declined," he said.

"Regarding the posts claiming I demanded B100mn, I can confirm that's impossible. I perform my duties honestly and straightforwardly. Money cannot buy justice."

He also denied all allegations linked to Patong entertainment licensing extortion claims.

"I have never met, never had the phone number of, and never contacted the people related to such matters," Mr Rungruang said.

Mr Rungruang has previously faced legal scrutiny and public controversy unrelated to the current Patong investigation.

Of note, in 2022, *Isra News Agency* reported that he surrendered to police after an arrest warrant was issued in connection with alleged online gambling and money-laundering activities. He was later granted temporary bail and denied all allegations.

Isra News also reported that the Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) seized assets during a separate narcotics investigation in Narathiwat in which firearms linked to licences issued while Mr Rungruang was serving as district chief were reportedly discovered at a suspect's residence.

Mr Rungruang denied wrongdoing in that case and said all investigations and licence revocations had been conducted according to law.

CRITICISM GROWS

Political criticism surrounding the transfers continued escalating online, including from Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee, who questioned why newly

appointed officials had been included in the order.

"The whole town, Thalang, the deputy, the security officers, they're all newly appointed. No one is involved in this," Mr Chalermpong wrote in comments posted under an official DOPA announcement regarding anti-corruption measures.

Mr Chalermpong also accused authorities of applying double standards.

"High-ranking officials involved in corruption and entanglement with influential figures in Bang Tao Beach have not faced any repercussions and remain in the area," he wrote.

"This double standard demands an investigation into the Director-General of the Department of Provincial Administration."

The Kathu, Thalang and Mueang district chiefs declined to comment on the transfer order, while Phuket Provincial Defence Officer Danai Sukskul was unavailable for comment.

"I'm just a low-level employee. If there's an order, I have to comply," Kathu District Chief Akkarapol said.

"I can't say or answer anything," he added.

Despite the escalating political fallout and public accusations, authorities continue insisting the Phuket investigation remains a fact-finding process only and that none of the five transferred officials have yet been found guilty of wrongdoing.

Governor calls for clearer definition of 'influential figures'

PHUKET GOVERNOR NIRAT Phongsittithaworn has called for stricter law enforcement against public land encroachment and urged a review of the official definition of an "influential person" as part of efforts to strengthen security operations nationwide.

Gov Nirat presented the outcomes of a national security workshop at Government House in Bangkok on May 21, following a meeting chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul.

Speaking at the Santi Maitri Building, Gov Nirat represented a provincial working group tasked

with presenting recommendations on key security and law enforcement issues affecting local communities.

One of the main concerns raised during the workshop was the continuing problem of encroachment on public land, which Gov Nirat said affects area management and fairness for local residents.

He stressed that resolving the issue would require strict and consistent enforcement of the law, alongside integrated cooperation between relevant government agencies in order to produce "effective and tangible results".



Photo: PR Phuket

The governor also highlighted discussions on revising the definition of an "influential person" to make it clearer and more practical for authorities.

The revised definition would be used to establish a framework for creating watchlists or "red lists", allowing security agencies to better target prevention and

suppression operations in response to increasingly complex situations, he explained.

Gov Nirat also addressed concerns over inappropriate behaviour by foreign tourists in Phuket.

He said the province had previously invited representatives from various foreign consulates in Phuket to discuss cooperation in improving understanding among tourists of Thai laws and regulations.

According to Gov Nirat, those efforts have begun to show positive results, with fewer incidents involving aggressive or

inappropriate behaviour by tourists and the overall situation becoming more stable.

The workshop formed part of a wider government initiative under the policy framework of "Relieving Suffering, Promoting Well-being, Upholding Peace and Order, Combating Drugs, and Conquering Criminals", said an official report of the meeting.

The programme aims to strengthen cooperation between provincial administrative bodies, police and security agencies in order to improve safety and security nationwide, the report concluded. *The Phuket News*

RFD orders Nui Beach clearout

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Royal Forest Department (RFD) has ordered the demolition of 11 structures built illegally within the Nui Beach area of the Nakkered Hills National Forest Reserve in Karon, with occupants given until June 5 to vacate the land and remove all construction.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee revealed the order in a post online late last Friday night (May 22), highlighting the government's latest move against alleged illegal occupation and tourism-related development at Nui Beach.

The order, signed on May 20 by RFD Director-General Nikorn Sirirojananan, follows a joint inspection carried out on May 14 by officials from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, local administrative agencies and the RFD at Nui Beach, located off Soi Laem Nui Nok in Karon.

Officials found that approximately 15 rai of protected forest land had



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

been encroached upon and developed for tourism purposes, according to the order issued under Section 25 of the National Forest Reserve Act B.E. 2507 (1964).

Authorities reported that the area contained 11 structures and installations, including a concrete shop building, bamboo house, massage area, bathing area, animal pens, concrete pavilions, a Naga statue, a

pond, garage, water dam and a concrete road.

The inspection team concluded that the ongoing construction, landscaping and tourism-related use of the site had caused degradation of the protected forest area and constituted a violation of Section 14 of the National Forest Reserve Act.

A formal complaint has already been filed with Karon Police under Police

Report No. 2 dated May 14, 2026.

The demolition order follows a high-profile inspection of Nui Beach by Natural Resources and Environment Minister Suchart Chomklin on May 14, after complaints from local residents and community leaders over blocked access to the beach and fees allegedly being charged to visitors.

During that visit, Mr Suchart declared that no

person or group had the right to block access to the beach or collect entrance fees, and ordered officials to reclaim the land within one week.

The minister's inspection came one day after Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul visited Phuket and vowed to crack down on influential groups accused of illegally controlling tourism areas and encroaching on public land.

Mr Suchart said at the time that Nui Beach had been under investigation for alleged forest and public land encroachment for years, with legal action already under way by the Royal Forest Department.

"Influential groups will no longer be allowed to exploit state land," he said during the inspection.

"The beach and forest are public property, and no individual can block access or collect tolls from citizens and tourists."

Under the latest order, all owners, occupiers or persons connected to the encroachment must vacate the land and demolish the structures by June 5. If they

fail to comply, the Forestry Department is authorised to carry out the demolition itself and recover all costs from those responsible, plus an additional 35% surcharge.

The order also warns that failure to comply could result in penalties under Section 37/1 of the National Forest Reserve Act, including imprisonment of up to six months, a fine of up to B10,000, or both, as well as a daily fine of B5,000 until compliance is achieved.

Those affected by the order have the right to submit a written clarification or appeal to the RFD Director-General within 15 days of receiving the notice. However, the filing of an appeal will not suspend enforcement unless expressly ordered otherwise.

The case is the latest in a series of enforcement actions targeting illegal occupation and tourism-related development in Phuket's protected forest and coastal areas, amid increasing scrutiny of land use within conservation zones.

Senate panel backs proposal for more Phuket autonomy

A PROPOSAL TO TRANSFORM Phuket into a special administrative region with its own directly elected governor has been formally presented to the Senate, with supporters arguing the move would give the island greater control over development, budgets and public services.

The proposal was presented by Aphinan Phuekphong, Senator and Chairman of the Senate Sub-Committee on Decentralisation and Special Forms of Local Government.

The study recommends upgrading both Phuket and Chiang Mai into special administrative entities similar to the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

Under the proposal, Phuket residents would directly elect a "Metropolitan Governor" for a four-year term along with a deputy governor and administrative team. A legislative council would also be elected, while a citizens' council representing professional and community groups would help guide development policy.

Mr Aphinan said Phuket continued to face structural problems because of heavy reliance on central government administration despite being one of Thailand's most important tourism economies.

According to the study, Phuket welcomes about 14 million tourists annually and generates an estimated B500 billion in tourism revenue each year, yet receives only around B7.5bn in annual state budget allocations.

The report also highlighted a lack of continuity caused by frequent transfers of



Screenshot: Thai Senate

governors appointed by the Interior Ministry.

Phuket has had 14 governors over the past 19 years, with each serving an average term of little more than one year, the study noted.

Supporters argue the current system hampers long-term planning and delays responses to local issues such as beach management and infrastructure development.

Under the proposed model, many responsibilities currently handled by regional government agencies would be transferred directly to Phuket authorities, while the island would also gain greater financial autonomy and a larger share of locally generated tax revenue.

The proposal received support from Phuket MPs.

Chalermpong Saengdee, MP for Phuket Constituency 2, described the plan as "good news" that could help transform Phuket into a stronger tourism and economic hub.

Somchart Techathaworncharoen, MP for Phuket Constituency 1, said he would continue pushing the concept of Phuket self-governance in Parliament.

The Phuket News

ISOC tightens Phuket security crackdown

PHUKET'S SECURITY and anti-drug operations came under the spotlight last Saturday (May 23) as Fourth Army Area Commander Lt Gen Norathip Poynok led a high-level meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall to review threats ranging from narcotics trafficking to illegal land encroachment and foreign nominee business activities.

The meeting brought together senior provincial officials, police, military commanders and representatives from multiple government agencies to coordinate ongoing enforcement efforts across the island.

Among those attending were Phuket Governor Nirat Pongsitthaworn, Deputy Governor Adul Chuthong, Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum and Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation President Rewat Areerob.

Officials reviewed issues including drug suppression, illegal im-



Photo: PR Phuket

public land in tourism areas including Bang Tao Beach, Freedom Beach and Nui Beach.

Officials confirmed several cases remain under legal proceedings while authorities continue investigating land ownership documents, business operations involving foreigners and alleged nominee arrangements.

Government agencies, including forestry officials, maritime authorities and police, were ordered to continue working together to accelerate investigations and enforce laws against illegal land use and natural resource encroachment.

Lt Gen Norathip said the government had elevated security threats, natural resource violations and issues involving foreign nationals to top-priority national concerns.

"The protection of national resources, the rights of citizens and public confidence in government administration are crucial," he said.

The Phuket News

The Phuket News

CONTACT US

editor@classactmedia.co.th 076 612 550

PURIYA BEAVAN
EditorCHRIS HUSTED
Executive Editor
084 307 7408
execeditor@classactmedia.co.thBEN TIREBUCK
News / Sport Editor
061 206 8132
editor3@classactmedia.co.thCHUTHARAT 'UM'
PLERIN
Thai Editor
088 766 1615
thai@classactmedia.co.thNATNAREE 'MILD'
LIKIDWANASAKUN
Reporter / Translator
082 295 3244
reporter1@classactmedia.co.thJASON BEAVAN
General Manager
086 479 7471
gm@classactmedia.co.thSIRIPORN (NOK)
SEANGMAS
Sales Support
086 479 7470
sales@classactmedia.co.thNIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITCHA
Graphic designerThe Phuket News
@thepuketnews

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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Phuket among targets in B200mn heroin bust

PHUKET WAS AMONG the intended destinations for more than 65 kilograms of heroin seized in a major crackdown on a transnational drug trafficking network involving a Nigerian man and two Thai women, police have confirmed.

The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB), together with the Crime Suppression Division (CSD), Immigration Bureau and the Royal Thai Police Anti-Trafficking in Persons Centre, announced the arrests following raids in Bangkok and at the Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal.

The suspects, identified as Ms Kanyarat, Nigerian national Mr Chiadikaobi and Ms Somporn, face charges of jointly possessing Category 1 narcotics with intent to sell without permission for commercial purposes.

Police said the network smuggled heroin into Thailand for distribution in major tourist destinations including Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket.



Photo: CIB

The investigation began after Nong Khai Immigration Bureau officers received intelligence about a Nigerian-led trafficking operation working with Thai women in Bangkok.

Investigators later raided a Bangkok hotel and arrested Mr Chiadikaobi, allegedly seizing 49.5kg of heroin hidden inside snack bags.

Police then arrested Ms Somporn at the Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal while she was allegedly preparing to transport drugs to Phuket. Officers seized another 16kg of heroin concealed in snack and pet food bags.

In total, authorities seized 65.5kg of heroin with an estimated street value exceeding B200 million.

The Phuket News

Public dumping offenders fined

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Municipal officers in Chalong and Wichit have stepped up enforcement against illegal dumping in public areas, using CCTV footage and public complaints to track offenders, issue fines and order clean-up operations.

Chalong Municipality confirmed this week that officers from its Public Order Division identified and prosecuted people responsible for illegally dumping rubbish on Nakok Rd near the Khun Sanya Learning Center in Moo 5.

According to a municipal announcement posted on May 20, officers used CCTV footage to trace the offenders, who later confessed. They were fined B3,000 under the Public Cleanliness and Orderliness Act and ordered to clean the area immediately.

Chalong Municipality said the action reflected its policy of strict enforcement against illegal dumping and urged residents and businesses to help keep public



Photo: Wichit Municipality

areas clean and report future violations.

Online reaction was largely supportive, with many residents praising the enforcement effort.

In a separate operation on May 19, Chalong municipal officers inspected illegal dumping at a workers' camp in Soi Klum Yang under the direction of Mayor Samran Jindaphol and in cooperation with the municipality's Public Health and Environment Division.

Officers issued warnings and ordered those responsible to clear the rubbish within the same day, warning that further inspections and fines would follow if they

failed to comply.

Meanwhile, Wichit Municipality reported similar enforcement action after receiving a complaint about construction waste dumped on Chao Fa Rd on May 17.

Wichit officers tracked the vehicle involved and located it parked outside a shop on Chao Fa East Rd. The offender admitted dumping the debris and was later fined B6,000 under the Public Cleanliness and Orderliness Act and ordered to clean the site.

Residents also praised the Wichit operation online, with many calling for continued strict enforcement.

Austrian deported over drunken disturbances

AN AUSTRIAN MAN ACCUSED of repeatedly causing disturbances while intoxicated in Rawai has had his visa revoked and now faces deportation, Phuket Immigration has confirmed.

The action was carried out jointly by Phuket Immigration and Chalong Police following complaints and social media reports about the man's behaviour.

Authorities identified the man only as Raphael, 39. Investigators said he had allegedly driven recklessly in Rawai, blocked traffic lanes, begged for money and harassed local residents while intoxicated.

Immigration police said Raphael had entered Thailand legally and later obtained a



Photo: Phuket Immigration

student visa to study Thai language and culture.

Officials said he repeatedly caused public disturbances while intoxicated despite previous warnings.

Phuket Immigration revoked his permission to stay in Thailand and began deportation proceedings under the Immigration Act.

The Phuket News

Australian tourist dead from suspected drug overdose

AN AUSTRALIAN TOURIST was found dead in a condominium room in Kata last week, with police investigating the case as a suspected drug overdose.

Police were called to the condo at 7:30pm on May 20 after staff discovered the body of the 27-year-old man lying on the floor of the room.

Karon Police investigating officer Pol Lt Col Eaksak Khwanwan reported the incident to Karon Police Chief Pol Col Pathapi Srichai before officers, forensic personnel and rescue workers attended the scene.

According to police, condominium staff said they last saw the tourist at about 12:20am on May 19. Later, concerned after being unable to contact him, staff alerted the room owner, who entered the room and found the man unresponsive before notifying police.



Photo: Karon Police

Investigators reported finding a quantity of white powder in a dish on a table near the body. Initial examinations found no signs of a struggle or physical assault.

Forensic officers collected evidence from the room, while the body was transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital for a post-mortem examination to determine the exact cause of death.

The substance found at the scene will also undergo forensic testing as part of the investigation.

Police said the Australian Embassy has been notified.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Phuket ramps up flood defences

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket municipalities across the island are stepping up flood prevention measures ahead of the peak rainy season, after heavy rain last week caused flooding on roads in Phuket Town, Kathu, Cherng Talay and Thalang.

Officials are warning that heavy rainfall in July and August could trigger more severe flooding in key economic and tourism areas, particularly as waterlogged ground conditions worsen later in the monsoon season.

The renewed push follows widespread rain on May 20 that caused localised flooding across Phuket and prompted weather warnings from the Southern West Coast Meteorological Center.

Heavy rain across Phuket caused minor flooding, fallen trees and traffic disruption in several areas, with officials continuing cleanup and drainage operations after rainfall totals exceeded 130 millimetres in some parts of the island.

One of the worst-hit locations during the May 20 downpour was near Tha Khraeng intersection on Sakdidet Rd, where flooding from the swollen Tha Khraeng Canal forced officials to temporarily close the road leading to Ao Makham.



Photo: PR Phuket

Flooding was also reported at the Samkong Underpass and in Soi Cherng Talay 4 near the Roma Hotel, where motorcycles were unable to pass through inundated sections of road.

At the time, Phuket City Mayor Suppachoke Laongphet inspected water levels at Bang Yai Canal and ordered pumping stations to operate continuously as heavy rain coincided with a high tide.

Separately, officials from the Prime Minister's Office and the National Anti-Corruption Commission inspected a canal retaining wall project at Khlong

Bueng Sai in Wichit aimed at improving water flow through flood-prone communities.

Deputy Inspector-General of the Prime Minister's Office Pol Col Prateep Charoenkal said the project was needed because sections of the old drainage structure had deteriorated and partially collapsed, restricting water flow and contributing to flooding risks.

Against that backdrop, Phuket City Municipality has upgraded its rainy season response plan for 2026, focusing on dredging canals, clearing drainage pipes, inspecting pumping systems and

deploying officials to monitor flood-prone areas around the clock.

Mayor Suppachoke said the municipality was particularly concerned about flooding later in the rainy season, when prolonged rainfall could saturate the ground and increase the risk of rapid flooding in urban areas.

The municipality has also expanded the use of its 'Phuket City Municipality' mobile application, which tracks water levels at various locations and provides alerts during periods of heavy rain and flooding.

Meanwhile, Rawai Municipality is accelerating four major flood prevention and drainage improvement projects aimed at reducing chronic flooding in vulnerable areas before the heaviest rains arrive between July and September.

Rawai Mayor Thames Kraiat on Monday (May 25) inspected progress on reinforced concrete drainage channels and other flood mitigation works in the south Phuket subdistrict.

Officials said detailed surveys found drainage canals in Rawai varied significantly in width, causing poor water flow and recurring waterlogging during storms.

Water pumps have also been installed at high-risk locations,

while sandbags and emergency response teams have been prepared to assist residents 24 hours a day throughout the rainy season.

In Thalang, Srisoonthorn Municipality has continued annual dredging works along major canals and waterways, including Khlong Moo 6 in Baan Don, one of the area's key drainage routes.

Srisoonthorn Mayor Chalermphon Kertsap said the work had been carried out during the dry season to prepare for this year's rains, with support from the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation, which supplied heavy machinery for the dredging operations.

Patong Municipality has also moved to address flood risks, with Mayor Lalita Maneesri leading officials on an inspection of a private construction project at Soi Song Phan, also known as Soi Khok Mu.

Municipal officials instructed project managers to urgently improve drainage systems at the site to prevent repeat flooding in nearby residential communities during heavy rainfall.

Across Phuket, officials have repeatedly urged residents not to dump rubbish into drains, canals and waterways, warning that blocked drainage systems remain one of the leading causes of urban flooding during storms.

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Tourism operators back 30-day visa

Bangkok Post

Tourism operators in Phuket and Pattaya have backed the government's decision to end Thailand's 60-day visa-free stay programme and return to shorter visa exemptions, saying the move could help curb illegal business activity and encourage higher-spending tourism.

The Cabinet on May 19 approved ending the 60-day visa-free programme introduced in July 2024 to support Thailand's post-COVID tourism recovery.

Tourism and Sports Minister Surasak Phanchaoenworakul said the rules would revert to the immigration framework in place before the 60-day scheme took effect, although the exact enforcement date is still being finalised.

Mungkorn Pratoomkaew, Director-General of the Consular Affairs Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, later said the changes would take effect 15 days after publication in the Royal Gazette.

Under the revised system, the 60-day visa exemption for all 93 countries and territories will be revoked.

Eligibility for 30-day visa-free entry will be reduced from 57 countries to 54, while some countries will instead receive



Photo: Bangkok Post

15-day exemptions or remain eligible for visa-on-arrival schemes.

Thailand had allowed nationals of 56 countries to stay visa-free for 30 days for many years before the exemption was expanded to 60 days and extended to 93 countries last year.

Authorities have signalled for months that the longer visa-free stays had created unintended problems, including foreigners using tourist exemptions to run businesses, work illegally or

engage in criminal activity.

The Department of Consular Affairs said the overhaul formed part of a wider restructuring of Thailand's visa system aimed at reducing confusion, tightening immigration controls and aligning permitted stay periods more closely with actual tourist behaviour.

Bhummikitti Ruktaengam, president of the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation, said the decision followed lengthy discussions between the

government and tourism operators.

He said most businesses agreed that 30 days was already sufficient for ordinary tourists, while investors and business travellers could apply through other visa categories.

"The overall impact on Thai tourism should be limited, although some markets may slow," he said.

Mr Bhummikitti said arrivals from the Middle East to Phuket had already declined sharply, while Australian tourists remained stable because they typically booked trips well in advance. Indian arrivals had softened slightly but remained relatively strong.

He also noted that Kazakhstan, which previously enjoyed visa-free access, would return to normal visa requirements under the revised measures.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee supported the change, saying Thailand should focus on "quality tourism" rather than simply increasing visitor numbers.

"Thirty days is already enough for tourism, and personally I think even 18 days would be sufficient," he said.

Mr Chalermpong warned that longer visa-free stays had created loopholes allowing some foreigners to establish nominee busi-

nesses, compete unfairly with local operators and engage in criminal activities.

He urged authorities to intensify legal action against illegal foreign-run businesses and strengthen immigration screening capacity, particularly in major tourism provinces such as Phuket.

Chutima Jeeramongkol, president of the Pattaya Business and Tourism Association, also backed the return to 30-day stays, describing it as a return to normal conditions after the temporary extension.

She said shorter visits often generated higher spending on accommodation, food and tourism activities, while long-stay travellers were typically more budget-conscious.

The government said future visa policy decisions would consider security concerns, reciprocity with other countries and economic impacts.

Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkaew recently said authorities were also reviewing Thailand's broader visa framework to determine whether some visa categories could be streamlined or merged.

Foreign tourist arrivals to Thailand as of May 17 were down 3.3% year-on-year to 12.9 million visitors, according to official figures.

Co-pay unlikely to help big eateries

THAILAND'S NEW CO-PAYMENT stimulus scheme 'Thai Chuay Thai Plus' is unlikely to benefit mid-sized and large restaurant operators, according to the Thai Restaurant Association, which is urging the government to provide support for businesses excluded from the programme.

Under the scheme, the government subsidises 60% of spending, while participants pay the remaining 40%, with support capped at B200 per day and B1,000 per month from June through September.

Eligible businesses include non-legal entity restaurants and retailers, as well as small legal entities with annual revenue below B1.8 million.

Thai Restaurant Association president Thaniwan Kulmongkol said most medium-sized and large restaurants are legally registered taxpayers and therefore do not qualify.

Ms Thaniwan said the restaurant industry was already under pressure as consumers cut spending, chose smaller eateries and dined out less frequently during the low season.

"Some restaurants decided to temporarily close," she said, warning that reduced operations could lead to staff layoffs.

She added that rising energy prices had also increased logistics and raw material costs, further squeezing operators.

Food delivery platforms had informed



Photo: Bangkok Post

the association that more of their gross profit revenue was now being directed to supporting delivery drivers affected by fuel costs, making it unlikely platforms would reduce fees charged to restaurants.

"Restaurants with less liquidity will face a tougher challenge than those with funds during this period," Ms Thaniwan said.

Despite concerns over the co-payment scheme, she said broader tourism stimulus measures could still help support the overall economy.

The association is calling on the government to help control rising raw material prices and reduce price volatility, which directly impacts restaurant operators.

Ms Thaniwan also urged authorities to consider reducing employers' social security contributions and lowering taxes for restaurants to ease financial pressure.

The association further proposed organising food festivals and offering low rental rates to provide restaurants with additional income opportunities.

Bangkok Post

Unnecessary laws to get the chop

THE THAI GOVERNMENT is preparing a major overhaul of more than 7,000 economic laws and regulations in a bid to reduce business obstacles, cut costs and create a more investment-friendly environment.

Government spokeswoman Rachada Dhnadirek said the reform effort, overseen by Deputy Prime Minister for Legal Affairs Pakorn Nilrapunt, will initially focus on 10 to 20 key laws identified as major barriers to doing business.

She said the government under Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul wants to shift the state's role from regulator to facilitator, making it easier for businesses to operate.

When Anutin took office after the dismissal of Paetongtarn Shinawatra last September, he said a "regulatory guillotine" campaign could reduce corporate costs by B134 billion annually and boost GDP growth by 0.9% per year.

Ms Rachada said many primary laws contain appropriate principles, but thousands of ministerial regulations, rules and offi-



Photo: Pizarros / Wikimedia Commons via Bangkok Post

cial announcements introduced over time have become burdensome and costly for entrepreneurs.

The government plans to review more than 7,000 subordinate laws and determine which should be retained, revised or repealed.

Where regulations remain necessary, digital systems will be introduced to streamline procedures, improve transparency and reduce discretionary decision-making.

Mr Pakorn recently discussed the initiative with the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking, as well as representatives from several business groups.

He asked participants to identify 10-20 subordinate laws requiring urgent re-

form and submit proposed amendments by next month.

The government also plans to introduce a "super licence" concept, allowing businesses to obtain a single licence covering multiple activities instead of applying for several permits.

In addition, authorities aim to move from a system requiring approval before operations begin to a post-audit model for eligible businesses, allowing companies to operate more quickly.

Ms Rachada said one licensing reform already producing results was the Board of Investment Fast Pass system, which helped accelerate approvals and contributed to an 18% increase in investment during the first quarter of this year. Bangkok Post

Ministry defends TikTok plan

BANGKOK
Bangkok Post

The Education Ministry has defended its plan to use artificial intelligence (AI) to help teachers produce short educational videos for TikTok, after the initiative sparked criticism from opponents who argued it contradicted global efforts to curb children's social media use.

The controversy emerged after Education Minister Prasert Jan-tararuangtong met executives from TikTok Thailand on May 21 to discuss promoting educational content on the platform.

The talks covered past and future collaboration, with a focus on promoting digital literacy through educational programmes to support career development while also aiming to advance the use of AI to help reduce teacher workload.

The ministry also plans to sign memorandums of understanding with several sectors to support education initiatives.

Under the proposal, AI technology would help teachers create two-minute educational video clips where students and teachers could engage through the comment section. Officials say the system could reduce workloads, simplify lessons for students and save time spent preparing teaching materials.



Photo: Bangkok Post

CRITICISM

The idea has drawn criticism across social media, with many questioning whether Thailand is moving in the right direction at a time when several countries around the world are introducing restrictions on youth social media use.

An online page, Reporter Journey, which has more than 250,000 followers, raised the question: "Is this to reduce teachers' workload or the quality of education?"

The page argued that Thai teachers' workload problems are not caused by "a lack of video materials" but by a government system that places excessive responsibilities on them, alongside shortages in staffing and insufficient institutional support.

Responding to the backlash, Education Ministry spokesperson Tatiyaphat Pitisetthapan said the ministry understood public concerns over screen time and the impact of social media on children.

"It cannot be denied that digital technology has become part of learning and daily life for modern children," he said. "At the same time, the ministry recognises concerns about the effects of digital media on children's concentration, development and wellbeing."

Mr Tatiyaphat stressed that the ministry was not encouraging children to spend more time on social media, but instead wanted students to develop digital and AI literacy in a safe and appropriate way.

"The principle is that technology must be a tool for learning, not the goal of education," he said.

He added that the ministry's policy centred on age-appropriate technology use that would not unnecessarily increase screen time or harm children's development, wellbeing or academic performance.

"What we really want is for children to use digital tools appropriately."

Democrats launch AI platform to fight graft

BANGKOK


Photo: Bangkok Post

THE DEMOCRAT Party has launched 'Song Rat' (scan the state), an AI-based platform designed to detect irregularities in government projects, starting with procurement linked to artificial intelligence initiatives.

Speaking at the launch on Monday (May 25), party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva said the platform was part of the party's push to improve transparency and public access to state information.

The launch coincided with the party's 80th anniversary and followed its pledge to make government data easier to access and monitor, particularly in state procurement.

Mr Abhisit said the system would initially be used internally to analyse procurement data using AI. Its first review covered 1,276 AI-related government projects

worth a combined B4.27 billion.

The party said some projects appeared to offer limited public benefit, raising concerns over inefficiency and possible corruption. It also questioned the lack of a clear national AI strategy, alleging that some agencies had labelled ordinary digital projects as AI initiatives.

The party said it had also identified three private firms involved in the procurement process and would examine possible links to political office-holders or political donations.

Mr Abhisit cited the "AI Passport" project as a potentially high-risk case and warned that serious findings could lead to parliamentary scrutiny, including a no-confidence debate. *Bangkok Post*

'Thais Help Thais' scheme boosts spending

BANGKOK

THE GOVERNMENT'S 'Thais Help Thais' programme has generated more than B110.89 million in spending while cutting household expenses by over B24.51mn, as authorities press ahead with efforts to stimulate grassroots economic activity nationwide.

Narucha Kosacivilize, director-general of the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA), said on May 23 that the initiative, led by Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, is aimed at easing living costs while strengthening local economies through wider access to affordable essential goods.

The programme is being implemented through co-operation between the DoPA, the Department of Business Development, modern wholesale and retail chains, local entrepreneurs and mobile vendors.

Low-cost product sales are being held every Friday across all 878 districts nationwide to expand access to reasonably priced goods while improving liquidity for community shops,



A vendor in Nonthaburi on May 15. Photo: Chanut Katanyu

SMEs and One Tambon One Product businesses.

The top five districts with the highest spending were Mueang Chonburi in Chonburi province, Mueang Saraburi in Saraburi, Mueang Yala in Yala, Mueang Ratchaburi in Ratchaburi and Kaeng Khoi district in Saraburi.

Cumulative spending since the programme kicked off on May 1 exceeded B110.89mn, while total savings for the public surpassed B24.51mn.

Mr Narucha said the programme would continue every Friday at district offices nationwide, helping people access quality goods at affordable prices, reduce household expenses and sustain grassroots economic

circulation across communities.

Meanwhile, the government launched the "Thais Help Thais Plus: 60/40" co-payment scheme, with merchant registration opening on Monday (May 25).

Deputy government spokeswoman Lalida Pherdwiwatthana said consumer spending at participating shops will run from June 1 to Sept 30, while purchases through food delivery platforms will be available from June 15 to Sept 30.

Ms Lalida said the scheme would help circulate funds more widely in local communities and expand business opportunities for small retailers nationwide.

Bangkok Post

Three charged over horrific train-bus crash in Bangkok

BANGKOK

POLICE HAVE CHARGED THREE people with negligence causing death and injury as part of the investigation into the deadly train-bus collision on May 16 in Bangkok.

Investigators have filed charges against the train driver, the Route 206 bus driver and the railway crossing gate operator, with all three facing charges of negligence causing death, serious injury and bodily harm.

The crash occurred when a freight train collided with a Route 206 public bus at the Asok-Phetchaburi railway crossing, leaving eight people dead and 32 injured. Some of the victims suffered severe burns, making identification difficult and requiring DNA testing by forensic police.

Toxicology tests conducted on the train driver found traces of amphetamine and cannabis in his body and investigators are examining whether the substances affected his ability to perform his duties at the time of the crash.

Investigators are also examining the actions of motorists who stopped on or near the railway tracks before the collision. Police said drivers of vehicles seen at the crossing during the incident will be summoned for questioning.



Photo: Bangkok Post

Authorities will investigate whether any of these motorists intentionally violated traffic laws or ignored road markings by blocking the railway crossing.

However, police said each case would be considered individually, as some drivers may have been trapped by heavy traffic and unable to move away from the tracks in time.

The investigation has drawn significant public attention amid concerns over railway crossing safety, traffic management and possible lapses in operational procedures. Authorities said the inquiry would also examine whether warning systems, crossing barriers and emergency response measures functioned properly before the crash.

Police and railway officials are collecting more evidence, reviewing surveillance footage and interviewing witnesses as part of the ongoing investigation into the crash.

Bangkok Post

At Sixty, I Travel for Discomfort



GLOBETROTTER

Todd Miller

Within the span of a few weeks, my life quietly divided itself into before and after: my father died, and then I turned 60. One event reminded me how long a life can be. The other reminded me it isn't unlimited.

Together they left me with a simple resolution: stop optimising for comfort.

For me, that means leaning deliberately into slightly uncomfortable situations. I've come to believe the best experiences begin where common wisdom politely suggests you reconsider.

What I want now – more urgently than ever – is to feel fully alive. Not busy. Not entertained. Alive in the slightly disorienting, full-sensory mode.

For decades we've treated discomfort as a design flaw in life – something to be engineered away. But chosen discomfort can be one of the most reliable sources of vitality. The problem isn't comfort itself. It's how easily comfort becomes a substitute for engagement. So, I intentionally place myself just beyond my comfort zone – not recklessly, not foolishly, just far enough to create productive tension.

Each week I ask myself a simple question: What will I do that surprises me? Often the answer involves travel. I'm on a long-term mission to meaningfully visit every country in the world. After more than 130 countries, I've learned that memorable moments are usually the most surprising.

Take Iraq, for example. Last fall – before the region erupted again in conflict – I travelled through Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, three places most Western governments strongly advise their citizens not to visit.



Todd volcano boarding down Cerro Negro, Nicaragua, March 2026, a month before turning 60. Photo: Todd Miller

One afternoon I found myself standing outside Saddam Hussein's abandoned palace overlooking the ruins of Babylon. The palace is officially off-limits, surrounded by rusting barbed wire that looked like it hadn't discouraged a visitor since about 1998. Naturally, this felt like an invitation.

I slipped through a gap in the fence, climbed a hill, and wandered inside. The palace was cavernous and empty, its walls covered in graffiti, the marble floors echoing with my footsteps. Eventually I reached a dais in the grand ballroom where Saddam once received visitors. Standing on that dais – slightly nervous and well beyond my comfort zone – I felt something rare: complete presence.

Every sense switched on. Travel has a magical way of doing that.

Exhilarating

More recently, discomfort took a different form on the slopes of Cerro Negro, an active volcano in Nicaragua.

The activity is called volcano boarding. The concept is simple: climb a volcano, sit on a wooden board, and slide down at speed.

The hike up was hot and dusty. At the summit, my guide handed me a protective suit and goggles that made me look like a low-budget astronaut. Then came the instructions: sit on the board, lean back slightly, and try not to panic. Within seconds I was rocketing down the black volcanic slope, kicking up clouds of ash and wondering whether my insurance included a clause titled, "What Were You Thinking?"

It was exhilarating. It was absurd. And when I finally reached the bottom – slightly dusty but intact – I felt the unmistakable afterglow that comes from doing something just outside your comfort zone.

But you don't need a volcano – or a former dictator's palace – to experience this kind of energy. It shows up in smaller ways: learning a language, starting a difficult conversation, walking into a room where no one knows your name, or attempting something you're terrible at. Even an impromptu trip to the cinema or dinner party with friends – I have done both in the past week – can surprise everyone.

None of this is dramatic. But it stretches you.

Often we regret the things we avoided – the experiences postponed, the risks that seemed unnecessary, the edges we chose not to explore. In my seventh decade, I'm leaning deliberately toward discomfort – the zone where life feels vivid, memorable, and fully lived. And I keep asking the same question: What will I do that surprises me?

At 60, it's not whether life can still surprise you. It's whether you're still willing to surprise yourself.

Adventurer Todd Miller has explored more than 130 countries. He authored the best-seller *ENRICH: Create Wealth in Time, Money, and Meaning*. www.ToddMiller.asia



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

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Global Ambition, Local Heart: Celebrating HeadStart's Class of 2026

With 52 graduates, HeadStart's Class of 2026 represents the largest, most ambitious cohort in the school's history. Their future pathways are truly global in scope, spanning everything from Natural Sciences at Cambridge and Medicine at Chulalongkorn to Contemporary Music in the UK, International Business in France, and Sports Science in Australia. Yet, as impressive as these academic accolades are, they only tell part of the story; what distinguishes this group is the character and leadership they have demonstrated far beyond the classroom and the contributions they have made to their community.



Nowhere is the Class of 2026's sense of community more visible than in the Creative & Performing Arts (CAPA) programme. In this year's senior production of Little Shop of Horrors, an impressive 17 Year 13 students played vital roles, showcasing a remarkable blend of artistic talent and community dedication. Whether captivating the audience with on-stage performances, providing musical accompaniment in the orchestra and choir, or managing set design backstage, these students demonstrated that their commitment to the school extends far beyond the final curtain call.

The legacy of the Class of 2026 extends onto the competitive stage through HeadStart's Sporting Academies. Year 13 athletes have represented the school at local and national football and basketball tournaments, showcasing their dedication to the game. Furthermore, the leadership of our senior AquaPanthers swimmers has been instrumental in the pool; by acting as mentors to their younger teammates, they have anchored the team's success in competitions at home and abroad.

Driven by a deep commitment to ethical and social justice, the Year 13 leadership team has furthermore set a powerful example through their dedication to HeadStart's charitable partners. Their impact is far-reaching: from launching the Moken Project to support marginalised indigenous groups and establishing eco-initiatives like the Mangrove Rejuvenation Project to help protect vulnerable local habitats, to hosting the Sunny Side Up English Camp and organising the 24-Hour Race against human trafficking. The Class of 2026 has not only proven their dedication to social responsibility, but has also consistently gone above and beyond to champion the needs of others.

As they prepare to embark on their next chapters, we celebrate the indelible mark they have left on the Phuket community and wish them the very best in their future endeavours.



For more Information about HeadStart
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Where to eat in PHUKET

May-June 2026 issue

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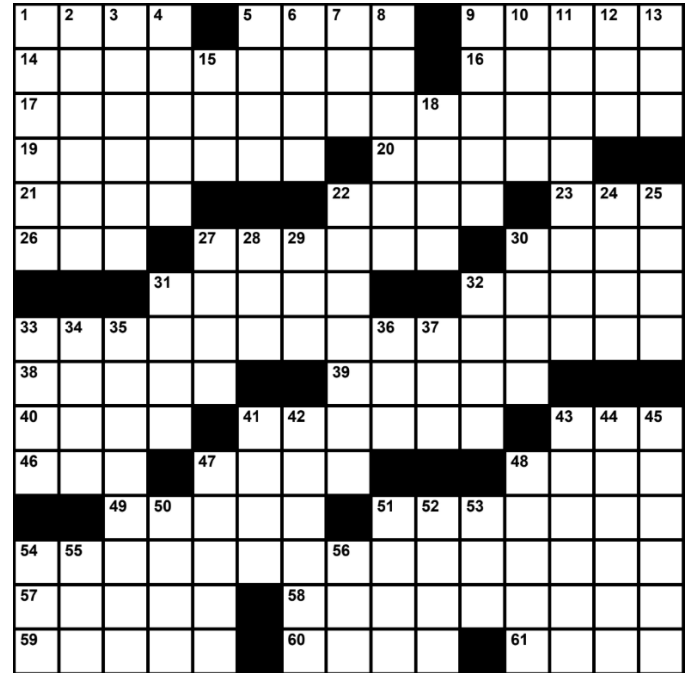
POP QUIZ

- Where are the Luxembourg gardens?
- What was known as Arabian Wine?
- What domesticated pet is never mentioned in the Bible?
- Which country has the world's oldest National Anthem?
- Terry Bollea became famous under what name?

Answers below, centre

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
- Wound
 - Trot or canter
 - Billiards shot
 - Capable of burning
 - Gray
 - Tolkien collection, with "The"
 - Accord
 - Baloney
 - "Darn it all!"
 - Long stretch
 - Big mouth
 - Cunning
 - Actor Snipes
 - Missile housing
 - Woody plant
 - Smooth
 - Chaucer classic, with "The"
 - Give or take
 - Cat's cry
 - Hop, skip or jump
 - Bad mark
 - Fond du ____, Wisconsin
 - Slippery __
 - Withdraw gradually
 - Rot
 - Deck out
 - Folder type
 - Dickens novel, with
- "A"**
- "I give up!"
 - Space sharers
 - More cheerful
 - First-class
 - Neck part
- Down**
- Hecklers
 - Relating to great pain
 - Uppish
 - Snaps
 - Knack
 - Experienced
 - U.N. working-conditions agcy.
 - Guinea pig
 - Morning service
 - P.D.Q.
 - Bungler
 - Bishop's jurisdiction
 - U.S.N.A. grad
 - Elephant's weight, maybe
 - City on the Hudson
 - Water-soluble protein
 - Nautical heading
 - Pans
- Stimulate
 - Goof
 - Relief
 - Picnic dish
 - Short end
 - Greek portico
 - Natural hideout
 - Brother of Cain
 - Averageness
 - 18-wheeler
 - Thanksgiving serving
 - Drudge
 - Hindu religious book
 - Nabokov title
 - Not alert
 - Gliding dance step
 - Beau
 - Hyperion, for one
 - Remove from a manuscript
 - Night light
 - Highest point
 - Game with matchsticks
 - Jerk
 - Literary olio
 - Court



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

SUDOKU

Very Easy

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

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Paris, France; 2) Coffee; 3) Cat; 4) Netherlands; 5) Hulk Hogan

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

in five UK adults can't change a light bulb or boil an egg, according to a recent survey.

18

kids are hospitalised every day from gun injuries in the US.

62

percent of Americans have had their private information leaked in data breaches within the past five years.

3,000

US dollars is how much Louis Vuitton's luxury Jenga game costs.

1.1 trillion

LEGO bricks have been created since the first LEGO brick was patented in 1958 - this equates to more than 140 pieces for every person on Earth.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Sunrise beyond Cape Panwa. Photo by Dave Richards

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

This week in history

May 29, 1453
Ottoman armies under Sultan Mehmed II capture Constantinople after a 53-day siege, ending the Roman Empire after over 2,000 years.

May 30, 1631
Publication of *Gazette de France*, the first French newspaper.

May 31, 2008
Usain Bolt breaks the world



record in the 100m sprint, with a wind-legal (+1.7 m/s) 9.72 seconds.

June 1, 1495
Scottish mendicant friar John Cor records the first known batch of Scotch whisky.

June 2, 1953
The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey becomes the first British coronation and one of the first major international events to be televised.

June 3, 1892
Liverpool Football Club is founded by John Houilding.

June 4, 1977
JVC introduces its VHS videotape at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. It will eventually prevail against Sony's rival Betamax system in a format war to become the predominant home video medium. Source: Wikipedia

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WINDOW ON PHUKET

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

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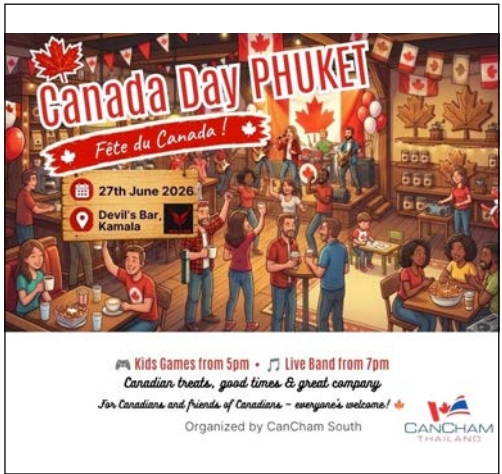
FRI 5 JUNE



Grow Boating Phuket Evening - June 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 the joint drinks sponsors for the evening will be the Thailand Boat Festival and Derani Yachts. Both based in the Phuket Boat Lagoon. See thailandboatfestival.com and derani-yachts.com 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 and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming, please invite them along. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/>

SAT 27 JUNE



Canada Day Phuket Celebration

Celebrate Canada Day in Kamala! Join the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Thailand – Southern Branch for a fun, family-friendly Canada Day celebration at Devil's Bar in Kamala. We'll kick things off at 5:00 PM with kids' activities, followed by a live band from 7:00 PM. Enjoy a relaxed evening of community, music, good company, and a buffet featuring a few Canadian treats. Buffet: 200 THB for adults and 100 THB for kids. All Canadians, friends of Canada, and Canadians for a day are welcome — so bring the family, wear a little red and white, and come celebrate with us! Please click through to register for the kids' activities so we can plan accordingly.

PROPERTY FOR SALE



Relocating Property must sell

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

PROPERTY FOR RENT



3-Bedroom House for rent

3-Bedroom House for Rent - Chao Fah Garden Home 3 (Koh Kaew, Phuket) Property Size: 272 m' (68 Talang Wah) Location: Secure gated community in Chao Fah Garden Home 3, Ko Kaew - conveniently located near Boat Lagoon and BISP Property Details: 3 bedrooms (all air-conditioned) 2 bathrooms (with hot water) Living Areas: Spacious indoor living room • Very large covered outdoor area with built-in cooking counter Peaceful garden view Appliances & Amenities: Fully equipped kitchen (dishwasher, washing machine, refrigerator, stove, toaster, microwave, coffee maker, etc.) Water tank and pump. 28,000.- anandajagota@yahoo.de, 089 872 8468

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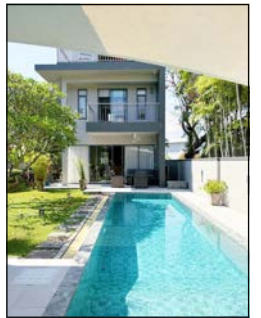
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SKÅL PHUKET - MAY DINNER

The Skål Phuket networking evening was held on May 21, graciously hosted by Skålleague Bjorn Courage and his team at the InterContinental Phuket Resort, Kamala. This evening offered a unique opportunity to experience one of Phuket's newest and most exciting venues — Sipping Tiger. Networking drinks were followed by a curated selection of pass-around bites and canapés that were enjoyed by the 80 plus members and guests. For more information of future events visit facebook.com/SkalPhuket



AUSTCHAM JOINT CHAMBERS PHUKET SUNDOWNERS

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, BeLuThai, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, NZTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce, SATCC and TSCC, recently hosted the Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners. The event took place on Friday, May 22, at SAii Laguna Phuket. Over 100 members and guests enjoyed catching up with new and current members of the Phuket business community. Before Phuket Sundowners, AustCham Thailand and Corporate Sponsor JLL organised an exclusive briefing session on the topic "Phuket Hotel Industry Focus: Market Trends and Outlook 2025–2026". To find out more about AustCham Thailand visit austchamthailand.com

Alcaraz withdraws from Wimbledon

TENNIS

CARLOS ALCARAZ'S hopes of regaining his Wimbledon title have been dashed with the two-time champion announcing he is withdrawing as he recovers from a wrist injury.

"My recovery is going well and I'm feeling much better, but unfortunately I'm still not ready to play, I am obliged to withdraw from both Queen's and Wimbledon," Alcaraz, who lost to world number one Jannik Sinner in last year's final, said on May 19.

"These are two really special tournaments for me and I'll miss them a lot. We'll keep working to come back as soon as possible," added the Spaniard.

Alcaraz sustained the injury during the first round of the Barcelona Open and subsequently pulled out of tournaments in Madrid and Rome and

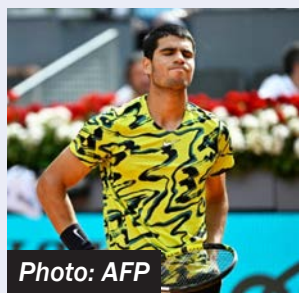


Photo: AFP

then Roland Garros, where he is the reigning two-time champion.

The world number two became the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam in January with his triumph at the Australian Open. The 23-year-old holds a 22-3 record this season and also won a title in Doha.

Wimbledon will be only the third Grand Slam that Alcaraz has missed since making his main draw debut at the 2021 Australian Open.

Alcaraz's injury has stopped him continuing his exciting rivalry with Italian Sinner, 24, who is firm favourite to triumph in Paris and London.

AFP

Four in a row for Kimi

FORMULA ONE

AFP

Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli continued his spectacular early-season romp last Sunday (May 24) when he claimed his fourth straight win for Mercedes to extend his lead in the drivers world championship to 43 points in a thrilling Canadian Grand Prix.

His win made him the first driver in F1 history to secure his first four wins in succession thanks, in part, to the retirement of team-mate George Russell with a power failure after the pair had battled through the first half of the race.

The 19-year-old Italian came home 10.768 seconds clear of Ferrari's seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

The Briton secured his 10th Canadian podium and the 204th of his career after resisting four-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull, who claimed his first podium of the season.

"It was a really fun battle with George," said Antonelli.

"We were pretty much on the limit. It was not easy today. It was a shame for George to have the failure because it would have been a very cool battle, but I'll take it."

Hamilton, who took his maiden victory in Montreal in 2007 and shares the record of seven wins there with Michael Schumacher, was delighted



Kimi Antonelli crosses the finish line to win the Canadian Grand Prix. Photo: AFP

and hugged Antonelli who succeeded him at Mercedes.

"Finally, we found our sweet spot and had a good weekend. It's amazing to be back up here. I am so happy, I love this track," said Hamilton.

"I had some cool battles," said Verstappen. "It is better to race up front. And it is really cool to have our first podium and to battle with Lewis. All really positive."

Charles Leclerc came home fourth for Ferrari ahead of Isack Hadjar in the second Red Bull, Franco Colapinto of Alpine and Racing Bulls' Liam Lawson. Pierre Gasly was eighth for Alpine ahead of Williams' Carlos

Sainz and Oliver Bearman of Haas.

Russell pulled up and retired with a power-unit failure on lap 30. It was his first 'did not finish' in 38 races since the 2024 British Grand Prix.

"Everything went off, the engine and the electronics. The lot," said Russell. "I'm lost for words."

It was also a dismal day for champions McLaren who made an error in tyre selection pre-race and then saw Oscar Piastri finish 11th after being handed a 10-second penalty for colliding with Alex Albon's Williams, while world champion Lando Norris retired with a gearbox failure on lap 40.

Thai teen Panchaya beats champ to win world title

SNOOKER

EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD THAI prodigy Panchaya Channoi has etched her name into the sport's history books after defeating England's veteran champion Reanne Evans 6-2 to claim the World Women's Snooker Championship 2026 title in Dongguan, China.

The May 19 title showdown at the Dongguan Changping Snooker Centre in Guangdong province, pitted the reigning Thai world U21 champion against the most decorated player in the women's game.

Evans, ranked world No.4, has lifted the world title a record 12 times. The English cueist, appearing in her first world final since 2019, had never before been beaten in a title match but a record-extending 13th title proved elusive.

It was the teenager from Thailand, better known to the local fans as Mind Sakol, who produced a masterclass to secure victory in commanding fashion.

Panchaya, who claimed the scalps of Chinese hopeful Bai Yulu and former Thai world champion Nutcharut Wongharuthai on her way to final, opened with a dazzling century break of 100 in the first frame before racing to a 3-0 lead.



Panchaya Channoi. Photo: Supplied

Evans rallied with wins in the fourth and fifth frames, narrowing the gap to 3-2, but the Thai youngster responded with composure and brilliance, compiling a tournament-high break of 107 to move 4-2 ahead.

She then captured the seventh frame before sealing the match with a decisive 59 break in the eighth.

Her triumph makes Panchaya only the third Thai woman to win the world title, following in the footsteps of Nutcharut and Siripaporn Nuanthakhamjan.

The victory came just 24 hours after Panchaya successfully defended her U21 crown, giving her two world titles in as many days. The victory also earned her £13,000 (B570,000) in prize money.

Bangkok Post

Ratchanok wins Malaysia Masters

BADMINTON

THAILAND'S RATCHANOK Intanon claimed her third Malaysia Masters title in Kuala Lumpur last Sunday (May 24).

The Thai second seed stunned top seed and world No.4 Chen Yufei of China 21-17, 21-15 in 51 minutes to complete a hat-trick of titles in the Malaysian capital seven years after her second in 2019.

She was tied with India's Pusarla V Sindhu and China's Wang Zhiyi on two titles each heading into the tournament.

The 31-year-old became the second most successful singles player behind Malaysian badminton icon Lee Chong Wei, who holds five.

The victory – her first since the 2025 Kumamoto Masters Japan in November last year – extended Ratchanok's perfect record in the final of the Super 500 tournament. She has now won all of her title deciders in 2018, 2019 and 2026.

With the victory, Ratchanok ended a run of four straight defeats against



Photo: AFP

Chen, although the Chinese still holds a massive 19-4 lead in their head-to-head record. She last beat the former Olympic champion at the 2022 Malaysia Open.

Ratchanok also claimed the US\$37,500 (approx B1.2 million) winner's cheque.

However, fellow Thai Panitchaphon Teeraratsakul failed in his bid to win his maiden Super 500 title after he lost to China's fifth seed Li Shifeng, who retained his men's singles title with a 21-16, 21-17 win in 50 minutes.

Mixed doubles players Pakkapon Teeraratsakul and

Sapsiree Taerattanachai missed out on their first title as a pair after they were beaten by China's third seeds Guo Xinwa and Chen Fanghui 13-21, 21-15, 11-21 in 58 minutes.

Sixth seeds Chen Fanshutian and Luo Xumin of China took the women's doubles title after beating Sayaka Hirota and Ayako Sakuramoto of Japan 21-16, 25-23 in the final. Daniel Lundgaard and Mads Vestergaard of Denmark downed Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin of Malaysia 21-16, 21-17 in the men's doubles decider.

AFP

Now you're Gunner believe us

FOOTBALL

AFP

Just four years ago, Arsenal were wallowing in recriminations and regret after finishing 24 points behind Premier League champions Manchester City.

Pipped to a Champions League place by arch-rivals Tottenham on the final day of the 2021/22 campaign, it seemed unlikely to many Arsenal fans that Mikel Arteta would ever lead them out of the wilderness.

Yet Gunners boss Arteta has completed his quest to take the club back to the promised land by winning a long-awaited Premier League title.

Arsenal's 14th English title, secured on May 19, is their first since Arsene Wenger's 'Invincibles' went unbeaten through the 2003/04 league season.

But winning a title fight against a club of City's calibre lifts Declan Rice, Bukayo Saka and company into the rarified air occupied by Wenger-era greats such as Patrick Vieira and Thierry Henry.

For Arteta, it was the moment the student surpassed his teacher after three years spent learning from Pep Guardiola during his time as City's assistant manager.

The 44-year-old has used those lessons to revitalise a club that was stuck in a rut when he arrived to replace the sacked Unai Emery in December 2019.

Despite winning the 2020 FA Cup



Arsenal are Premier League champions for the first time in 22 years. Photo: AFP

in his maiden campaign, Arteta endured painful teething problems.

He had to rid the dressing room of divisive egos, stamping his authority by exiling unsettled captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and moving out Mesut Ozil.

Arsenal finished a lowly eighth in 2020 and 2021, leading to calls for his dismissal. Yet, gradually, a highly motivated, superbly drilled team fashioned in Arteta's intense image emerged from the turmoil.

Arsenal unexpectedly found themselves in the title race in 2023, but blew an eight-point lead to let Manchester City take the crown.

Twelve months later they suffered the agony of being pipped to the title on the final day of the season by

Guardiola's men.

Arsenal came second for a third straight year in 2025, but this time they took a step back, ending 10 points behind champions Liverpool.

While others wrote off the Gunners as "chokers" and serial underachievers, Arteta's belief never wavered.

The Spaniard once compared his work with the daily commute from his home to the club's London Colney training base.

He likened his ability to navigate the busy north London traffic to the way he had to switch tactics and players during his Arsenal overhaul.

For Arteta, and for the club, the long and winding road to the title has come to an unforgettable end.



Photo: Bangkok Post

Thais walkout and lose World Cup takraw final

SEPAK TAKRAW

THAILAND'S BID FOR a third successive ISTAF Sepak Takraw World Cup ended in chaos last Saturday (May 23) when the men's team regu, the on-court trio, staged a dramatic walkout in Kuala Lumpur, handing hosts Malaysia the trophy amid furious protests over refereeing decisions.

The final at Stadium Titiwangsa had been delicately poised at 1-1 after the first two regus and, in the deciding match-up, Thailand trailed by a set but led 14-13 in the second when Phutawan Sopha appeared to score with a spike.

Initially ruled a fault for stepping on the line, the Thai camp successfully

challenged the call and were awarded the point to level the tie.

But moments later Malaysia lodged their own protest, arguing the challenge had been lodged out of time, leading to the Singaporean referee reversing the decision.

The Thai bench erupted, accusing officials of bias and demanding the referee be replaced. When organisers refused, the players walked off court. After a half-hour delay, Thailand were declared losers by default.

Thana Chaiprasit, president of the Takraw Association of Thailand, condemned the officiating, while Malaysia team manager Datuk Abu Jimi Samat insisted the referee was correct. *Bangkok Post*

Spurs survive as Hammers drop

FOOTBALL

TOTTENHAM SECURED Premier League survival at the expense of West Ham last Sunday (May 24) as Pep Guardiola and Mohamed Salah bade emotional farewells to English football.

Spurs knew a draw against Everton would realistically keep them up as they had a two-point advantage over West Ham and a significantly superior goal difference.

Joao Palhinha released the mounting pressure at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium just before half-time, poking home after his header thundered back off a post, before being mobbed by his teammates.

Just a few miles away, at the London Stadium, Valentin Castellano, Jarrod Bowen and Callum Wilson scored for West Ham in a 3-0 win against Leeds but it was too little, too late as a nervy Spurs held on to win 1-0.

The Hammers, who



Spurs fans celebrate. Photo: AFP

were promoted to the English top division in 2012, will join Burnley and Wolves in the Championship next season.

Elsewhere, Manchester City boss Guardiola took charge for the final time after confirming he was leaving the club after 10 years, with six Premier League titles, three FA Cups and the Champions League in his extensive collection of silverware.

A huge banner rippled over the heads of fans bearing a giant image of Guardiola, with the messages "Game Changer" and "History Maker".

Despite the outpouring of sentiment City lost 2-1 to newly-crowned Europa League winners Aston Villa.

Salah and Andy Robertson played their final game for Liverpool, who drew 1-1 against Brentford.

Deposed champions Liverpool finished fifth in the table, joining Arsenal, City, Manchester United and Aston Villa in next season's Champions League.

Ten-man Chelsea lost 2-1 at Sunderland, meaning that newly appointed boss Xabi Alonso will have no European football when he is at the helm next season.

Victory took Sunderland into the Europa League, alongside Bournemouth, while Brighton will be in the Conference League.

AFP

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Sport



Arsenal savour league title victory > p15



DONE AND DUSTED

Malykhin retires after title win

Anatoly Malykhin celebrates after regaining three-division champion status in ONE Championship. Photo: Bangkok Post

MMA

Bangkok Post

Anatoly Malykhin reclaimed the ONE Championship heavyweight MMA title in brutal fashion recently – then dropped an even bigger bombshell.

The 38-year-old Russian, who lives in Phuket and trains at Tiger Muay Thai, knocked out Umar ‘Reug Reug’ Kane in the fourth round of their rematch at The Inner Circle in Bangkok on May 15, before announcing he was retiring from the sport.

“I want to say a big thank you to Mr Chatri [Sityodtong, ONE CEO] for giving me an amazing six years,” Malykhin said in his in-ring interview, with his three MMA world titles draped across his shoulders and waist.

“I started losing the love for this sport but being here today and having the support of everyone in the stadium – half the

people here travelled from Russia. “Mr Chatri, thank you so much... I love you brother, but I’m done.”

Malykhin said he was ready to return home to Russia after a six-year run in ONE that saw him win heavyweight, light heavyweight and middleweight MMA gold.

“I want to say thank you to all the Thai people watching,” he said. “I’ve lived here the last six years. These people have changed my life.

“That’s it, I’m going back to Altai and taking care of my cows and my dogs. I’m tired of spilling blood and being away from home.

“Mr Chatri, thank you so much because you changed my life these past six years. I’ve never disappointed you and you’ve never disappointed me. I love you. This is my family.”

CHAOTIC

Malykhin’s win came after the

most chaotic ending Lumpinee Stadium is likely to ever see, with a wild brawl breaking out between the two corners immediately after referee Olivier Coste had waved the fight off.

Malykhin had just floored Kane with a brutal four-punch sequence, after patiently breaking the Senegalese champion down for more than three rounds.

But as Coste stepped in, Malykhin threw a kick towards Kane on the canvas – sparking fury from Reug Reug’s corner.

Several members of Kane’s team climbed on to the ring apron and confronted Malykhin, who stood in front of them with his tongue out and blood streaming from a nasty cut down the middle of his forehead.

Malykhin’s corner then charged across the ring, and ugly scenes followed as both teams clashed while officials tried to restore order.

One member of Malykhin’s

team appeared to leap through the air and strike a member of Kane’s camp at ringside. Reug Reug’s manager suffered a serious leg injury during the incident, after being sent toppling from the ring to the floor.

Security, ONE officials, judges, the timekeeper and the ringside doctor all entered the ring as Coste tried to separate those involved, while some spectators also appeared to climb over the ringside barriers amid the confusion.

TENSIONS

Malykhin and Kane traded verbal barbs at the official face-offs on May 14, with their respective teams also shouting across the divide before ONE staff separated the champion and challenger.

It followed two physical altercations prior to their first meeting at ONE 169 last November, when Kane shocked Malykhin by split decision to

claim the title. The pair had tussled at the fighter hotel in front of journalists on media day, then again on stage at the official pre-event press conference.

Following the May 15 fight and subsequent brawl Kane called for members of Malykhin’s team to be banned from future ONE events at Lumpinee Stadium.

“This isn’t what our sport is about, you can see I’m on the floor and the officials are allowing these guys to jump on me,” Kane said on his official X account.

“If these guys from Tiger Muay Thai are allowed to step foot in a ONE arena again, any of them, I’m done. I will never fight here again.

“We win, we lose – but we win and lose like gentlemen.”

Kane also accused members of Malykhin’s team of racist behaviour in the same post.

ONE had not announced any disciplinary action at time of press.

Phuket hosts run to mark International Nurses Day

RUNNING

THE PHUKET PROVINCIAL Nurses Association organised the fourth annual ‘Southern Nurses Run For Well-being 2026’ at Saphan Hin Park recently to mark the occasion of International Nurses Day.

The premise of the May 17 event was to promote fitness and proactive health-care measures while uniting nursing practitioners from Phuket and the surrounding

southern provinces to create awareness of the role of nurses within the local community.

Over 750 people participated in the event which included a 5-kilometre Fun Run for individuals and families and saw commemorative certificates and trophies awarded to the best-placed finishers.

In addition to the race was the option to undergo a preliminary health check-up, including a blood pressure reading, body mass



Photo: PR Phuket

index (BMI) assessment, nutritional advice and a general mental health check.

The opening ceremony was presided over by

Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam, who was joined by: Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO); Kritporn Muangprom, President of the Phuket Nurses Club; as well as representatives and medical staff from public and private hospitals, and members of the general public.

In her address as part of the opening ceremony, Mrs Kritporn explained that the

event was held in commemoration of International Nurses Day, which falls on May 12 every year, to remember Florence Nightingale, the founder of the nursing profession.

It was also an opportunity to foster unity among medical professionals from Phuket and surrounding provinces by sharing best practice approaches to healthcare, Mrs Kritporn added.

“Nurses play a vital role in not only in caring for

patients in medical facilities, but also as important health leaders in society,” said Mr Suwit in his opening remarks.

“We extend the highest levels of praise to nursing personnel from both the public and private sectors for inspiring the public to recognise the importance of exercise and continuous self-care for a better quality of life and to reduce the long-term healthcare burden,” he added.

The Phuket News