

Emergency line under fire in tower body case

**Thai
Pulse**

What's hot in Thai
newspapers and
social media

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The discovery of a Swedish man dead on one of the top floors of the Unique Tower on Sathorn Road has led to a debate on whether the 191 police emergency line is dependable in times of crisis.



The police 191 emergency call centre says it is overwhelmed by hoax calls. It has taken a beating online following complaints its line is always busy.

The 191 emergency call centre is defending itself after an amateur photographer who found the body of a Swedish man in an abandoned building said he could not reach the service.

On Monday, Nattawat Wasathian, 33, said he had to take to the Pantip webboard to raise the alarm about the body after he failed to receive any help from the police.

The amateur photographer said he tried calling 191 several times to alert the authorities but the line was always busy.

He found the body on one of the top floors of the Unique Tower on Sathorn Road.

Many readers have responded with negative comments about the police emergency call service.

Yesterday, Pol Maj Gen Panurat Lakboon, who is in charge of the 191 police unit, fuelled further discontent by saying there was no record of the photographer's call in the centre's log, according to *Matichon Online*.

One user said he should have come up with a better excuse, as it was lame.

"This is a case of you not doing your duty while blaming others," the user wrote on Pantip.

"The caller made it clear he could not connect, as he kept getting a busy signal. Do you understand that? If he could not reach the service, how could you have a record of his call?"

"The police should try thinking first before offering their excuses," the user said.

Another user said it's pathetic that the police spent precious time looking up a phone log in an attempt to find fault with a Good Samaritan.

"This has allowed us to see what the police priorities really are," the user wrote.

Many said it was sad that media outlets such as Jor Sor 100 radio and social media seem more reliable to citizens in distress than tax-funded state services.

Others commended Mr Nattawat for taking the trouble to alert the authorities and leading rescue workers to the scene.

Pol Gen Maj Panurat yesterday asked for

public understanding, saying more than half the calls made to the 191 centre are pranks.

According to Sanook Online, Pol Gen Maj Panurat said 191 operators receive about 260,000 calls each month, of which 110,600 of them are hoax calls.

On Dec 6, an impressive 6,331 calls of a total 7,883 received were judged to be bogus.

Prayut keeps his poll sheen

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha's popularity has dipped slightly, but the 7.43 he wins in a new poll shows he still has the trust of the people, *Thai Rath* columnist Mae Look Chan says.

The columnist cited the latest Bangkok Poll in which the premier's rating has fallen 0.38 after three months in office.

But his rating is still higher than that of the cabinet which received only 6.52.

Some cabinet members are struggling to gain public acceptance, Mae Look Chan said.

About 53.8% of respondents rate Gen Prayut's performance higher than what they expected while 21.1% said he reaches their expectations.

Only 7.5 said the prime minister needs to do better.

About 75% of respondents said they would vote for Gen Prayut if an election was held today, while 12%, an increase of 4% from the last poll, said the general would not be their choice.

Mae Look Chan said the Prayut cabinet still has a chance to bounce back, especially if it brings about national reconciliation.

Gen Prayut's rating shows people are satisfied with his role and personality. "Thais like strong leaders," said the columnist.



A strawberry vendor from Chiang Mai says soldiers took away his products probably because they bear a logo that looks like former PM Thaksin Shinawatra.
PRACHATAI

"The next election should not be much of a race given that key political figures will still be in a difficult situation, and new blood has yet to emerge," he said.

Whether Gen Prayut stays on in office, as some expect he might, is likely to depend on the new charter and the political situation over the next 18 months, he said.

"He can wait for another year to make a decision," said Mae Look Chan.

Square-jaw wine swipe

A red-shirt supporter in Chiang Mai claims soldiers seized his fresh strawberry products because they bear a logo similar to the face of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Pichit Tamool, the owner of @Pai strawberry products, said a group of six to seven men in military uniform visited his stall in the tourist district of Pai, Mae Hong Son yesterday, according to *Prachatai Online*.

Mr Pichit said he was not there at the time.

His staff, however, informed him the soldiers dismantled the tent and seized eight bottles of strawberry wine, six bottles of strawberry juice and 20 jars of jam.

Mr Pichit said it remained unclear to him why the soldiers took away his goods as they did not give the shop any notice. He insisted the stall displays no political banners or messages.

He said the problem might stem from the product's logo featuring a square-jawed man which resembles Thaksin, the report said.

PM look-alike now a celeb

Meanwhile, a physical education teacher in Nong Khai is gaining celebrity status because he bears a similarity to Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha.

Khamkien Banthao, 54, is getting used to having strangers asking him for photos and seeing them shared on social media, *Matichon Online* reports.

His newfound fame has nothing to do with his teaching physical education at Pathumthep Withayakarn School in Nong Khai's Muang district where he has worked for 33 years.

"People have been telling me I look like PM Prayut for a while," Mr Khamkhien said.

"Some ask me for my picture or my autograph. Friends also call me up and ask if I have seen my photo online," he said.

Mr Khamkhien said he was not too fussed as he is not a frequent internet user.

He said he has never wished to compare himself to the PM. Sometimes, however, his students or people he meets at the market tease him by calling him "Than Prayut" or "Mr Prime Minister".

Wanchalerm Chaeyong, his colleague, said Mr Khamkhien not only looks like Gen Prayut but he also moves and talks like the PM.

"When I first moved here, I was shocked at the resemblance," Mr Wanchalerm said.



A physical education teacher in Nong Khao, Khamkhien Banthao, left, has gained celebrity status for his uncanny resemblance to Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, right. MATICHON



Music producer Boyd Kosiyabong is disappointed to learn the YouTube singer he wants to work with is a Filipino, not Thai.

Bunot's a hit with Boyd

Famed producer Boyd Kosiyabong says he is disappointed that a shirtless singer in a widely-shared video clip is a Filipino and not Thai, as he would like to work

with him.

Boyd was so impressed with the man's voice after watching him in one video knock out a karaoke version of the Bee Gees' *To Love Somebody*, that he wanted to sign him up.

"Whoever knows this man please tell him I want to work with him. Tell him to contact me," Boyd wrote on his Facebook page.

While his invitation was shared a few thousand times, many people who commented on his page pointed out the singer is actually a Filipino.

Roland Abante or "Bunot" to his friends and family is from Oslob, Cebu, according to Viral4Real.com.

All About Juan posted his video on YouTube on Nov 19.

It has been so well-liked and well shared in his home country that netizens urge him to join *The Voice Ph*.

"If he could sing like this in front of *The Voice's* judges, he will have all four chairs turned towards him," the story said.

Boyd told *Thai Rath Online* it's a pity the man is not Thai.

"If he could speak Thai, then we could work together. I like him because I feel could nail it with his singing. I like capable people," Boyd said.

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