



Family members of the 12 boys and their coach from the "Wild Boars" football team trapped in the Tham Luang cave, pray before a shrine in the cave area as operations continue to rescue them in the Khun Nam Nang Non Forest Park in the Mae Sai district of Chiang Rai province.

A dedicated student, Adul still teaches his friends English and helps them with homework. "He's a role model for the younger kids at school," Aman added. Adul and several other Wild Boars now play for the Ekkapol Academy, a new club founded by Coach Ek, as he is known. As he runs drills Ek smiles at the visiting media, but bound by Netflix's gag order he cannot talk about the cave drama. His peers say he is delighted to have finally realized his dream of running his own football school. "After the storm came calm, this is a new life for him," assistant coach Noppadol Kanthavong told AFP. Coach Ek also now heads a media company which will act as the go-between for the production houses, the boys and their families for a Netflix production that will include "Crazy Rich Asians" director Jon M. Chu. Rumors have swirled about payments to the boys-US media has pinned the number at \$100,000 for each.

Lucky number 13

Fame has also come to some of the divers who helped rescue the boys. After weighing several options, the boys and the coach were eventually given sedatives and brought out wearing wetsuits and full-face breathing apparatus in a series of relays. Extracting



In this file handout video rescue personnel carry a member of the "Wild Boars" football team on a stretcher during the rescue operation inside the Tham Luang cave in the Khun Nam Nang Non Forest Park in Mae Sai district.

everyone took three days because crews had to replace air tanks and other supplies, requiring up to twenty hours between each run. Many of the rescuers were Thai Navy SEALs, some were experts running tourist dive operations, while others were lifelong cave hobbyists who flew in from Britain and Australia to assist. All found themselves at the heart of a drama without precedent.

"When I arrived, I thought it was a suicide mission," said Ben Reymenants, a Belgian who runs Blue Label Diving in Phuket. Among the rescuers was Saman Gunan, the only fatality during the near three-week saga. Today a statue of the Navy SEAL, who ran out of oxygen in a twisting, flooded passage, stands near the cave's entrance. Other rescuers like Vernon Unsworth were shunted into the media spotlight against their will.

The British diver is suing US tech mogul Elon Musk, who called him a "pedo" on Twitter after Unsworth questioned the billionaire's usefulness when he showed up at the rescue site. Speaking to the BBC, Unsworth played down his central role in helping the trapped thirteen to safety. "None of us are heroes. We just did a job we were asked to do," he said. "Thirteen is not an unlucky number anymore." — AFP



In this file photo rescue workers take a break as operations continue to rescue the 12 boys and their football coach from the "Wild Boars" football team trapped in the Tham Luang cave.



One of the members of the "Wild Boars" football team is carried on a stretcher during the rescue operation in the Tham Luang cave in the Khun Nam Nang Non Forest Park in Mae Sai district.

MAROON 5 PLAY TO 17,000 FANS FROM ACROSS THE REGION

By Abigail Mathias

Earlier this week, Grammy award winning band, Maroon 5 played a sold-out concert to an audience not seen before. The Red Pill Blues Tour is the sixth concert tour by the band, in support of their sixth studio album Red Pill Blues (2017). The tour began on May 30, 2018 in Tacoma, Washington and is scheduled to conclude in August 31, 2019 in Willemstad, after touring North and South America, Australia, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

When it was first announced in April 2019, many closer home weren't sure if a music concert at the hottest time of year (June), made sense. But there was soon talk of an indoor arena and before you knew it, the band was on its way. People from Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, came especially for the event with their families in tow. Many queued up for hours but everything went smoothly. A family from Spain stood in front of us in the line and their young children belted all of the songs.

The concert was held in the brand-new 17,000-seater Coca-Cola Arena, in City Walk, Dubai. The show was the first announced act in this arena and was the first music performance to be hosted here. When did such a large-scale venue open up in the UAE, may wondered?

It was such a unique experience to see people from different countries and ages all under one roof tweeting and calling friends to share the collective experience. Belting out one hit after another, the band seemed to live to their end of the bargain, when they finally hit the stage well past 9.30 pm. (The show was scheduled to begin at 8.30 pm).

Perched on the highest floor, I noticed lead singer, Adam Levine clutching the mic stand a little unusually during some of the band's biggest hits. When Moves like Jagger played, I



attributed it to his ode to the music icon but somehow something didn't feel right. Levine is a well-known host of the show, The Voice, and he is known for his stellar vocal skills. While the crowds continued to sing along and echo most of the hits in the arena on that June 16 night mid-way, Levine was seen heading out of the stage. The Lebanese crowd that sat next to me in the arena said, "This is so much fun and I hope they come back for an encore."

True to the spirit, of 'the show must go on,' the band including Lead guitarist, James Valentine and James Farrar on bass, played some mind-blowing guitar riffs. My son, Daniel looked at me and we knew something wasn't quite right. "This is my first music concert but it can't be over right?" he asked. I've been listening to some of the songs by this band from before 12-year-old Daniel, was born. Luckily moments later Levine came right back and did a rendition of "Forever Young," from the 80's fused with one of their current chart busters, "Girls Like You".

Levine soon told the crowd that he wanted to be honest and shared that he wasn't feeling up to the mark due to severe stomach cramps. He also mentioned being in awe of the audience response saying he never heard people sing so loud. He then dedicated the song, "She will be loved," to the multitude



of women in the audience and yes you could hear a collective sigh (or maybe that's just me). "Last night a dream came true," said Urvashi Khanolkar, a resident of the UAE and a fan from Mumbai, India.