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# THE TEST



Health officials conduct a random swab test on a migrant worker in Kathu. Photo: PPHO

## COVID-19 PROTOCOLS PUT TO THE TEST AS OFFICIALS SCRAMBLE TO PREVENT OUTBREAK REACHING THE ISLAND

**The Phuket News**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

At the time of going to press Phuket appeared to have so far remained unscathed by the outbreak of COVID-19 from Samut Sakhon, on the outskirts of Bangkok, which began just two weeks ago and has sparked warnings from the prime minister of another nationwide lockdown.

At last report Phuket Vice Governor announced that Phuket officials were not yet entertaining the idea of placing Phuket under lockdown. That statement came last week while officials were attempting to dampen

panic rising online and reports that Phuket was already under lockdown, or was about to be imminently.

As of last Saturday (Dec 26), Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha had exercised his power under the Emergency Decree to prohibit public gatherings nationwide and had authorised governors to decide for themselves whether a COVID-19 lockdown must be imposed in their provinces, announced Dr Taweelap Visanuyothin, spokesman for the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA).

Rumors of a Phuket lockdown began circulating more than a week ago after the number of confirmed

infected in Samut Sakhon reached the hundreds. As of Monday (Dec 28) the outbreak had reached 38 provinces.

"Many rumors have spread on various social media platforms saying the Phuket Government has announced the closure of the province. I confirm this is not true," said Vice Governor Vikrom, declaring himself to be acting as a spokesperson for the Phuket Provincial Government.

Mr Vikrom explained, "We started taking action three weeks ago, before the outbreak in Samut Sakhon, after we were warned that people from Myanmar were trying to sneak back into the country, and possibly to Phuket.

"We checked 163 employers in

Phuket who have migrant workers. We asked for their cooperation to inform officials of any new workers arriving at their camps so health officials could screen them," he said.

"Phuket Governor Narong Wo-onciew has already ordered officials to ramp up COVID-19 protection measures at all three main forms of entry to the island [all ports, roads and the airport].

"Phuket International Airport has been ordered to increase the intensity of screening arrivals to Phuket. Everyone at the airport must wear a mask and all arrivals must complete the travel declaration form via the AoT Airports application and...

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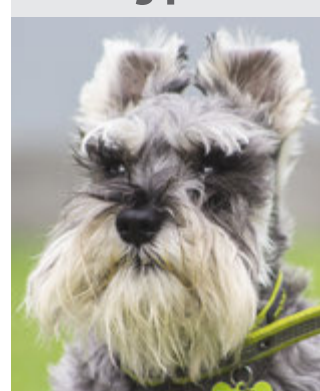
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# News



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## Officials scramble over outbreak

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...the Thai Chana platform.

"Any passengers inbound to Phuket found to have a high body temperature will be taken aside by health officials to be considered for further checking," V/Gov Vikrom said.

With much of the fear focused on the possibility of Myanmar workers bringing the virus to Phuket, Mr Vikrom added, "For safety we have already notified every District Office to check workers' camps in their areas." (See page 3.)

"However, how effective all these measures will be depends on the cooperation from the public. If you encounter migrant workers who have recently arrived or you have never seen their face before, or even if you see people who seem to have a fever and are not wearing a mask, let us know so we can go out to investigate and solve problems as quickly as possible," V/Gov Vikrom urged.

"Phuket is the best province in dealing with this problem. We have already been through the experience of having the second-highest number of infections in the country, after Bangkok, so

we have done all these steps before. Now we just have to do them again to fix with the current situation," he said.

"Therefore we ask for cooperation from all people in Phuket. We have not shut down the province and we do not mind our brothers and sisters who want to come to Phuket.

"It doesn't matter which province they come from, I just ask for cooperation to comply with the measures of public health for the safety of everyone," V/Gov Vikrom said.

"Please wear masks at all times and follow the health measures. Also try to avoid crowded areas. If it is necessary, spend the shortest time possible among any crowds and wash your hands often," he advised.

However, rumours of an island lockdown gained momentum after a 40-year-old man living in Kathu tested positive for COVID-19 after joining a big bike event on Koh Lanta, Krabi. Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew confirmed the news in a video broadcast last Tuesday night (Dec 22).

At that time a total of 28 people were believed to have come into high-risk contact



Health workers are conducting random swab tests of migrant workers across the island. Photo: PPHO

with the man, explained Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Thanit Sermkaew.

The man had joined a 'big bike' tour event on Dec 10-13 that included riding to Phang Nga, Surat Thani, and Krabi, where he joined an event on Koh Lanta. At the event on Koh Lanta, the man became infected after coming into direct contact with a man from Samut Sakhon province, Dr Thanit explained.

"During the trip, he met a man from Samut Sakhon who he later found out was infected with COVID-19. They hugged and shook hands to say goodbye on Dec 13. The

Phuket man returned to his home in Kathu and had dinner with four family members.

"Then he went to work in Koh Kaew on Dec 14-16, where he worked with 15 co-workers. On Dec 17, he did not feel well. He had a headache and a cough. He decided not to go to work and stayed at home on Dec 17-18.

"He had a headache, cough, sore throat, runny nose and was experiencing a loss of sense of taste. He went to clear some work at the office for two hours and went back home on Dec 19.

"On Dec 20, he was informed that the man from Samut Sakhon was infected, so

he stayed home and informed all his friends who also went on the big bike trip.

"He went to Vachira Phuket Hospital on Dec 21, and tested positive," Dr Thanit explained.

"The hospital tested him a second time, and the result was positive," he added.

"The man is already at Vachira Phuket Hospital, where he has been since Dec 21 [Monday]. His lungs are normal, the infection has caused no harm to his lungs," Dr Thanit said.

Vachira Phuket Hospital Director Dr Chalermpong Sukontaphon the next day confirmed that the man's wife and daughter had tested negative for COVID-19, but the man's two sons, the eldest and youngest of his children, aged 9 and 13, had tested positive.

Unofficial news of the children's infections had actually spread like wildfire the day before. The two schools that the boys attended, Phuket Wittayalai School in Phuket Town and Kajonkietpattana School in Wichit, were both closed immediately on being informed that the children were COVID-positive.

Amid fears of an outbreak on the island, more than 14 schools closed a day later, with intensive sanitisation of risk areas carried out.

Dr Pitakpol Boonyamalik, an inspector-general at the Public Health Ministry, arrived on the island on Dec 25 to be briefed on the COVID situation in Phuket.

He was told that in total 230 people were deemed to be at risk of contracting COVID-19 from the man who had travelled to Koh Lanta.

At the meeting with Dr Pitakpol, PPHO Chief Thanit Sermkaew explained that so far 156 people in Phuket who had come into contact with the man or his sons had been tested for the virus, with 156 testing negative and five test results still yet to be confirmed – but that the total number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 on the island remained at three.

Dr Pitakpol pointed out that foreign tourists were still allowed to enter the country, especially tourists looking to use the wellness and healthcare services available.

However, he also pointed out that conditions of entering the country must be enforced.

## All gatherings banned, full COVID rules in force

PRIME MINISTER PRAYUT Chan-o-cha last Saturday (Dec 26) exercised his power under the Emergency Decree to ban public gatherings nationwide.

The order followed Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew last Thursday (Dec 24) banning all mass gathering events on the island, including all official New Year Countdown celebrations and the Children's Day activities that were to be held on Jan 9.

Sports events where participants are in close proximity to each other were also banned, with other forms of sport to be strictly regulated by organisers. Walking street markets or other similar places were also prohibited, including the popular Lard Yai Walking Street market in Phuket Town and the Rim Lay Seafood festival in Patong.

Operators must apply the disease control measures at the following

places: Restaurants and food courts; Market and department stores; Tutoring centers; Public parks, activities and exercise areas; Entertainment venues, such as pubs, bars, karaoke venues (areas for dancing not to be arranged); Government offices.

Educational institutions were also affected, with school directors allowed to make their own consideration when to open or close their school.

Governor Narong has also issued a formal order for all potential carriers of COVID-19 arriving in Phuket to be screened for the virus.

New arrivals at Phuket International Airport, at all piers and marinas and at the Phuket Check Point in Tha Chatchai must have their temperature checked in order to be allowed into the province.

"Any persons who exit a building must wear a face mask or cloth



Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew. Photo: PR Phuket

[covering the nose and mouth] at all times, and any activities which may lead to the disease spreading are banned," Governor Narong noted in the order. *The Phuket News*

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# Targeting migrant workers

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

At the time of going to press Phuket health officials had not identified a single Myanmar migrant worker as infected with COVID-19 after a crackdown ramped up last week saw more than 20,000 migrant workers on the island screened for possible infection and a ban on all migrant workers from entering or leaving Phuket brought into force.

Phuket Provincial Police have been ordered to check all vehicles coming onto the island specifically for migrant workers, with public transport interprovincial buses given special attention, and Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew on Dec 23 issued an order banning all non-Phuket based fishing boats from docking in Phuket.

The move is hoped to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to the island by crews on board visiting fishing boats, as a vast majority of the crewmen aboard Thai fishing vessels are migrant workers, many of them from Myanmar.

As health officials, assisted by local officials from



Migrant workers are screened at a worksite in Phuket. Photo: PPHO

municipalities across the island, launched mass screening of all migrant workers on the island, Governor Narong last Wednesday also issued an order for employers of migrant workers to not move any migrant workers into or out of the province.

Failure to comply with the order, marked to remain in effect until further notice, may be punished under Section 51

of Disease Control Act 2015, which incurs a fine of up to B20,000, the order noted.

Those found breaching the order will also be charged under Section 18 of the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations B.E. 2548 (2005), the order also warned.

Governor Narong explained that as the outbreak of COVID-19 in Samut Sakhon and

other provinces posed a threat to health of people on the island, the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA), the national authority governing all matters related to COVID-19, had ordered all provincial governments to strictly control the movement of people in each province.

As such, employers were ordered to screen all workers for possible infection and

to immediately report any workers suspected of being infected.

Employers were also ordered, through specific measures listed in the order, to ensure that all workers and workplaces met the full COVID-19 prevention measures issued by the Ministry of Public Health.

Dr Pitakpol Boonyamalik, an inspector-general at the Public Health Ministry, who arrived on the island on Dec 25 to be briefed on the COVID situation in Phuket, was informed by Phuket health officials, including Phuket Provincial Health Office (PPHO) Chief Thanit Sermkaew, that at that time a total of 21,203 workers had been screened at 434 camps, residences and workplaces, including 126 workers who had recently returned from Samut Sakhon province.

So far no confirmed cases of migrant workers had been found, Dr Pitakpol was told.

In addition to the mass screening of migrant workers, namely by temperature checks, the PPHO has also conducted random swab testing of migrant workers across the

island, the PPHO announced last Sunday (Dec 27).

At that time 141 workers from 87 workers' camps in Phuket's Mueang District had already tested negative for the virus.

The PPHO at that time was still waiting for test results on 70 workers from 34 camps in Kathu District and on 164 workers from 91 camps in Thalung District.

In announcing the crackdown in checking Myanmar nationals arriving back in Phuket early last month following the Tachilek outbreak that affected Chiang Mai and Rai, among other provinces, Phuket Vice Governor Phichet Panaphong confirmed, "Phuket has about 59,000 migrant workers, especially Myanmar nationals, which comprise about 80% of all the migrant workers in the province."

"People should monitor the situation, and help each other to monitor and watch for any foreign workers who might be infected fleeing to Phuket, and notify community leaders immediately. In order to continue helping to prevent the spread of infection," Dr Pitakpol said.

## New Year road-safety campaign aims for zero deaths – again

THE ANNUAL 'SEVEN DAYS OF Danger' road-safety campaign for the New Year began at midnight Monday night (00:01am, Dec 29), with the island's disaster chief hoping for zero deaths during this year's campaign.

Sophon Thongsai, Chief of the Phuket Provincial office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket), on Monday (Dec 28) re-confirmed that the target is for Phuket to suffer zero deaths in road accidents during the campaign, which will conclude at midnight, Jan 4.

Mr Sophon said he expected Phuket to have far fewer accidents, and hence far fewer people injured or killed in road accidents during the Seven Days, as there are far fewer people in Phuket due to the COVID-19 situation.

So far this year 70 people have died in road accidents in Phuket, according to the Thai Road Safety Committee (ThaiRSC) official website.

According to ThaiRSC, Phuket's Mueang District suffered 33 deaths, 4,459 people injured in 3,881 accidents, while Kathu District suffered 12 deaths, 1,223 people injured in 1,062 accidents and Thalung District suffered 25 deaths, 1,180 people injured in 1,073 accidents.

Also according to ThaiRSC, Phuket suffered two deaths during the Seven Days campaign for New Year 2020, although Phuket officials at last report claimed that Phuket had suffered zero deaths.



The three main 'control centres' for the campaign were launched on Saturday (Dec 26). Photo: PR Phuket

"Control centres" for road and water transport safety for each district were launched last Saturday (Dec 26). "These centres will support the main checkpoints set up on the roads and at the piers so that information and coordination among all the agencies assisting with the campaign can be processed faster and more accurately," Mr Sophon said.

In total there will be 12 main checkpoints and 28 minor checkpoints set up on the roads and safety control centres will be set up at all ports and piers on the island, Mr Sophon explained.

"More than 200 local officials will be assisting traffic police as much as we can," he added.

"The goal is to integrate cooperation in the prevention and reduction of road and marine accidents, making it as safe as possible for the public and tourists," he added.

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Low: +25°

Wind 14 m/s

SAT JAN 2



High: +30°

Low: +25°

Wind 18 m/s

SUN JAN 3



High: +31°

Low: +25°

Wind 14 m/s

MON JAN 4



High: +31°

Low: +26°

Wind 14 m/s

TUE JAN 5



High: +32°

Low: +26°

Wind 11 m/s

WED JAN 6



High: +30°

Low: +25°

Wind 22 m/s

THU JAN 7



High: +30°

Low: +25°

Wind 14 m/s

## ONWR tackles long-term water woes

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Office of National Water Resources (ONWR) Secretary-General Somkiat Prajamwong visited Phuket earlier last week to follow up on local projects to boost water supply across the island.

Mr Somkiat arrived in Phuket last Monday (Dec 21) to be welcomed by Phuket Vice Governor Piyaphong Chuwong and Phuket Provincial Irrigation Office Director Pairot Kamthorn, who joined him on his tour.

During his visit, Mr Somkiat inspected Bang Neow Dam reservoir in Srisoonthorn, which in recent years has drained nearly entirely during the dry months, adding to the water-supply crises Phuket residents have endured.

Mr Somkiat then inspected the seawater reverse-osmosis (RO) water-production plant in Karon, which currently can produce up to 12,000 cubic metres of water per day. About 65% of the water produced by the RO plant is distributed to Patong, while the rest 35% is sent to Karon and Kata, Mr Somkiat was told.

Mr Somkiat explained that this inspection aimed to follow up the water management in Phuket, which has been the focus of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) study by Naresuan University and consultancy companies to develop local water resources.

The SEA is also being conducted in 11 other provinces in the South, and researchers from the university have conducted extensive questionnaire surveys among local people in



Office of National Water Resources (ONWR) Secretary-General Somkiat Prajamwong was in Phuket to inspect the main water sources feeding the water-supply network. Photo: PR Phuket

order to create five-year and 20-year development plans. The study is expected to be completed by May 2021, Mr Somkiat said.

"It is important to set up water source management plans in order to serve the increasing demand for water. Water management is an important part of supporting the local economy and tourism in the future," he added.

"For the fiscal year 2020, the government has provided B1.96 billion for 114 [water-supply-development] projects in Phuket being carried out by seven government agencies," Mr Somkiat explained.

"The projects have produced 10.13mn m3 of water and increased the volume of water sources by about 3.2mn m3. This extra water has been already distributed to 10,770 households across about 42,297 rai on the island," he said.

According to information released by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket), a study in 2019 reported that Phuket needed about 80.86mn m3 of water each. That figure was predicted to rise to 103.18mn m3 by 2029, and to 124.22mn m3 by 2039.

"The increasing need for water is

leading Phuket to face a lack of water supply, so good water management is necessary for this situation," said the report.

Phuket currently uses about 27.14mn m3 of water per year, with 20.59mn m3 (75.87%) from on-ground sources, 2.55mn m3 (9.4%) from under-ground sources and 4mn m3 (14.73%) produced from seawater.

"However, the amount of water is not enough to meet demand, which is about 125,800m3 per day, or 45mn m3 per year. The current water reserves can serve only 70% of people on the island," the PR Phuket report admitted.

## Tsunami memorial service falls to COVID ban

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 16 years, the annual Light Up Phuket tsunami memorial event at Loma Park in Patong was not held this year due to concerns over COVID-19.

"It would be better to stay safe in this time," Patong Mayor Chalermluck Kebsup confirmed late last Saturday (Dec 26), the 16th anniversary of the disaster.

Last year, hundreds of tourists and local residents joined the annual Light Up Phuket tsunami memorial event at Loma Park in Patong on the night of Dec 26 to attend multi-faith ceremonies and a minute's silence before placing flowers and candles in the sand to remember the thousands who lost their lives to the 2004 Asian Tsunami.

The move to cancel the formal



A woman stands in front of the main sign at the Light Up Phuket tsunami memorial event on Patong Beach last year. Photo: Patong Municipality

tsunami memorial activities followed Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew just days earlier banning all mass events organised by the government to celebrate the New Year. Smaller private parties held by hotels, restaurants and members of the public may still go ahead, but must comply

with COVID-19 protection measures.

By that time Patong Municipality had already announced that the Countdown Patong 2021 event had been cancelled, and by Wednesday afternoon had announced that a slew of other events hoped to support local tourism businesses had also been

cancelled, including the Rim Lay Seafood Festival, the Mini Marathon Run on Dec 27 and the Children's Day activities that were to be held on Jan 9. The Light Up Phuket tsunami memorial event was not among those announced as cancelled.

In Thailand, official government estimates today mark that 4,812 souls lost to the waves on Dec 26, 2004, with another 8,457 injured and 4,499 missing, presumed dead, all lost to the tsunami.

While confirmed deaths in Phuket officially numbered only 259, another 700 remained listed as missing.

Phang Nga, however, bore the brunt of the tsunami, with 4,163 people confirmed dead and another 2,113 recorded as missing. Records mark that of those killed in Phang Nga by the tsunami 2,213 were foreigners – mostly tourists. *The Phuket News*



# Prosecutors face graft probe

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) is moving to have two former Phuket Public Prosecutors charged for corruption for allegedly demanding money from a defendant in order to drop charges of encroaching on state land.

One of the two prosecutors was the Chief of the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office at the time.

NACC spokesman Niwatchai Kasemmongkol announced the news following a meeting at the NACC headquarters in Bangkok on Dec 21.

Mr Niwatchai named the two prosecutors as Thamma 'Chinchot' Sornjai and Wanchat Chunhathanom.

Mr Thamma held the position of 'Expert Prosecutor' at the Office of Public Prosecution Region 8 and Chief of Phuket Provincial Public Prosecutor's Office at the time, Mr Niwatchai said.

Mr Wanchat was Provincial Prosecutor under the Office of the Attorney General Phuket Provincial Attorney's Office, he added.

The NACC had conducted



Wanchat Chunhathanom is one of two former public prosecutors at the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office facing corruption charges sought by the NACC. Photo: PR Phuket / file

its own investigation and found that the allegations of corruption dated back to 2013, when an officer of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) filed a complaint to Tha Chatchai Police to charge the board members of a private company for encroaching on a protected forest area.

After completing their

own investigation, police agreed with the complaint to charge two suspects – who Mr Niwatchai did not name – and passed the case to the Chief of the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office to consider for proceeding with legal action.

The company board members appealed to the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office for "fairness in considering legal

action", so the case was handed over to the Chief of the Office of Public Prosecution Region 8, Mr Niwatchai explained.

The Public Prosecutor Region 8 Chief ordered that the company board members not face legal action and passed the case to the Commander of the Region 8 Police, who did not agree with the order to not charge the suspects, he said.

With all the parties already involved in deciding whether or not to proceed with charging the suspects, the case was finally handed over to the Office of Attorney General to give the final decision on whether or not the suspects would be charged, he added.

The Attorney General noted that the District Chief was the head of the investigation team for the case, and hence the investigation was under the control of Phuket Governor's Office.

"So the case was sent back to the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office on June 28 last year [2019]," Mr Niwatchai said.

The Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office presented the case to the Phuket Governor, who at the time was Phakaphong Tavipatana.

"On July 1 [last year], Mr Thamma as Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Prosecutor's Office ordered the prosecutor who used to take care of this case to make an appointment with the company representative to come and see him at his office on July 2," Mr Niwatchai said.

Also present at the meeting was Wanchat Chunhathanom, he added.

Mr Thamma had offered the company representatives that he would persuade the Phuket Governor to not charge their company. He then met with the company representatives many times and asked for money, Mr Niwatchai said.

"The NACC already checked the case information and considers that Mr Thamma was guilty of Section 157 of the Criminal Code, wrongful exercise of duties, and Section 201, acceptance of a bribe, and Section 83, a breach of principles expected of an official," Mr Niwatchai said.

Mr Niwatchai also pointed out that under anti-corruption laws, any accomplice found guilty of assisting to facilitate the act of corruption stood to face the same charges, and the same penalties, as the person found guilty of the actual act of being corrupt.

"The NACC will send all documents and evidence from our investigation in this case to the Office of Attorney General to work on proceeding with legal action under the Organic Act on Anti-Corruption B.E. 2561 against Mr Thamma and Mr Wanchat," Mr Niwatchai said.



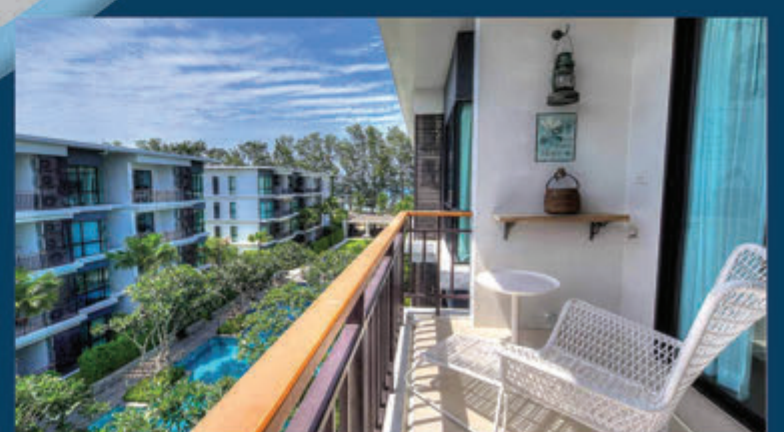
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# New Year spending to take a hit

Phusadee Arunmas & Narumon Kasemsuk

Spending during the New Year holiday is expected to stay below B100 billion for the first time in 10 years, attributed to the fresh surge of COVID-19 infections.

According to the latest survey by the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC), spending during the New Year festive season is estimated at B91.5bn, a significant drop of 33.6% from B138bn last year.

“With the fresh round of infections, people are very concerned about the pandemic,” said Thanavath Phonvichai, president of UTCC. “The majority of people surveyed during Dec 14-23 prefer to stay home.”

According to Mr Thanavath, average spending is B9,876 per person, a fall from B15,615 per person year-on-year.

“In 2021, people would like the government to contain the COVID-19 spread, ensure political stability and take care of the cost of living,” he said. “The government should not apply rigid national lockdown measures to curb the impact



Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn. Photo: MOTs

on the overall economy.”

The university estimated an economic loss of about B7bn per day or B200bn a month if the government re-introduces lockdown measures across the country for one month. This would result in a decrease in economic growth by 1.5 percentage points, said Mr Thanavath.

The economy is likely to recover in the second quarter if the government succeeds in containing the outbreak, he said.

Yet the government needs to continue with stimulus measures to raise domestic spending and extend the “We Travel Together” scheme until the first quarter, said Mr Thanavath.

“If the stimulus measures fail to boost the economy in the first quarter, the government needs to inject more than B60bn of additional budget in the first quarter to shore up the economy, especially for a tourism sector hard hit by a fresh surge of

COVID-19,” he said.

The UTCC forecast the economy to recover and post growth of 2.8% next year from a 6.3% contraction this year, driven by the availability of a COVID-19 vaccine, an export recovery and a return of foreign tourists.

The forecast assumes a foreign exchange rate of B30.40 per dollar, and a Dubai crude oil price averaging US\$44.2 per barrel.

Next year’s economy would also be helped by

consumption stimulus measures, including the extension of the popular co-payment scheme, said Mr Thanavath.

## MORE LONG WEEKENDS

Meanwhile, the government is poised to allocate long holidays every month next year to stimulate local tourism demand, while pledging to commence travel bubbles after April.

Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said domestic travellers will continue to be a major market for at least the first four months of 2021, with frequent holidays helping to increase the number of domestic trips while the international market remains unpredictable.

He said the Tourism Authority of Thailand was to announce the extension of 1 million room nights as part of the subsidy scheme for local travellers, despite the ongoing probe into fraud.

In the Cabinet meeting scheduled for Dec 29, the ministry was to propose a B5-billion stimulus campaign for senior travellers aged 55 and above that could help

increase liquidity for tour operators because the scheme will require eligible tourists to buy tour packages only from operators, he added.

Moreover, if there are budget funds left over after the stimulus programmes expire in April, the ministry will work with the private sector, finding new stimulus projects or activities to maintain the momentum of the domestic market, Mr Phiphat said.

Mr Phiphat insisted tourism operators should not stop thinking about plans to attract the foreign market as it remains a vital source for tourism.

But to mention those plans out loud now may not be appropriate as Thailand is still struggling with a new wave of infections, he noted.

Mr Phiphat said the summer season next year could be a good time to revive negotiations on travel bubbles with other countries as the pandemic is believed to be more controllable with warmer weather. Different countries have learned various methods to curb the outbreak while balancing their economic priorities, he said.



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The 14 business women met at the Australian Consulate in Phuket office on the bypass road last Monday (Dec 21) to share their insights on dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and identifying opportunities in a rapidly evolving business environment.

## Women business leaders receive support

THE AUSTRALIAN Consul-General in Phuket, Matthew Barclay, was proud to host the first gathering of Australian Women Business Leaders in Southern Thailand at an event in Phuket last week.

Fourteen local business leaders representing health and wellness, hospitality, design, digital engagement, tourism and charity sectors came together at the Australian Consulate in Phuket office on the bypass road last Monday (Dec 21) to share their insights on dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and identifying opportunities in a rapidly evolving business environment.

Guest speaker Supphatra Jaruariyanon, a well-known local hotelier and passionate advocate for Phuket’s growth in her role as Vice President of the Phuket Tourist Association (PTA), shared her views on operating businesses in a “dynamic economic environment”.

A number of attendees discussed moves to pivot their business model in the face of lower international traveller numbers. Attendees were also keen to understand how they too could assist with achieving the objectives of organisations like the PTA to ensure Phuket could see through the current challenges presented by COVID-19.

Australian Consul-General

Matthew Barclay said he was thrilled to see such a high-calibre gathering of professionals come together to network and discuss their experiences.

“Female voices are critical to economic development and particularly during times like these where business owners, employees and the general public are facing unprecedented challenges” he said.

“The Consulate-General will continue to support female business leaders to share their voice into the future through regular events and discussions with the community,” Mr Barclay added.

The Phuket News



# 'More serious' than first wave

## Calls for public diligence after latest COVID-19 outbreak

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) admitted on Monday (Dec 28) the current novel coronavirus outbreak is more serious than the first wave early this year and urged the public to comply with disease control measures so drastic measures would not be needed.

Taweessilp Visanuyothin, spokesman for the CCSA, said the number of infections jumped by over a thousand over a short period of time, suggesting the spread of the virus this time is far more serious than the first wave, which began at the start of the year.

A total of 144 new COVID-19 cases were reported on Monday, 115 of which were local transmissions. The number of accumulated cases rose to 6,285, compared with 4,331 before the outbreak in Samut Sakhon began in mid-December.

At time of press, COVID-19 cases linked to Talad



Workers wait for COVID-19 tests outside a field hospital set up at the Central Shrimp Market in Muang district of Samut Sakhon on Sunday (Dec 27). Photo: Apichit Jinakul

Klang Kung (Central Shrimp Market) in Samut Sakhon have now been found in 38 other provinces, the CCSA spokesman said, adding Sukhothai, Lop Buri and Surin reported their first linked cases on Sunday.

However, Dr Taweessilp said health officials are better prepared and more experienced than they were when the

pandemic first hit the country and the public also have easier access to face masks now.

"So whether or not the disease control measures will be intensified will depend on how much the public cooperates. If we cooperate, there will be no need to enforce the law, impose lockdowns or a curfew. The government doesn't want to impose restrictions," he said.

infections emerged linked to a local underground casino in Muang district, for withholding information about their activities, which could hamper health officials' efforts to contain the virus.

The area has been declared a maximum control zone – where the tightest COVID-19 control measures apply – after 27 new infections were confirmed in a single day on Saturday, increasing to 106 by Monday.

This prompted national police chief Pol Gen Suwat Jangyodsuk to transfer the Rayong police chief, Pol Maj Gen Paphatdet Ketphan, to an inactive post at the Royal Thai Police Office.

Dr Taweessilp said similar incidents have been reported in Japan, South Korea, and Australia, where new cases were linked to "grey" or possibly illegal activities.

Authorities will pay special attention to illegal activities following the discovery of the Rayong cluster, he said, before calling on Rayong residents to comply with social distancing measures.

"When there are confirmed cases, the impacts are vast. It's not limited to the infected people. Others are affected. The entire province is affected," he said.

Dr Taweessilp said the Public Health Ministry will also speed up COVID-19 testing, after it was slammed for being slow in providing public updates relating to the new confirmed cases.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha is urging the public to use the "Mor Chana" application to track COVID-19 cases around them, government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said.

Mr Anucha said the application was a collaboration between state organisations and private developers, aimed at providing data to the Department of Disease Control to boost its efforts to curb the spread of the virus.

The application, launched in April, can help warn individuals who have been exposed to infected patients by using GPS and Bluetooth technology to track their location.

Dr Taweessilp said everyone should continue wearing face masks in public and avoid large gatherings, saying they can still hold small parties with close friends and family members.

### POLICE CHIEF TRANSFERRED

Dr Taweessilp also took to task gamblers in Rayong, where a new cluster of COVID-19

## Health Minister Anutin quarantined

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER and Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul is under house quarantine for 14 days after a meeting with the Samut Sakhon governor, who later tested positive for COVID-19.

Dr Taweessilp Visanuyothin, spokesman of the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration, announced on Monday (Dec 28) that Mr Anutin was in house quarantine.

A sample swab had been collected from the minister for COVID-19 testing after a senior local official was confirmed with the disease, he said.

"The official has been working hard in the province and been exposed to a high risk of contracting the disease, despite taking precautions," the spokesman said.

The official would now take a rest and subordinates would take charge, he said. He did not identify the man.

Dr Taweessilp said senior officials from the Public Health Ministry had a one-hour meeting with the official at Samut Sakhon



Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul is under a 14-day house quarantine. Photo: Bangkok Post file

Hospital on Sunday. The senior provincial official was later confirmed infected with COVID-19.

All wore face masks throughout the meeting, held to discuss the establishment and construction of field hospitals in Samut Sakhon.

Results of COVID-19 tests on the health minister and the other senior officials of the ministry were pending, he said.

Mr Anutin wrote on his Facebook account later that the infected official was Samut Sakhon governor Weerasak Wijitsaengsri and they had the meeting before the governor was tested.

Mr Anutin said his own first test was negative and doctors considered him at low risk of catching the disease, because the Samut Sakhon governor had always worn a face mask.

Bangkok Post

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# 2020 - COVER TO COVER







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# Dealing with family feuds



## UNLEASHED

**Russell D Russell**  
info@k9pointacademy.com

**L**ots of people have more than one dog in their household, and for the most part it's great, but every now and again there can be issues. Now if you grew up with brothers or sisters, you probably had your fair share of spats back in the day – to some degree, these are 'normal'. And every now and again, for a variety of reasons, our dogs may have a little 'spat' with another dog in the house.

However, dealing with genuine dog-dog aggression within your pack at home, is not pleasant, nor is it any easy quick fix. A lot of the time, the easiest and best solution is to find a home for one of the dogs. I don't say this lightly, but understand if your dogs have a serious aggressive issue, then it may indeed be safer for all parties.

With that said, if you have the time and patience and can work with carefully managing things, then it can be possible to fix the issues, or at least get to a point where the pack members are tolerant enough of each other to not be a problem.

### Broken friendship?

Imagine you and your good mate have a barny, which concludes with one of you getting punched. Forgiveness may be hard to come by, especially in the beginning, and even so you are possibly going to be a bit tentative around that person



Photo: Chewy / Unsplash

for a little while. We're also hoping that whilst we're being tentative, our friend isn't misreading that signal as something else. The same is true with our dogs. And while it sounds obvious, it's really important that we work well to manage the situation and prevent future fights and escalations. The more they occur, the harder it becomes to rebuild the trust and friendship.

### Why is this happening?

There could be any number of things going on between the dogs. Some of the more common reasons could revolve around:

Sickness. Maybe one of the dogs isn't feeling themselves, and acting out. Again in a similar way to humans, when we're not feeling quite so perky, we may become more agitated and reactive. Equally, if we're in pain, either from illness or injury, the same applies. It's always a good starting point to have your dogs checked over



Photo: Ludovic Migneault / Unsplash

by a veterinarian, run some blood work and check for any aches and pains, or issues that your dog (or dogs) may be dealing with.

Stress and fear can play a big part in our dogs reactivity levels, and things like stress can be triggered by a host of different things. This year has been massively stressful for all of us, and our dogs are highly sensitive to that stress. Also higher levels of arousal in our dogs – which may not necessarily be solely the domain of intact dogs, but can also be true of those that are sterilised – can have a big impact on their reactivity. And if any of our dogs are possessive over certain things such as food, or toys, then that is something we need to work at too.

Trying to identify the triggers, and start point of these aggressive, or reactive, episodes is really important, so we can work more closely on mitigating those factors and resolving the issues.

### How do we fix it?

With all things dog, it comes down to management AND training. Management prevents the problem from occurring, training shows the dog how to do something else. For obvious reasons, management is the starting point here, whereby we separate the dogs, both physically and visually. This allows the dogs to have their own safe, calm space where they feel relaxed, and not threatened.

It also gives you space to then work and train with each dog individually, building up some more control and basic behaviours that will come in super handy later on. Put dogs in different parts of the house, different rooms, or use baby gates (that are covered to create a solid 'wall') to create separation – as long as the dogs have their own space, that's the key.

Next you want to work relentlessly on engagement, and focus between you and your dogs individually. Starting from just the two of you and increasing that to other distractions being present – not the other dog just yet, but other dogs in general, people, whatever... as long as you can redirect your dog's focus to you. Do the same thing with each dog. Doing it a handful of times makes no difference, doing this hundreds of times a day and things start to change.

From here, it's all about slowly and carefully putting the dogs back together in closer proximity. Starting at a distance where they can see each other, but are non-reactive and slowly inching forward over time. Again, this can take weeks and months of work. Do not expect things to go quickly. It is all about creating a positive experience for both dogs in this phase, making sure they are comfortable. As with anything in dog training, if it's not working, go back a step or two to where the dog is comfy, and work from there.

If our dogs are now tolerating each other, we can start to reduce the distance between them, but all the while trying to maintain their focus on us, not the other dog. Remember this is all about positive association, not shouting or correcting them.

You can see from here, it's all about adding small steps to our dogs, to slowly get them closer, but in a controlled, and positive manner. Essentially, you want each dog to think, "Hey, having him around is really positive and fun."

### A word on muzzling your dog...

I often get asked if we should muzzle our dogs, and while a muzzle can certainly help as a management tool, it does have its drawbacks. Muzzles by default do not train your dog to do anything different, and more often than not, actually make things worse. You have to use them correctly.

*Again, working with this issue can be tough. And I'd advise getting in touch with us first so we can help create a more focussed plan for you. So if you would like some more information on canine training, or behavioural issues, then please to contact us on 091 654 1960, email info@k9pointacademy.com, or check our website www.k9pointacademy.com. CPA is accredited with the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), as an American Kennel Club (AKC) Evaluator and a Professional Member of the IACP.*



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# POP QUIZ

1. The Singapore national anthem is on which banknote?
2. Can hippos swim?
3. The four 'Little Women' of the classic novel of the same name are Beth, Jo, Amy and who?
4. In which year was the machine gun invented?
5. What is the Oxford Dictionary's 'Word of the Year' for 2020?

Answers below, centre

## SUDOKU

Hard

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Difficulty
4. Specifying article
7. Runs without moving
12. Computer-sharing setup
13. Intense desires
15. Eastern people
16. Words before tear or dare
17. Salon foot treatment, briefly
18. Has no roughness on the surface
19. Large animal
22. Healthy berry
23. Sport
24. Chia, e.g.
27. Harsh commentary
31. Famous triangle
33. Big name in credit cards
35. Vectra maker
36. Tunnel maker
43. Rhone river city
44. Slangy assents
45. "How should I know?"
49. Shoulder muscle
54. "Fire away!"
55. Pills and such, for short
57. Corn bread, regionally
58. They store food in middens
62. Oil source
65. Madame, in

Mannheim

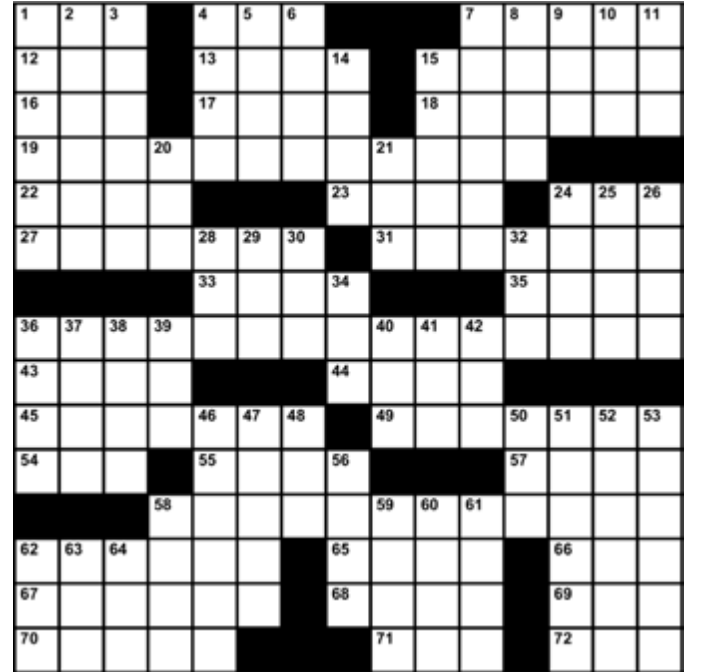
66. Early second-century year
67. Completely
68. Identifies, as in a Facebook photo
69. "Brokeback Mountain" director Lee
70. Delta deposits
71. LAPD part
72. Corral

Down

1. Island greetings
2. Indy car driver who does ads for GoDaddy
3. Even (with)
4. Error
5. Dickens's Uriah
6. Prefix with scope
7. Magazine distributor
8. Runs out of steam
9. Bathroom in Britain
10. Compass dir.
11. Fig. in identity theft
14. Locate
15. Anouk of "La Dolce Vita"
20. Snapshot
21. Message from police HQ
24. Kind of platter
25. Original garden
26. Dissertation

28. Crackerjack

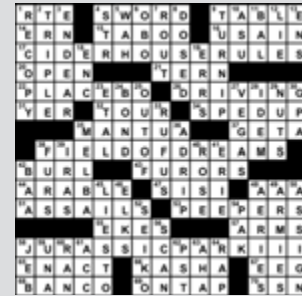
29. Galahad, for one
30. Map abbr.
32. Keaton flick: "Mr. ..."
34. Chilling
36. Island of Napoleon's exile
37. Poll responses
38. Wash process
39. Cable channel
40. Yonder ship
41. Going public letters
42. Hollywood setting, for short
46. Is suspicious
47. Olympian award
48. GQ staffers
50. Credit card company pitch subject
51. Protective covering of a boot
52. Surfing the net
53. Quit
56. Architect's meas.
58. Romp
59. Orsk's river
60. "Othello" bad guy
61. Wisconsin Senator Feingold
62. U.S.S.R. successor
63. Tropical American Cuckoo
64. Patriot's org.



## Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) S\$1,000; 2) No; 3) Meg; 4) 1884; 5) None - 2020 was deemed "a year which cannot neatly be accommodated in one single word"

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

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15

percent of all internet traffic is due to Netflix.

2,617

times a day is how often the average smartphone user touches their phone.

30,000

degrees Celcius is the temperature of the air immediately surrounding a bolt of lightning - that's 5 times hotter than the surface of the Sun.

253 trillion

US dollars is the equivalent of how much people all around the world owe. There is only the equivalent of US\$90.4trn in circulation.

Source: Uberfacts

## ISLAND VIEW



Sunrise at Chalong Pier. Photo: Michael Lee

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## This week in history

### Jan 1, 2009

Sixty-six people die in a fire at the Santika Pub nightclub in Bangkok. Citizens of 13 countries were among the 222 people injured.

### Jan 2, 1981

Serial killer Peter Sutcliffe, the "Yorkshire Ripper", is arrested in Sheffield, South Yorkshire.

### Jan 3, 2009

The first block of the blockchain

of the decentralised payment system Bitcoin, called the Genesis block, is established by the creator of the system, Satoshi Nakamoto.

### Jan 4, 1948

Burma gains independence from the UK, becoming an independent republic named the Union of Burma, with Sao Shwe Thaik as its first President and U Nu its first Prime Minister.



Flag of Burma (1948-1974).

### Jan 5, 1974

Warmest reliably measured temperature below the Antarctic Circle of +59°F (+15 °C)

recorded at Vanda Station.

### Jan 6, 1017

Cnut the Great is crowned King of England.

### Jan 7, 1979

Cambodian-Vietnamese War: Phnom Penh falls to the advancing Vietnamese troops, driving out Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.

Source: Wikipedia



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SUN 3 JAN



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E098°19.001

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**Sunday Brunch at Pine Beach Bar**

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MON 4 JAN



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6pm – 11pm: All you can eat BBQ Ribs served with salad buffet, potato salad & choice of sauces. Reservation recommended. 295 baht P/P. shakersphuket@gmail.com, 081 891 4381.

FRI 8 JAN

**The Grow Boating Networking Evening for January 2021**

The Grow Boating Networking Evening for January 2021 will be held at The Hardstand Cafe at the Phuket Boat Lagoon Marina on Friday the 8th of January 2021 from 5pm onward. There will be a light buffet sponsored by The Hardstand Cafe and as always all of your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Please contact us if you would like to be our drinks sponsor for the evening. Sponsors receive a generous media package from the Phuket News and can display their products and services on the evening and give a presentation on their company. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome. There is no entry fee, just drop your business card or register at the bar. We hope to see

you there and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming please invite them along. To join our mailing list please send an email to growboatingphuket@gmail.com The Grow Boating Networking Evening is organised by the Thai Yachting Business Association. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/growboating or our Website https://www.thaiyachtingbusinessassociation.com/grow-boating Grow Boating is kindly supported by our media partner The Phuket News, Live 89.5 radio and Phuket News TV. See www.thephuketnews.com

FRI 29 JAN

**Australia Day - Phuket Sundowners**

AustCham Thailand and the Australian Consulate General Phuket, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, British Chamber of Commerce Thailand (BCCT), Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber of Commerce, CanCham Thailand, Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce (FTCC), German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (GTCC) and the Netherlands-Thai Chamber of Commerce (NTCC), is delighted to invite you to join us for "Australia Day Phuket Sundowners" at Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa, on Friday 29 January 2021, from 18.00-21.00 hrs. A celebration of all things Australian, join us for your favourite Australian food & beverages, and welcome in the New Year as the first business networking event of 2021! Cost: 500 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members\*, 900 THB for non-members. \*For registration code for Australian Alumni members, please contact AustCham team at 02 109 9616 or email to office@austchamthailand.com

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# When form hits the fan call 'Big Sam'

## The master of avoiding top-flight relegation is back at it again

### FOOTBALL

Ben Tirebuck

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

If you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can find him, maybe you can hire: Big Sam.

That has been the *modus operandi* for several Premier League clubs over the years who have been desperate to preserve their top-flight status and, crucially, the riches and recognition it entails.

Like a one-man 'A-Team', 63-year-old 'Big' Sam Allardyce has carved out his niche position by never experiencing relegation with any of the seven top-level clubs he has managed: Bolton, Newcastle, Sunderland, West Ham, Everton, Crystal Palace and Blackburn have all been grateful recipients of his alchemy and wizardry.

It was therefore somewhat inevitable that West Bromwich Albion would turn to him next. Promoted to the promised land last season under the stewardship of Slaven Bilic, the Baggies had found life tough back amongst the big boys and



Pointing the way: 'Big' Sam Allardyce. Photo: AFP

subsequently fired their coach on Dec 16, despite a credible 1-1 draw against Manchester City only a day before.

West Brom's owners had clearly lost faith in the Croat and become anxious that their Premier League experience would be short-lived. Rumours that they are keen to sell the club made it imperative that they maintained their top-flight status.

Enter 'Big Sam' who was appointed manager on the same day that the unfortunate

Bilic was bowing to the exit sign, with the team in 19<sup>th</sup> position on a meagre seven points and clearly facing an uphill slog ahead.

If Allardyce needed further proof of the task at hand, his first game against local West Midlands rivals Aston Villa delivered a sobering reality check after a 0-3 reverse.

Next up came reigning champions Liverpool, top of the league, in their own back yard where they hadn't dropped a league point in 34

games. A daunting task but a glimmer of hope lay in the fact that Allardyce was the last manager to emerge from Anfield in the league victorious after a 2-1 win with Crystal Palace in April 2017.

### JUBILANT CELEBRATIONS

At the conclusion of the first half last Sunday (Dec 27) it was quite baffling how the Reds were only one goal ahead thanks to Sadio Mane's 12<sup>th</sup>-minute opener.

They attacked in droves with wave after wave of red domination accounting for 84% of possession but were unable to unpick the stubborn backline of their opponents to add to their tally. By the end of the game Liverpool had enjoyed 78% possession and a shot count of 17 to the Baggies' five.

Yet Allardyce's troops stood firm. The master escape artist had, after only 90 minutes of football, weaved his spell in record time by seemingly hyptonising his team to mirror his resolute demeanour and robust tactical style on the pitch and they often looked the better team during the second half.

In the 83<sup>rd</sup> minute West Brom defender Semi Ajayi scored an equaliser to silence the 2,000 fans inside fortress Anfield and prompt jubilant celebrations from the away team and manager.

It meant Allardyce has now not been beaten in his last four away league games against Klopp's Liverpool with four different clubs.

"We've got a point against Liverpool, which no-one out-

side of us in the dressing room thought we'd get," Allardyce told the *BBC* post-match.

"Every man today showed the spirit this team needs to get out of this position. I saw a lot of guts, a lot of determination and a lot of quality," he added.

Of course, one swallow doesn't make a summer and there is still a long, hard road ahead if the Baggies are to achieve their goal and thus maintain their new manager's record. They are, at time of press, still five points off safety ahead of their home game against Leeds on Tuesday (Dec 29).

But a result like this breeds immeasurable confidence and is testimony that Allardyce's philosophy and style achieves the desired effect, and quickly. Clearly his players have bought into it already and opponents in the coming weeks will be a lot less confident than they were a week ago.

Could he do it with his eighth club? One thing is assured: 'Big Sam' loves it when a plan comes together, so don't bet against it.

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## Momota wins title to cap comeback after car crash

### BADMINTON

WORLD NUMBER ONE Kento Momota won the All-Japan championships on Sunday (Dec 27) to complete the first step of his comeback, nearly a year after suffering serious injuries in a car crash.

Momota came from behind to beat world number 11 Kanta Tsuneyama 18-21, 21-12, 21-17 in Tokyo, marking a successful return from the accident that left him fearing his career might be over after fracturing an eye socket.

The win gave Momota his third straight national title, and he immediately turned his thoughts towards making his international comeback at the Thailand Open in January.

"I had the initiative in the first game but then I started to lose my cool once I had the lead," he Momota.

"I think that's because I'm still not used to playing matches. In the second



Kento Momota. Photo: AFP

and third games, I wanted to put all my feeling into it regardless of technique or tactics, and I think I willed myself to the win.

"The Thailand Open starts in the new year and I'll be able to play against players from overseas. I want to go there and show what I can do as the top Japanese player."

Momota was badly hurt in January when the vehicle taking him to the airport after he won the Malaysia Masters crashed, killing the driver.

He admitted to feeling

nervous as he returned to competition this week in Tokyo, and he was pushed to the limit by Tsuneyama, who took him to 16-16 in the final game only to crumble with victory in sight.

"This week, I hadn't played for a long time so I was very anxious going into each match. But I think my game will start to return now that I've won this title."

The 26-year-old left-hander is one of Japan's brightest hopes for a gold medal on home soil at the coronavirus-postponed Tokyo Games this year. *AFP*



# Celebrating heroes of sport

## World sport rises to challenge in 2020 after a year like no other

### ALL SPORTS

Nobby Piles

Sport has experienced some difficult times over the years, but nothing has created so much havoc in the world's sporting calendar as the COVID-19 virus. No sport escaped the wrath of the pandemic and little did we know back in March that the disruption would go on for so long and take such a toll.

However, slowly but surely, sport did manage to drag itself from the canvas. With spectators still barred on health grounds, it certainly looked and felt different but as events started to re-emerge there were many stories of triumph that ensued.

The Thai women's cricketers returned home from Australia with their heads held high after a courageous performance in their debut at the Women's T20 World Cup in March. Led by captain Sornnarin Tippoch, they played with enthusiasm, dignity and skill. The fact that the Thai team had been competing against the best in the world was an achievement in itself.

Thai golfer Jasmine (Thidapa) Suwannapura was runner-up at the Women's British Open in August and did not appear too upset at just missing out, commenting: "You can't be any happier than playing golf at Royal Troon in Scotland."



Thailand women's cricketers. Photo: Bangkok Post



Naomi Osaka. Photo: AFP



Liverpool FC. Photo: AFP



Kobe Bryant. Photo: AFP



Lewis Hamilton. Photo: AFP



Diego Maradona. Photo: AFP

Thailand's F1 driver Alex Albon managed two podiums and finished seventh in the overall standings with Red Bull although his season was bitter sweet as he lost his seat for next year and will only continue as a test driver for the team.

In football Liverpool finally ended a long 30-year wait by winning the English league title again and they did it in style, winning by a massive 18-point margin from Manchester City. Manager Jurgen Klopp was awarded FIFA coach of the year.

Lewis Hamilton won his record-equalling seventh Formula One world title and set the record for the most

race wins in F1 history (95), completely dominating the field for team Mercedes in the process.

In one of the biggest upsets in rugby history Argentina beat the mighty All Blacks 23-15 in November with Nicolas Sanchez scoring all the Pumas points.

Patrick Mahomes won his first Super Bowl with an MVP performance for the Kansas City Chiefs after a dramatic fourth quarter comeback in January.

Japan's Naomi Osaka won friends on and off the court with her second US Women's Open victory and her brave stance on fighting racism. Before and after each match at

Flushing Meadows, she wore a mask bearing the name of a different Black American who had suffered racial injustice in the United States.

### LEST WE FORGET

We lost far too many wonderful sport personalities in 2020, beginning in January when former Los Angeles Lakers basketball star Kobe Bryant was killed in a tragic helicopter accident in California along with his 13-year-old daughter Gianna.

Jack Charlton and Nobby Stiles were key members of England's 1966 World Cup-winning squad who sadly passed away this year, as did former Liverpool and England

goalkeeper Ray Clemence.

Italian striker Paolo Rossi passed away, aged 64. Rossi was Italy's hero in their successful 1982 World Cup campaign, scoring six goals in the tournament including one in their 3-1 victory over West Germany in the final.

World football went into mourning in November with the news of Diego Maradona's death at the age of 60. Widely regarded as one of the finest to play the game, Maradona led Argentina to World Cup glory in 1986 and also inspired Napoli to two successive league titles in Italy and a UEFA Cup triumph.

In other sports, the rugby world mourned the death of

Wales and Lions winger JJ Williams and cricket was shocked by the loss of former Australian batsman Dean Jones, aged 59.

One of Britain's racing pioneers, Stirling Moss, died aged 90. He was admired not just for his considerable driving skills, but also his courage, sportsmanship and all-round behaviour.

This strange, remarkable year is probably best summed up by Hollywood film stars Rob McElhenney and Ryan Reynolds taking over struggling Welsh football club Wrexham AFC, vowing to make the club "a global force."

Who knows what 2021 will bring us... Bangkok Post

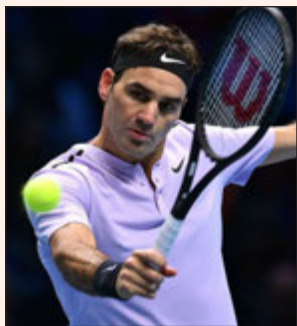
## Fed out of Aussie Open

### TENNIS

TWENTY-TIME GRAND Slam champion Roger Federer will miss the Australian Open for the first time in his career as he continues his recovery from two rounds of knee surgery, it was confirmed on Monday (Dec 28).

The 39-year-old Swiss has been out of action since February but recently resumed training and was on the entry list for year's opening Grand Slam, which will make a delayed start on February 8.

Federer, a huge favourite with the Melbourne crowds, hasn't missed the Australian Open since his debut in 2000, winning the trophy six times.



Roger Federer. Photo: AFP

"In the end Roger ran out of time to get himself ready for the rigours of a Grand Slam and he's very disappointed he won't be coming to Melbourne in 2021," said tournament chief Craig Tiley.

"We wish him all the best as he prepares for his comeback later in the year and look forward to seeing him in Melbourne in 2022." AFP

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