

THAILAND PASS CANCELLED, FACE MASKS VOLUNTARY OUTDOORS > PAGE 2

MIDNIGHT SALE



Region 8 Police Deputy Commander Maj Gen Saksira Phuak-am leads an inspection of Bangla Rd, Patong, before normal trading hours resumed last week. Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

BARS ALLOWED TO TRADE PAST MIDNIGHT, BUT HEALTH AND INFLATION WORRIES RISE

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Preechavude ‘Prab’ Keesin, Executive Director of the Pisona Group and the chairman of the Patong Development Foundation, has welcomed the easing of COVID measures to allow pubs, bars and other entertainment venues to remain open to their pre-COVID times.

Nightlife venues have been allowed to remain open until 1am or 2am, depending on each venue’s respective operating licence, since last Saturday (June 25) following a provincial order issued by Governor Narong Woonciw. (See page 2.)

However, Mr Prab has noted that public health and inflation are now the key concerns for Phuket’s nightlife industry, which suffered heavily with forced shutdowns ordered throughout the past two years.

“Resuming the opening hours until 2am [sic] is good in terms of tourism and various economic activities that will stimulate employment. It helps tourists gain confidence in coming here and it provides an opportunity to realise a very high potential in the tourism industry, and especially in the various service sectors of Phuket, and Patong,” Mr Prab said.

The move is likely to attract more investors looking to enter Phuket’s

tourism and entertainment industries as well, he added.

“However, we have not yet achieved the goal of nightlife venues being allowed to stay open until 4am, which would make much more sense for an international tourist city like Patong,” Mr Prab said.

“This would bring even more economic benefit to the island,” he added. “I wanted this to happen by July 1, but we have to give those involved time to work first. The request has been submitted, but it involves three separate laws, some of which overlap.

“The request must go through the proper legal channels first, then be

presented to Cabinet for approval, but I still want them to proceed with this as quickly as possible,” Mr Prab explained.

GOOD TIMING

The easing of the nightlife venue closing times comes as Phuket is starting to experience a slight increase in the number of tourists coming to the island.

“Overall, there has been an increase in tourism, with the number of tourists gradually increasing,” Mr Prab said.

“Even though this is the low season, we have got the attention of tourists, especially from India.

NEWS PAGE 3

Police probe immigration visa scam



LIFE PAGE 9

The ballad of Sam Wilkinson draws to a close



SPORT PAGE 16

The awards keep on coming for kart star Porsche



CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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News

The Phuket News
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Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew has issued provincial orders confirming that face masks are no longer required to be worn outdoors, except for special situations, and that Thailand Pass registration is no longer needed for international arrivals landing on the island.

The new orders bring the COVID measures in Phuket in line with the easing of measures announced by the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) on June 17.

The first order issued, on June 24, cited the proclamation in the Government Gazette on June 23 that the requirement to wear face masks in public areas has been eased with immediate effect.

Under the new order, wearing a face mask outdoors is now purely voluntary.

However, face masks are still required when attending crowded and poorly ventilated areas where appropriate spacing between people is not possible, such as public transport, and markets and concert venues.

“People at risk of developing severe symptoms if infected with COVID-19, such as “Group 608” patients and people with congenital respira-

tory disease, “should” wear a mask at all times to reduce the risk of infection,” said an announcement by the Phuket Info Center (PIC), operated by the Phuket office of the Ministry of Interior.

“And in the case of a person who is infected with COVID-19 or who is exposed to a high risk of COVID-19, it is necessary to wear a mask properly at all times when with other people to reduce the risk and prevent the spread of disease,” the PIC added.

THAILAND PASS

Another order, issued by Governor Narong on June

25, eased the conditions for nightlife venue operators effective immediately, and confirmed the new eased COVID measures for international arrivals to come into effect today (July 1).

The latest order repeals a slew of previous provincial orders and also confirmed that face masks were no longer required to be worn in general public areas.

Under the new order, all previous provincial orders mandating the requirements for international travellers to enter Phuket have been repealed.

The order also specifically

cancelled the requirement for travellers to register through Thailand Pass system from July 1. Foreign arrivals are also no longer required to have US\$10,000 COVID health insurance.

The order mandated that international arrivals must present evidence of vaccination for COVID-19, or present negative results from a professionally administered antigen test (ATM) performed within 72 hours of departure.

All previous requirements for State Quarantine and Alternative Yacht Quarantine were repealed, with arrivals by sea now required to com-

ply only with the same entry measures as any other arrival by land or air.

Of note, the new entry measures to come into effect today (July 1) also reinstate the three-day border pass entry allowed to people entering the country via land crossing checkpoints.

BACK TO NORMAL

Under the June 25 order, effective immediately, food or beverage outlets are allowed to provide services for distribution and consumption of liquor or alcoholic beverages on the premises as long as it is in compliance with

the relevant laws, rules or regulations for that specific venue, and “must comply with preventive measures and conditions for organising and various systems and advice of the government”.

Likewise, all service places such as entertainment venues, pubs, bars, karaoke venues or other similar places can now operate as usual under the relevant laws, rules or regulations for the specific venue, again as long as the venue operators comply with “preventive measures, conditions, arrangements, and systems and governmental recommendations”.

Activities for large groups of people can be organised “as appropriate, by strictly complying with the public health measures prescribed by the government”. Gatherings of more than 2,000 people require official permission by relevant authorities and must be conducted with appropriate measures to prevent the risk of a cluster or the spread of infections.

Of note, while the new order did not specify the exact requirements operators of the above venues are to follow, officials have been plain in requiring venue operators to comply with general COVID-prevention measures to help prevent any potential spread of infections.

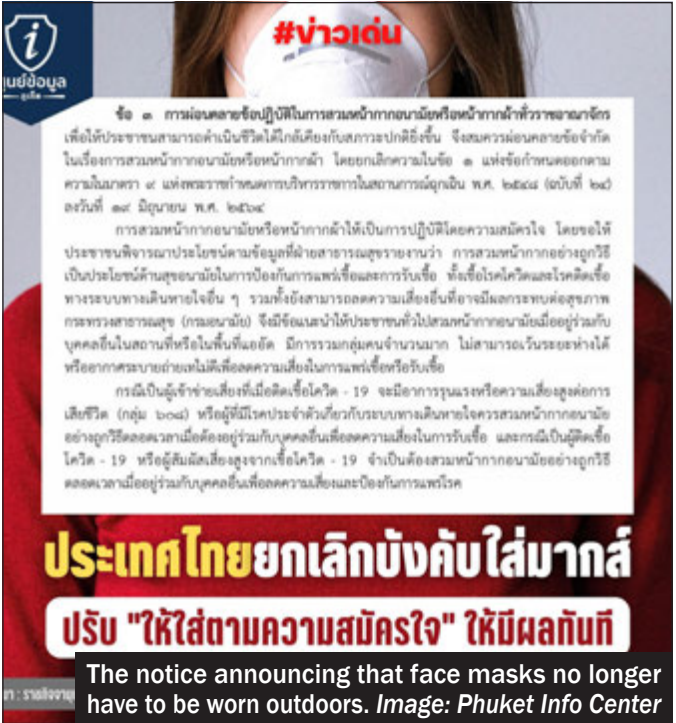


Campaign aims for rehab, not jail > p5

Face masks eased, Thailand Pass cancelled



The entry requirements in effect as of today (July 1). Image: PR Phuket



The notice announcing that face masks no longer have to be worn outdoors. Image: Phuket Info Center

As nightlife rules ease, key concerns move to health, inflation

Continued from page 1

“There are also some Europeans such as Germans, coming to Phuket. The number of Americans and British is also gradually increasing,” he said.

“This is increasing confidence in the economy, and in employment. It is allowing people to have jobs, to open their eyes and live in a time of economic crisis like now. People are starting to have hope for the opportunity to have a better life together,” Mr Prab said.

“In addition, we are still developing the adjustments required in order to be allowed to operate our businesses,” he noted.

HEALTH MATTERS
Entertainment venue opera-

tors must be strict in complying with public health measures still in effect as COVID-prevention measures, Mr Prab said.

“As for the tourists themselves, they have to take care of themselves and be careful not to spread any infections,” he added.

“We must uphold the requirements to prevent the spread of infections. There are strict measures such as social distancing and providing hand wash gel, as well as other requirements, that must be provided for tourists’ protection.

“Overall, preventing the spread of any infections will give our country a better image, especially in terms of readiness to receive tourists, and this will improve our



Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

economy, and make people happier,” he noted.

“Now we have a better understanding of how to live in a new way with COVID-19, but entertainment venue operators must realise that we are still unable to manage 100% of infections. Public health matters because we still have to live in the world with COVID-19. We will not be able to completely overcome

it,” he said.

A key condition of entertainment venues reopening is that they must comply with Thai Stop COVID 2 Plus (TSC 2+) measures as set out by the Ministry of Public Health and mandated by the CCSA in Bangkok.

In the days leading up to the easing of closing time last Saturday, senior police officers including Maj Gen

Saksira Phuak-am, Deputy Commander of Region 8 Police, conducted inspections of venues along Bangla Rd.

Joining Maj Gen Saksira were Col Chaikiat Wiriya-thitkul, Deputy Commander of the Phuket Provincial Police; Lt Col Ekachai Siri of the Phuket Tourist Police; and Lt Col Preecha Baringpatanakul and Lt Col Wuttiwat Raising Boonjinda, both Deputy Commanders of the Patong Police.

RISE IN PRICES

Another key concern for Phuket’s tourism industry are the rising prices due to inflation, Mr Prab noted.

“While everyone is adjusting to the New Normal lifestyle, another concern is inflation, the economy and more expensive goods and

services. Just rising fuel prices mean transportation costs will increase, as will the prices of goods and services,” he said.

“Therefore, the quality of life of the general public and business operators themselves are being affected in terms of wages and the rising cost of living. Water and electricity bills are going up.

“We have to ask the government for help in managing inflation, especially the prices of goods that are necessary for everyday life. This is needed to help reduce the burden on the labour force, and the operating costs borne by business operators, because people are already living a very difficult life,” he said.

Phuket Immigration vows action over visa scams

Eakkapop Thongtub
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More than 60 foreigners have been left in the lurch by a visa service company taking money from foreigners but failing to have their visas extended.

Some of the foreigners have been waiting for more than three months, reported Kim Shanti, of Shanti's Lodge in Chalong, who has been assisting the foreigners with their claims as a "co-ordinator".

Many of the foreigners have now filed complaints with Phuket City Police.

Fearful of their immigration status, some of the foreigners have been reluctant to report their predicament to immigration, Ms Shanti said.

Ms Shanti, who has lived in Phuket for decades, explained that many of the foreigners were initially stuck in Phuket due to the pandemic and had turned to using the visa service company to help them obtain their visa extensions.

However, many of them are now left with no immigration stamps confirming that they



Col Sarawut Chuprasit has vowed to prosecute visa agents who have deceived tourists. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

may continue to stay in the country. Many of them still have not had their passports returned.

Ms Shanti has been instrumental in helping the foreigners understand local legal processes. "Some of the people who reported this to police were not aware that the officer only recorded their statements in the daily record log," she explained.

As far as the police were concerned, at that time a formal complaint had yet to be filed, Ms Shanti added.

Ms Shanti appealed to the

media to highlight the issue, as now formal complaints have been filed, but still no action has been taken against the visa agency.

"Thailand is open, and tourists are ready to travel to Thailand. But there are some people who do bad things like this. I don't think that's okay," she said.

Phuket City Police Chief Col Sarawut Chuprasit told *The Phuket News* that police were aware of the incident and that he had contacted Phuket Immigration about the visa agency.

"We have done a preliminary check and coordinated with the Phuket Immigration Chief about this case. We have held discussions with the relevant departments and commanding officers, and the conclusion is that tourists must apply for a visa extension at the immigration office in person," he said.

"Ensuring that your visa is current and valid is a responsibility that every tourist should know. In the event that the visa or extension is about to expire, you must hurry to contact the immigration office to submit your application to extend your stay," he added.

"In the event that a tourist has claimed to have been deceived, the police will conduct an investigation. If a tourist has been scammed, we will prosecute the agency and ensure that the tourist recovers any monies paid as well," Col Sarawut said.

Phuket Immigration has urged any foreigners affected by a visa broker or visa renewal agency to contact the Phuket Immigration Help Center at 086-4077763 or 076-221905 ext 10.

Police play down Patong tuk-tuk driver brawl

POLICE HAVE PLAYED down the street brawl among motorbike and tuk-tuk drivers on the Patong beach road on June 18, saying the matter has been dealt with and the drivers involved have resolved their differences. It was a "misunderstanding", police have reported.

Phuket Provincial Police released its statement regarding the brawl on June 21, while Patong Police posted the same Provincial Police release early the next afternoon – four days after the brawl took place.

The statement clearly explained that the "update" was in response to posts on social media showing the brawl.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong had ordered Patong Police Chief Col Suchin Nilabadee to investigate the brawl, which the statement said occurred in front of the Tourist Service Center on Thaweewong Rd (the beach road) at around 10pm.

Although police have not described the incident as such, it now appears that the "brawl" was five tuk-tuk drivers beating a lone motorbike taxi driver.

The fight started over a customer, the statement read.

The five tuk-tuk drivers were named as Mr Anan, Mr



Suriya, Mr Ekkaluk, Mr Boonrit and Mr Kritsada. The motorcycle taxi driver was named as Mr Ibrahim.

The family names of all six were withheld.

Officers brought the six to Patong Police Station to record details of the incident on June 19, the day after the brawl, the statement explained.

All six returned to Patong Police Station on the Monday (June 20), when the five tuk-tuk drivers were fined, the statement continued.

The statement did not confirm how much each tuk-tuk driver was fined for the "brawl", which now appears more like an attack.

The statement did assure that the drivers had now resolved their differences.

"The group said to the police that it was a misunderstanding and they did not understand each other," the statement said.

The Phuket News

Late night music irks residents

LOCAL RESIDENTS IN THE PHOONPON area in Phuket Town have filed formal complaints over a popular local restaurant playing loud music past 2am.

One local resident, Tik Namsomati, explained that complaints about the noise had been filed with Phuket City Municipality for three months, but still no action had been taken.

The restaurant, James Garden on Phoonpon Soi 7, is also reportedly trading without the appropriate licence, which officials have told her they are powerless to do anything about.

"The later at night, the louder it gets. We are unable to sleep until 2am, often later," Ms Tik said.

"We [at her house] have to get up at 6-7am each day. My mother has to take sleeping pills to get to sleep," she said.

Ms Tik said the officer she had filed her complaints with told her that he had looked into the complaint.

The restaurant was reportedly operating without a licence, but he was powerless to do anything about it.

"In the end he suggested that we complain to the media as it might get results quicker," she said.

Ms Anong Ead-oui, owner of the popular Bak Kut Teh shop nearby, which she has operated for 25 years, said that she understood that the operators of the night venue needed to make a living, especially in the current economic climate, but that the volume should be turned down late at night.

"If the municipality is forced to do



Ms Tik points to James Garden on Phoonpon Soi 7, which has been playing loud music past 2am. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

anything, it might force the restaurant to close or stop it from providing any music because it does not have the proper licence. Just ask them to turn down the volume, that would be okay," she said.

Phuket City Mayor Sarot Angkhanapilas said the municipality was aware of the issue and was in the process issuing an order to ban the venue from providing any music as entertainment as the venue has not been issued the appropriate licence.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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School closes classes as COVID cases rise

The Phuket News
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Baan Talad Neua School in Phuket Town last week suspended classes for many students following a spike in the number of COVID cases involving staff and students at the school.

The school, operated by the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), suspended all kindergarten-level classes on June 24-25, confirmed a notice issued by School Director Palirat Manalert on June 23.

All Prathom (Primary School) classes for Prathom 1-3 were suspended on June 24. All Mattayom (Secondary School) classes for Mattayom 2 and Mattayom 4-6 were suspended on June 27-28, the notice added.

The spike in the number of infections followed a mass event held to mark Wai Kru Day (Teacher's Day), Ms Palirat noted.

"If there are any additional changes, the school will inform you later," she added.

Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO), on June 22 during a radio interview recognised that the number of COVID cases in Phuket had been rising over the previous week.



Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO). Photo: PR Phuket

Although the number of cases confirmed by RT-PCR tests had risen to the mid- to high-20s over the previous few days, the number of cases reported by ATK (antigen test kits) had risen into the hundreds, exceeding 300 on June 23.

Of note, the PPHO marks only cases confirmed positive by RT-PCR tests for its tally of COVID-positive cases in Phuket.

The PPHO does mark the number

of new COVID cases confirmed by ATK tests in its daily report, but does not include those cases in its tally.

In comparison, the Phuket Info Center, operated by the Phuket office of the Minister of interior, under Governor Narong Woonciew, does include ATK-positive cases in its daily tally.

In his radio interview on June 22, Dr Kusak urged people to continue wearing face masks in public areas as

the number of new cases was rising.

His call for people to continue to protect themselves from infection by wearing a face mask came as the requirement for wearing face masks in public areas was removed by order of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

As of June 24, people in Phuket were no longer required to wear a face mask outdoors, except for in situations where distancing was not possible.



Photo: Supplied

German man in hospital after car slams fence

A GERMAN MAN WAS rushed to hospital after the BMW he was driving slammed into a roadside fence on Thepkasattri Rd on June 23.

Lt Col Pattwat Yodkwan of the Thalang Police was notified of the accident just after 10pm.

Officers and rescue workers arrived at the scene, in front of the Mae Ju shop on Thepkasattri Rd northbound in Moo 5 Thepkasattri, to find a heavily damaged Bangkok-registered BMW sedan in front of the store.

The driver, named only as German national Frank Alexander (sic), 42, was pinned inside the vehicle.

Kusoldharm Foundation rescue workers used hydraulic cutters to recover the man from the wreck, before administering him emergency first aid and rushing him to Thalang Hospital.

Police reported they initially believed that Mr Alexander lost control of the car in the wet storm conditions on the night and crashed into the fence and a sign in front of the store.

However, their investigation was ongoing, officers said.

The German man will be held responsible for damages to the fence and the sign, police confirmed.

Eakkapop Thongtub



Police seeking foreigners for sex in front yard

KAMALA POLICE HAVE warned that having sex in open areas is illegal and people caught will be prosecuted. The warning followed a foreign man and his female partner caught on CCTV having sex in front of a house in the area.

Waralak Fritze, 52, owner of the house, on Baan Bang Whan Rd in Moo 1, Kamala, discovered that a couple had relations in her front yard when she logged on to check her CCTV cameras from where she is now in Germany.

The CCTV cameras were installed after she had a dispute over a company installing a drinking water vending

machine in her driveway last year.

The couple were recorded in the act at about 10:35pm on June 21.

"I never imagined that something like this would happen," Ms Waralak said.

Ms Waralak reported the incident to Kamala Police, who have confirmed they are investigating it.

"An incident of this nature is considered an offence. Anyone who has evidence of the offence can report it to the investigating officer at Kamala Police Station so we can track down the offenders and prosecute them in accordance with law," one officer said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Karon anti-drug campaign aims for rehab, not jail

The Phuket News
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Pol Lt Gen Panurat Lakboon, Deputy Inspector-General of the Royal Thai Police and Deputy Director of the Royal Thai Police Narcotics Prevention and Suppression Center, was in Phuket last week to support an anti-drug campaign that aims to have drug users enter treatment instead of jailing them.

Also present for the event, held at Wat Suwan Khiri Khet (Wat Karon) on June 23, were Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong and Karon Police Chief Col Theerawat Liamsuwan, along with community leaders and students.

Col Theerawat explained that under Royal Thai Police policy every police station is to have a sustainable community action project to solve the drug problem in line with the national strategy.

Karon Police had assigned its Community Relations Police Operations Unit to carry out the campaign in the area in order to acknowledge the



Photo: PR Phuket

problem and educate local residents about narcotics, Col Theerawat added.

Karon Police are responsible for just one tambon, Karon, with an area of about 20 square kilometres, comprising four villages with a total population of approximately 7,000 people, he said.

For this year Karon Police had selected Baan Khok Chang, in Moo 4, Karon, for the focus of its community anti-drug campaign, Col Theerawat added.

Under the campaign, officers will visit every household in Baan Khok Chang to prepare for the drafting of a

memorandum of understanding (MoU) on drug testing, Col Theerawat said.

Under the MoU, people who test positive for drugs will be taken under public health care for recovery and rehabilitation, after which they can return to their families, he added.

"If there are no addicts in the community, there will be no suppliers. This will make the community become a strong, drug-free community," Col Theerawat said.

Similar programmes were being rolled out in 1,483 communities throughout the country, he added.

The government provides B50,000 per community to implement the project, he said.

"However, this budget was insufficient to provide comprehensive treatment for patients. Therefore, integration with network partners, including local leaders and parents is an extremely important part in expanding the project into other community areas," Col Theerawat added.

Lt Gen Panurat added that the community campaigns would also help alleviate the stress on the prison system.

There are currently 300,000 inmates in prisons, 80% of whom are serving drug-related sentences, he said.

Teerayut Ariyaudomkit, Director of the Karon Health Promoting Hospital, noted, "Community participation therapy is the right path.

"Health officials will design each patient's treatment process according to the severity of their condition and to make the treatment as effective as possible... Three follow-up visits will be conducted to allow the patient to be truly disconnected from drug dependence," he explained.

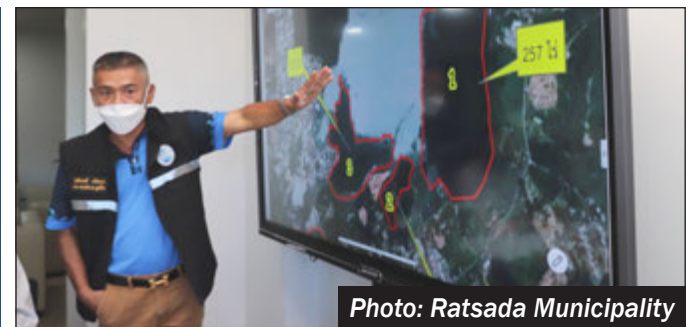


Photo: Ratsada Municipality

Ratsada aims to create mangrove eco-tourism

RATSADA MAYOR NAKARIN Yosangrat has gained support to use one tract of 101 rai of natural forest and mangroves and another area covering 10 rai to use together as a protected nature reserve complete with nature trails as an eco-tourism attraction.

The support for the 'Ratsada Green in the City' project (also called the 'Ratsada Urban Forest Project') came at a meeting at the Ratsada Municipality offices on June 22.

At the meeting the project gained the approval of the Phuket Mangrove Forest Resource Management Center, Phuket Rajabhat University and the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources.

The site for the natural forest recreational area is located in the Khlong Tha Chin - Bang Chee Lao area, where in total more than 1,000 rai of mangrove forest has been

earmarked for the project.

The DMCR will jointly carry out the construction of a recreation and learning centre and nature trails for mangrove ecosystems to support ecotourism.

Mayor Nakarin invited all government agencies, local private businesses and the public to support the project for "the continuing conservation and restoration of natural areas" on the island.

"The project is intended to preserve, protect and restore the mangrove forest, to keep the area fertile and develop a learning centre and eco-tourism attraction about mangrove forest resources

"The project also aims to strengthen participation among all people to help support the local economy in a sustainable way by protecting our natural resources," he said.

The Phuket News

500kV power station comes online

BOONYANIT WONGRAKMIT, Governor of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), was in Phuket on June 21 to inaugurate the official opening of the new power substation in Koh Kaew, built to receive the new 500kV supply line from Surat Thani to feed into the Phuket power grid.

At the event, held at the power substation, Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Phinsuwan praised the development.

"Phuket is a strategic area in the tourism industry that is important to the country. It is the province with the second-highest income from tourism in the country after Bangkok... Having stable, sufficient electrical infrastructure is considered at the heart of Phuket's long-term development," V/Gov Amnuay said.

Mr Boonyanit explained that the new 500kV supply line to Phuket draws from the power grid in Central Thailand through the Bang Saphan 2 High Voltage Power Station located in Prachuap Khiri Khan, which connects to the Surat Thani High Volt-



Photo: PR Phuket

age Power Station 2.

"The new 500kV power lines from Surat Thani to the new Phuket High Voltage Substation 3 covers a total distance of 504 kilometres. It is the first 500kV electric power supply line in the South and is the longest electrical supply line in Thailand," he said.

"It increases the ability to transmit electricity from the central region to the south by more than two times, from 700 megawatts to 1,600 megawatts, and increases the ability to deliver electricity to Phuket in the future," Mr Boonyanit continued.

"Further, Phuket High

Voltage Power Station 3 is a Gas Insulated Substation [GIS], which is the latest technology and uses less construction space," he added.

"EGAT has a mission to maintain the stability of the country's power system and has continued to develop electrical infrastructure to support the growing demand for electricity in the South, especially for Phuket in the long term, as Phuket has the second-highest demand for electricity in the southern region and has a record of 7-10% higher electricity usage per year," Mr Boonyanit said. *The Phuket News*



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Thai AirAsia X to refund pandemic bookings

THAI AIRASIA X HAS affirmed it will refund all paid bookings made in the previous two years, despite filing for bankruptcy.

Thai AirAsia X director Tassapon Bijleveld has affirmed that the 6,500 bookings made prior to the bankruptcy process, as well as new bookings made after May 17, will not be affected by court procedures. These bookings will be eligible for a cash or credit refund.

The airline carrier has accumulated around B25 billion in debt and has filed for bankruptcy, which was accepted on May 17.

If the airline's creditors do not object to this petition, the carrier will proceed with its rehabilitation plan, which it hopes to

finish by the third quarter of 2023.

During the bankruptcy process, the airline has continued to cut operational costs such as by relocating its hub to Suvarnabhumi airport, which reduced space usage and cut costs by half. The airline previously operated 15 jets before the pandemic but reduced its fleet to five this year.

Mr Tassapon confirmed that the airline's international flights will continue as usual. The airline intends to resume all South Korean and Japanese destinations, with the goal of serving 300,000 passengers in 2022. Flights to South Korea restarted last month, while its route to Japan is scheduled to begin in July. *NNT*

Household debt crisis looms as rates hike

Bangkok Post

With interest rates set to rise in the second half of the year, increased household debt could deal a heavy blow to the Thai economy, weakening consumer purchasing power and slowing economic growth, according to KKP Research.

Thailand's household debt now exceeds 90% of Thai GDP, ranked 11th-highest in the world, as households struggle to make ends meet.

Most households in the lowest 20% have an average monthly income of only B10,000, while the minimum monthly expenditure is B12,000. These households resorted to borrowing to pay for daily essentials, driving up the proportion of short-term consumer debt to total household debt, said the research house.

Thailand's per capita income is also very low compared with countries with similar levels of debt, suggesting the Thai economy is more vulnerable to impacts from indebtedness than other coun-



A sign advertises interest rates at a money expo. Household debt now exceeds 90% of Thai GDP as households struggle to make ends meet. Photo: Bangkok Post / file

tries, KKP Research stated.

According to Credit Suisse, Thailand has one of the highest levels of wealth inequality in the world, and debt tends to be concentrated in low-income households that have a lower asset-to-debt ratio. As a result, when interest rates rise, these households have to reduce their consumption to pay off their debts, which will slow economic growth.

Low-income households also bear a bigger brunt from inflation as food and energy expenses make up a relatively larger proportion

of total household spending, decreasing their ability to pay down debt.

Higher household debt will cause Thailand to face a long downturn in the economic cycle, said the research house.

The debt burden will intensify as interest rates rise and higher household debt slows consumption growth. Any attempts to stimulate consumption through debt will reach a dead end because there is already a high level of debt, said KKP Research, meaning debt-driven consumption stimulus cannot

create growth.

KKP Research estimates if the economy enters a debt repayment period or deleveraging, consumption momentum will drop by about 1.3 percentage points, while economic growth will slow by about 0.7 percentage points, causing a long economic slump.

However, the firm believes Thai financial institutions will remain strong with high foreign currency reserves. Risks to monitor include Thailand's loss of competitiveness, which could lead to a negative current account balance, a weakening baht, excessive debt that may lead to an economic crisis, and a weaker tourism recovery than expected. External risk factors include global central banks' long-term plan for their monetary policy in case of stagflation, as well as the promotion of domestic tourism by the Chinese government that could result in a decline in the Thai current account.

KKP Research said the Thai government should not try to stimulate the economy through debt, preferring a gradual hike of interest rates.



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Phuket hotels await start of high season

PHUKET SAW AN INFLUX OF TRAVELLERS from India in the first six months of this year, accounting for 50% of foreign guests, but half of all hotels on the island remain closed as they await the start of high season.

Suksit Suvunditkul, president of the southern chapter of the Thai Hotels Association (THA), said the hotel business in Phuket gradually picked up in the first half with an average occupancy rate of around 40% in May, mostly driven by travellers from India, Singapore, Australia and the UK.

He said the Indian market saw significant growth during this period with over 52,227 travellers from May 1 to June 25, more than twice the size of the Singapore market in second place with 19,298 travellers.

"The situation in Phuket has mostly returned to normal with tourists in some destinations, such as Patong, starting to take masks off after Thailand lifted the mandate last week. The spread of new subvariants doesn't impact sentiment at the moment," said Mr Suksit.

Meanwhile, the outlook for the Indian market in July remains strong with direct flights from Thai Smile Airways, Go First Airlines and Indigo Airlines connecting Phuket with key cities such as New Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore and Mumbai.

In July, Phuket will have 15 airlines flying 58 direct flights to the island, bringing tourists from India, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Qatar, Israel and the UK, with an average load factor of 80%.



Tourists take snaps in Phuket Old Town. Mr Suksit said the Indian market saw significant growth during the first half of this year. Photo: Dusida Worrachaddejchai / Bangkok Post

But since Thailand has been in low season since May, around 50% of Phuket hotels remain temporarily closed as demand from the long-haul market is softer.

THA expects most hotels on the island to resume business with the start of high season in October when European markets, particularly chartered flights from Russia, start to travel again.

Mr Suksit said that given Phuket received 3 million Chinese travellers in 2019, or one-third of all its foreign visitors, it was hard to see a strong recovery for all hotel segments without this market.

"Chinese travellers typically generated revenue in all types of hotels in all locations, ranging from three-star hotels to luxury resorts, which was different from European guests, who are the main market for beach resorts and luxury hotels. This meant the hotel industry recovery was uneven," he said. *Bangkok Post*

Thailand ready for life in the post-pandemic era

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Public Health Ministry is ready to usher in the post-pandemic era today (July 1), permanent secretary for public health Kiattiphum Wongrajit has announced.

"We will keep to our schedule to announce the post-pandemic era on July 1. And what we expect to see is only small or medium clusters that will not do any harm to our public health service. The disease will be under control," Dr Kiattiphum said on Monday (June 27).

He admitted that two new COVID-19 subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, had already arrived, but said there had not been any significant change in the number of severe cases admitted to hospitals, raising hopes neither will prompt a scare.

On Tuesday morning Thailand recorded 13 coronavirus-related deaths during the previous 24 hours, the fewest since Feb 7 this year, along with 1,761 confirmed new infections.



Traditional dancers at the Erawan Shrine in Bangkok on Sunday (June 26) chose to continue wear face masks despite their use now being voluntary. Photo: Nutthawat Wicheanbut

The ministry has opted to base its big announcement on a more optimistic premise, but only after the World Health Organization downgrades COVID-19 to endemic status, Dr Kiattiphum said. The ministry will then reconsider the state's responsibility for treating those who continue to catch COVID-19.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has expressed his satisfaction over news that most Thais are voluntarily wearing masks for protection against COVID-19 despite the mask mandate being lifted last Thursday (June 23).

The PM had previously expressed concern about the health of the public as coronavirus infection risks remained, despite a drop in numbers.

The Department of Disease Control (DDC) recommends that people with underlying conditions, the elderly and pregnant women who have yet to get boosters keep wearing masks.

Those who are healthy can discard the mask when alone, exercising, eating, drinking or in an open space where social distancing can be practised, the DDC said.

Education Minister Trinuch

Thienthong, says masks are still required at education institutions, except for when attending outdoor activities, as the ministry is concerned about children who are too young to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

However, last Saturday Bangkok governor Chadchart Sittipunt showed that people can now take off their masks in open spaces by undertaking his morning run at Lumpini Park without one.

Since the government lifted the mask mandate, people can now go mask-free outside while staying one metre away from others, Mr Chadchart told the media after his daily jog.

People can simply keep their masks with them and only put them on when meeting others, he said.

"The law has changed, but we shouldn't take the situation for granted as the Omicron variant remains active," he said.

Mr Chadchart signed an announcement making mask-wearing in open spaces a personal choice last Friday, one day after the national mask mandate was lifted.

Medical Services Department warns against cannabis binging

BANGKOK

THE DEPARTMENT of Medical Services has confirmed nine people have sought medical treatment at three hospitals in Bangkok under its jurisdiction for consuming too much cannabis since the decriminalisation of marijuana on June 9.

The medical facilities are Nopparatrajathane Hospital, Lerdsin Hospital and Rajavithi Hospital.

The cases were associated with both over-consumption of food with a marijuana ingredient and the use of cannabis for recreational purposes, said Dr Manas Phothaporn, deputy director-general of the department.

Their symptoms were divided into three groups concerning where in their bodies the impact of cannabis binging took place, namely blood vessels and heart, neurological system and digestive system, he said.

The impact of too much cannabis on blood vessels and the heart included an



Photo: Bangkok Post

unusually fast heart beat and a volatile pulse, while the most common symptom in the neurological system was dizziness, he added.

Symptoms of too much cannabis in the digestive system found in some of these nine patients included vomiting, Dr Manas said.

"Overdoing it on cannabis has partly stemmed from cooks having added marijuana into food hoping to enhance its flavour while consumers weren't aware they were eating food containing cannabis," he said.

Dr Manas urged people to take precautions when consuming cannabis, both in relation to where it is acquired from and how much they ingest.

Bangkok Post

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Photo: Rawai Municipality

Yanui underwater cleanup nets 100kg of trash

Before the storm weather blew in late last past week, Thai and foreign volunteers held an underwater cleanup at Yanui Beach that netted more than 100kg of trash and marine debris.

Rawai Mayor Aroon Soros said that 70% of the waste collected was trash, including discarded fishing nets and other materials. Some 30% of the trash collected was plastic.

The cleanup, held on June 23, was organised by the Rotary Club of Andaman, Mayor Aroon said.

The main aim of the cleanup, which Rawi Municipality staff also lent a hand in organising, was to collect marine trash and debris that was damaging the local marine ecosystem and would most likely eventually end up being washed on shore.

The cleanup also aimed to help create awareness among local people about the importance of preserving the environment and encourage people to not pollute the waters around Phuket, Mayor Aroon said. *The Phuket News*

Wheelchairs rolled out for elderly, disabled

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

More than 800 wheelchairs were handed over to the Region 11 office of the Red Cross Society of Thailand last week as part of a B9 million joint initiative involving Living Waters Phuket and the Church of Latter Day Saints.

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew was present for the handover of 815 wheelchairs at the offices of the Phuket Red Cross on June 22.

The wheelchairs will be distributed across all subdistricts in Phuket (tambon) as well as other provinces where the Red Cross Region 11 office operates, including Surat Thani, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Ranong, Phang Nga and Krabi.

Shaun Stenning of 5 Star Marine, and founder of the Living Waters Phuket Foundation, explained that 200 wheelchairs handed over last week were "left over" from May in the ongoing campaign. A further 1,000 wheelchairs and other mobility aids are expected to arrive later this month.

In total, the campaign aims to provide more than 2,000 wheelchairs to



Photo: PR Phuket

the elderly and mobility disabled, Mr Stenning said.

According to a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department, the Phuket Red Cross has received 1,015 standard wheelchairs, which have been distributed to the elderly and disabled in 18 localities across the island.

The Phuket Provincial Hospital (also often referred to as the 'OrBorJor Hospital') and other government-operated medical facilities have received a total

of 48 wheelchairs.

A further 20 wheelchairs have been handed over to the Phuket office of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and 252 wheelchairs have been donated to nine local municipalities and other government administration organisations (OrBorTor).

Another 543 wheelchairs will be handed over to the Thai Red Cross Society and the Provincial Red Cross Region 11 office in the next delivery, PR Phuket reported.



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Sam Wilkinson passes away

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A memorial event for Sam Wilkinson, well known across the island for playing his guitar at high-end restaurants and as a writer, will be held in Rawai in December.

For more than 15 years Sam, his full name Anthony Jerome Wilkinson, travelled to all corners of the island playing at resorts large and small, his face and voice carrying his simple, beautiful message of what it was like to live in Phuket.

During his years on the island, Sam wrote innumerable restaurant reviews for many respected dining publications. He also worked a stint as an editor at *The Phuket Gazette* and later contributed as a writer to *The Phuket News*.

Sam passed away at Marie Curie Hospice in his home town of Liverpool in England on June 5 after a brief battle with cancer. Although it was already noticeable that Sam's health had started waning, in total it was only two months from diagnosis to death. He was 66 years old.

Since his passing the number of messages posted online of condolences, support and tributes to the wonderful character that Sam was have been too many to count, testament to how many lives of people living in Phuket, and many regular returning visitors, he had touched with his engaging vivacity. He



Sam in full voice. Photo: Collette Edouard

was a loving force of nature.

"To all the beautiful people at Marie Curie Hospice in Liverpool who cared for our dad Sam Wilkinson until his last breath...words cannot express our appreciation for everything you did and continue to do for those in need. May you be as blessed as we were to have you caring for us in the final days,

hours and minutes," wrote Collette Edouard, Sam's daughter who lives in Phuket, where she co-founded HeadStart International School.

"He was lovingly cared for by my warrior of a sister Joy Dove, family members and the beautiful human beings at Clatterbridge Hospital and Marie Curie Hospice in Woolton. If you

think there are no more good people in the world, think again. These people are heroes in my books," she added.

"Dad took his last breath at 10:47pm with Joy and I at either side of him. We played him his favourite Jimi Hendrix, Van Morrison, Beatles and John Mayer songs as we read all the messages that his friends and family sent in the days leading up to his death," Collette wrote.

"From being diagnosed with advanced pancreatic and liver cancer in April to passing in June, we had precious little time to revisit the places of dad's youth and relive his happy memories here in England, but we tried our best!" Collette added, posting a collection of photos of Sam "so that you can experience the beautiful time that we spent together in dad's final days."

"Rest in peace dad. You've left a legacy of strong, brave and kind children and grandchildren. You are gone but not forgotten. And in true Liverpool spirit remember that you'll never walk alone. Let your free spirit fly with the angels, never to suffer again."

Details of the memorial event, during which Sam's ashes will be scattered at his desired location in Rawai, where he lived for many years, will be announced when they become available.

Anyone seeking information regarding attending the memorial in December can email Collette at cedouard@headstartphuket.com

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POP QUIZ

- On average, how many seconds a day do humans spend laughing?
- What is the literal translation of the Japanese word 'kimono'?
- Nomophobia is the fear of what?
- What do the songs *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *Hey Jude* have in common?
- Which company is the world's biggest toy distributor?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

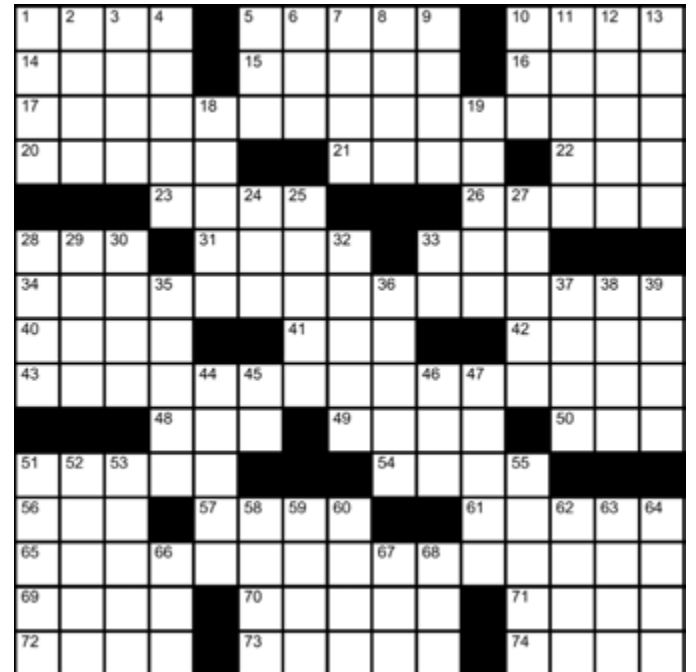
9					5	7		
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8						6	3	
			6		9			
		7	9					1

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
- Bohemian, e.g.
 - Foreshadow
 - Beat
 - Calcite rock
 - Kind of force
 - Deplaned
 - Hoagie, e.g.
 - "What's Happening!!" character
 - Grand
 - 1965 Ursula Andress film
 - Delineate
 - Fertilizer ingredient
 - Common contraction
 - Some deer
 - B & B
 - Creamy dessert
 - The "B" in N.B.
 - "Arabian Nights" menace
 - "___ cost you!"
 - Basic
 - Blinking light, maybe
 - Jewish month
 - Cow, maybe
 - Zoroastrian
 - Nile wader
 - ___ system
 - Hot
 - Didn't walk
 - Cooking style
 - As a result
- Down**
- Bustle
 - Vermeer's "Woman With a ___"
 - A long way off
 - Care for
 - Dr. J's first pro league
 - Mantel piece
 - Surge
 - Bryce Canyon locale
 - City near Sparks
 - Aviary sound
 - Elite
 - Corner
 - Aromatic solvent
 - Foreword
 - "Beats me!"
 - Rank above maj.
 - Got wind of
 - Indigenous Canadian
 - Part of a nuclear arsenal, for short
 - Biblical pronoun
 - Lady of Lisbon
 - Ore remover
 - "___ Not There," 2007 film
 - Sea monster of myth
 - Dangerous bacteria
 - Greek promenade
 - Knocked off, in a way
 - If not
 - All excited
 - ___ Doubt, rock band
 - It has a certain ring to it
 - Excuse
 - Glazier's items
 - Scrub
 - Cheek cosmetic
 - Bar offering
 - Skin products maker
 - Swift fly
 - Oenologist's interest
 - Municipality in France
 - Organic compound
 - Buck
 - Word
 - Nod, maybe
 - Adaptable truck, for short

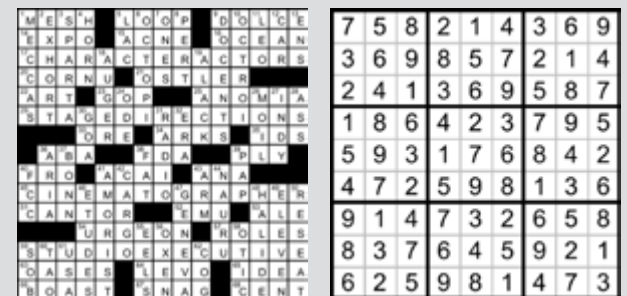
Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) 360; 2) "Thing to wear"; 3) Being without a mobile phone; 4) They were recorded using the same piano (also recorded in the same studio); 5) McDonald's.



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

inch is how much Mount Everest grows every year.

98

percent is the average rating the entire *Toy Story* series has on Rotten Tomatoes.

2,700

litres of water are required to make one cotton shirt, enough to meet the average person's drinking needs for two-and-a-half years.

100,000

years is how long it would take to travel across the Milky Way galaxy if we could travel at the speed of light.

5

billion

videos are watched on YouTube every day. 500 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Phuket rose. Photo by *Sutharat Khaodee*

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This week in history

July 1, 1770

Lexell's Comet is seen closer to the Earth than any other comet in recorded history, approaching to a distance of 0.015 astronomical units (2,200,000 km). It has not been seen since.

July 2, 1997

The Bank of Thailand floats the baht, triggering the Asian financial crisis. Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand were the countries most affected by the crisis.

July 3, 1035

William the Conqueror becomes the Duke of Normandy and reigns until 1087.

July 4, 2009

The Statue of Liberty's crown reopens to the public after eight years of closure following 9/11.



Micheline Bernardini, 19, models the first bikini in 1946.

July 5, 1946

The bikini goes on sale after debuting during an outdoor fashion show at the Molitor Pool in Paris.

July 6, 1885

Louis Pasteur successfully tests his vaccine against rabies on Joseph Meister, a boy who was badly bitten in 14 places by a rabid dog.

July 7, 1985

Boris Becker becomes the youngest player ever to win Wimbledon at age 17. Becker was even younger than the Wimbledon junior champion that year, Leonardo Lavalle.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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SUN

3 JUL

WED

6 JUL

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Grow Boating Evening

We look forward to seeing you at the next Grow Boating Evening at the Isola Restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina from 5pm on Friday the 1st of July. The next Grown Boating will follow after the AGM of the TYBA and we are delighted to announce that our drinks sponsor for the evening will be the Royal Phuket Marina. There will be a delicious free buffet for all attendees and as always all of your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. 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 Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/growboatingphuket Grow Boating is kindly supported by our media partner The Phuket News, Live 89.5 radio and Phuket News TV. See www.thephuketnews.com

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THAT'S AMORE ITALIAN RESTAURANT OPENING

A great group of people came together to celebrate the latest food and beverage venue in the heart of Phuket Town on Sunday evening, June 26. Beverages were flowing and the endless offerings of traditional home-cooked Italian food were snapped up by all. A great example that home cooking can be fine dining.

WINDOW ON PHUKET

The August/September 2022
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Distributed in resorts/hotels lobbies, in a high number of restaurants and coffee shops, plus inserted in one issue of *The Phuket News* each month, it is a great way to Talk to Phuket.

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Sadio Mane. Photo: AFP

Bayern complete signing of Mane from Liverpool

FOOTBALL

BAYERN MUNICH HAVE confirmed the signing of Sadio Mane from Liverpool after the Senegal forward signed a three-year deal last Wednesday (June 22).

Bayern, who won a 10th straight Bundesliga title last season, have reportedly paid a fee which could rise to €41 million (฿1.6 billion).

The 30-year-old won the Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup, League Cup and Club World Cup titles during six years on Merseyside.

“My agent told me that there were also enquiries from other clubs, but for me, the feeling was right from the start when Bayern presented their plan with me,” Mane told German daily *Bild*.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp paid tribute to the departing Mane, who netted 120 goals in 269 games for Liverpool.

“One of Liverpool’s greatest ever players is leaving and we must acknowledge how significant this is,” said Klopp.

“The goals he scored, the trophies he won; a legend, for sure, but also a modern-day Liverpool icon.”

Mane, voted African footballer of the year in 2019, is a versatile attacker who has spent the majority of his career on the wing but can also play through the middle.

“It is really strange to no longer be a Liverpool player but I had an unbelievable time,” he told Liverpool’s website. “I am going to be Liverpool’s number one fan forever.” *AFP*

Fans advised to snap up Thailand GP tickets

MOTO GP

Bangkok Post

Organisers of the OR Thailand Grand Prix 2022 have urged fans to snap up tickets for the race sooner rather than later to avoid disappointment at missing out.

The third MotoGP event in Thailand will again be held at Chang International Circuit in Buri Ram from Sept 30-Oct 2, with tickets available from July 8, organisers confirmed last Thursday (June 23).

This year’s tickets are divided into three categories – Grand Stand at ฿4,000 each, Side Stand at ฿2,000, and Special Rider Stand, with a souvenir, of which the price will be confirmed later.

They will be on sale at www.allticket.com and All Tickets at 7-Eleven convenience stores from 3pm on July 8.

The organisers said fans should hurry up as, they claimed, tickets were sold out in just five minutes for the previous editions.



Honda’s Marc Marquez celebrates winning the Thailand MotoGP in 2019. Photo: AFP

Thailand will resume hosting the MotoGP event after a lapse of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first two Thailand Grand Prix editions were organised in 2018 and 2019.

“The government has confirmed that the 2022 Thailand Grand Prix will be held at Chang International Circuit in Buri Ram from Sept 30-Oct 2,” Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) Governor Gongsak Yodmani said.

“We received a lot of praise

from organising the first two editions,” Gongsak said in a press release.

“After COVID-19 forced cancellation of the event twice, we have prepared for the event this year. We hope the event will help develop motorsport in Thailand and boost the country’s economy.”

With Moto2 rider Somkiat Chantra becoming Thailand’s first champion in any category of the world motorcycle championships, interest in the Thailand MotoGP 2022 should

be higher, he said.

Honda racer Marc Marquez is the only rider to be crowned champion of the Thailand Grand Prix after his wins in 2018 and 2019.

Despite crashing out of last Sunday’s (June 26) incident-packed Dutch MotoGP with what he called a “rookie mistake”, Yamaha’s Fabio Quartararo still currently leads the standings.

It was a great day for Italian riders with Ducati Lenovo’s Francesco Bagnaia winning the race and Marco Bezzecchi of VR46 Racing Team in second. Spanish rider Maverick Vinales of Aprilia Racing rounded out the podium in the 11th race of the season.

Frenchman Quartararo fell on laps 5 and 13, flipping spectacularly over his handlebars in the second incident although he walked away afterwards, shaking his fists in anger at his error.

Heading into the summer break, Quartararo now holds a 21-point lead over Aprilia Racing’s Aleix Espargaro, who was fourth in the Netherlands.

NSW beat Queensland to force decider in State of Origin series

RUGBY

A REJUVENATED NEW SOUTH Wales forced a decider in the best-of-three State of Origin rugby league series after a scintillating 44-12 victory over Queensland last Sunday (June 26).

Under pressure after an upset home defeat in the opener, an aggressive NSW ran their bitter rivals ragged in game two in front of a capacity crowd of nearly 60,000 fans on a crisp and clear night at Perth’s Optus Stadium.

After a see-saw first half, the Blues ran in five of their seven tries in a blistering second half to easily prevail on a greasy surface, where players numerous slipped over but conditions failed to dampen the high-octane spectacle.

The desperate Blues made seven changes for the must-win clash after a 16-10 defeat in a tense opener in Sydney.

The move paid dividends, particularly the inclusion of Api Koroisau who was brilliant as starting hooker after getting the nod over Damien Cook.

The series decider will be played at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane on July 13.

“We were more brutal and hungry. There were no second chances,” said NSW captain James Tedesco.

“It’s very pleasing and we’ll enjoy the win but it’s going to be a big test at Suncorp.” Queensland gamely withstood NSW’s



NSW’s Nathan Cleary in action against Queensland. Photo: AFP

expected early onslaught before running out of gas in a reality check for rookie coach Billy Slater, widely considered one of the greatest to ever play the game.

“We tried to match their energy in the first half but they were too good... they had the ball too much and scored points,” said Queensland star Cameron Munster.

It was just the second time the showpiece event has headed to Western Australia, which hasn’t had a professional rugby league team in 25 years in a state where the dominant football code is Australian Rules.

NSW will be hoping that history repeats itself: in 2019, a 38-6 game two victory in Perth powered them to a famous come-from-behind series victory. *AFP*

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Annual tennis invitational makes debut in Phuket

TENNIS

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket hosted its first tennis invitational event last weekend as a selection of professional players and rising stars helped promote the island as a sports tourism destination.

The Sports Association of Phuket along with the national Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) to launch the inaugural 'SAT Phuket Tennis Invitation 2022' at the multipurpose tennis courts at Saphan Hin Park last Friday through Sunday (June 24-26).

Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong opened the event and was joined by Saroj Angkanapilas, Mayor of Phuket City, Thammawat Wongchareonyot, President of the Phuket Sports Association, and Charoenchai Suwansri, SAT Department Director of regional sports.

Vice Governor Panapong explained that the event was to include aspiring young tennis players, seniors and professionals to help reinforce



Photo: Sports Association of Thailand

Phuket's standing as a major sports city, as per directives by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

The event was also expected to attract a significant number of tennis fans to the island, he added, which will help boost the local economy.

Mr Charoenchai said the event will be an annual occasion developed via a collaborative effort by SAT, the Thailand Lawn Tennis Association and the Thai Senior Tennis Association to ensure the right calibre of players are invited to compete.

The goal, he added, is to develop the event to a level

that sees talented athletes competing each year to help grow interest and participation in the sport locally and nationally.

Concurrent to the competition, former Thai professional player Danai Udomchoke, who reached a global ranking of 77 in 2007, helped run a series of coaching sessions to further help with player development.

Other players of renown taking part included Worachon Rakpuangchon, Worawin Kamthornkittikul, Nattapat Phewbangrak, Rada Manatrivat and Runya Wongthienchai.

The competition consisted

of male and female senior and junior contests as well as a seniors doubles competition where the total age of the four players competing could not be less than 100 years of age. The prize money distributed across the various contests was B300,000.

Thanakorn "Tar" Srirat, a 20-year-old rising star ranked 21st nationally, beat 27-year-old Chayanon "Max" Kaewsuth, ranked 50th nationally, in the men's singles final after the latter had to retire injured in the second set.

Former national player Waranya "Yui" Wongthienchai, 29, beat 25-year-old Rada "Ploy" Manathawiwat, ranked 21st nationally, 7-5, 6-4 in the women's final.

In the final of the men's singles under 14 age group, Tri Srisen defeated Benjamin Siang Saw 6-3, 6-3 while Tharita Hongyok defeated Thanisara Chongquinit 6-0, 6-4 in the same age group of the women's singles final.

In the senior mixed doubles final Jenjira Nimmanhaemin and Kreetha Phimphahu defeated Jira Thanthong and Arcade Suriyapanpong 6-0, 6-2.

Phayahong makes K-1 kickboxing history

KICKBOXING

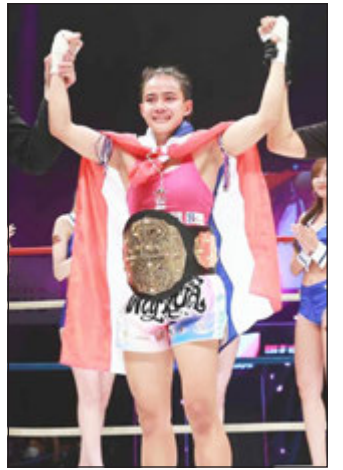
PHAYAHONG AYO-thayafightgym has become the first Thai woman to win a K-1 kickboxing championship, taking the title in the 45-kilogramme division at the K-1: Ring of Venus event in Tokyo, Japan last Saturday (June 25).

Phayahong was declared the winner after beating the reigning Krush Atomweight champion Sukawara Miyu of Japan at Yoyogi National Gymnasium in Shibuya.

The fight was ruled a majority decision draw after the first three rounds, with one judge scoring the bout for Phayahong. She was awarded the split decision after an extra fourth round was fought.

K-1 is a Professional Kickboxing promotion established in 1993. The only previous Thai title winners were all men – Buakaw Banchamek, Kaew Viriyalekgym and Kongnana Viriyalekgym.

Buri Ram native Phayahong, real name Chanthakan Manobal, is a cousin of Lalisa Manobal, better known as Lisa Blackpink, a Thai rapper, singer and dancer based in



Phayahong after her historic win in Tokyo. Photo: Ayothaya Fight Gym

South Korea who is a member of the South Korean girl group Blackpink.

Phayahong is a former student of Nakhon Ratchasima Sports School and began boxing at the age of nine, winning her first title at the age of 13. She is currently a student in the faculty of education at Kasetsart University.

She won a kickboxing bronze medal at the recent SEA Games in Hanoi and was also named an outstanding performer of the boxing coach reverence dance, or wai khru, on National Muay Thai Day, Feb 6, in 2020.

The Phuket News

Gold medal winning athletes train in Phuket

ATHLETICS

PHUKET RECENTLY PLAYED HOST to a number of gold medal winning national athletes who were training on the island ahead of their qualifying campaign for the World Athletics Championships in Oregon, USA later this year.

The men's 4x100 metre relay team, who won gold at the 31st SEA Games in Hanoi, Vietnam last month, used the Kathu Municipal Stadium as their base to hone their skills on June 19-20 before they headed off to Kazakhstan, where the Asian qualifiers for the World Championships in the USA were being held.

The Thai women's 400m sprint team, women's triple jump team and members of the Thai men's pole vault team were also present training at the stadium.

The training sessions were open to members of the public who came along to get a rare glimpse at the top-level skills and preparation efforts required for elite athletes. Many of the fans were able to get close to the stars and take photos to keep as mementos of the occasion.

The sessions were overseen by Pol Maj Gen Surapong Ariyamongkol, who is also Vice President and Secretary General of the Athletics Association of Thailand.

Joining him were chairman of the Thai national athletics team Pol Maj Gen Supawanat Ariyamongkol and Kathu Mayor Chai-anan Suttikul.

Star athlete Nong Puriphon Boonsorn,



Members of the men's 4x100 metre relay team in training. Photo: PR Phuket

who, in addition to being part of the winning relay team, also won gold medals in the men's 100m and 200m in Hanoi, commented that he and his fellow athletes were in good condition and heading to the qualifiers in confident mood, determined to do their best.

He asked that all Thais back home cheer the teams on as they strive to make it to the World Champions in Eugene, Oregon, which is to be held from July 15-24.

The Asian qualifiers for the World Championships held in Kazakhstan took place last weekend (June 25-26), but at time of press no official results had been published. *The Phuket News*

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Sport



Invitational tennis comp a big hit > p15



RIGHT SAID TED

Sheringham kicks off Phuket football clinic

Teddy Sheringham (left) with event organisers at last Friday's (June 24) football clinic in Phuket. Photo: PR Phuket

FOOTBALL

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Manchester United and England legend Teddy Sheringham was in Phuket last Friday (June 24) to officially open the southern region of 'The Match Football Clinic'.

Former Red Devils striker Sheringham, who also starred for Tottenham Hotspur and Nottingham Forest and won 51 caps for his country in a glittering 24-year professional career, was on hand to meet over 300 children participating

in the clinic where he passed on invaluable advice and tips on playing the game at the very highest level.

The Match Football Clinic is being organised by Fresh Air Festival Co Ltd in collaboration with provincial sports associations across the country as part of the much anticipated 'Century Cup 2022' exhibition match in Bangkok on July 12 between Premier League giants Manchester United and Liverpool.

The clinic is being funded by a budget from the National Sports Development Fund which supports special projects for youths aged 14-18 and

covers four regions nationally; in addition to Phuket further clinics will be held in Chanthaburi, Chiang Mai and Udon Thani. Phuket was selected to host the southern region clinic which saw participants coming from 15 other local provinces.

Sheringham will also be involved at the clinic in Chanthaburi, while former Liverpool and Norway star John Arne Riise will oversee the sessions in Chiang Mai and Udon Thani.

The inauguration of the Phuket clinic was held at Surakul Stadium at 9am last Friday, overseen by Phuket Provincial Administrative

Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob.

Mr Rewat was joined at the opening ceremony by Thammawat Wongcharoenyos, President of the Phuket Sports Association and Chairman of the Provincial Sports Association Confederation; Winai Thongrat, President of the Sports Association of Trang Province and the National Sports Development Fund Committee; Prasong Borirak, President of the Sports Association of Songkhla Province; Damrong Chaisena, Director of the Sports Authority of Thailand, Phuket Province; Ratchadaphon Oin of the

Phuket Tourism and Sports office; Prasit Sinsaowapak, Deputy Mayor of Phuket City and other selected dignitaries.

"It is an honour and a great pleasure to be the Chairman of The Match Football Clinic project today in the name of Phuket Province and we welcome all participants," Mr Rewat said as part of his opening remarks.

Mr Thammawat commented that, despite the inclement weather which saw heavy rainfall throughout the entire day, he believed all the children from the 15 provinces that attended the southern region clinic in Phuket had a

very enjoyable time.

He added that the opportunity for so many children to learn skills and advice on playing the game from such a renowned star as Sheringham was very special as they aspire to continue to develop their game and one day perhaps become professional players themselves.

In addition to stars such as Sheringham and Riise, all the clinics are overseen by expert, A-licensed coaches certified by the Thai-Bavaria Football Co Ltd, who will assist in developing the youngsters' skills, knowledge and gameplay.

Phuket speedster remains on track, receives local award

KARTING

YOUNG PHUKET GO-KARTING sensation Kamolphu "Porsche" Anutchakun is proving to be no flash-in-the-pan as his skills on the track continue to see an array of awards come his way.

Last Friday (June 24) it was announced that Porsche, a 9-year-old student at Kajonkietsuksa School in Kathu, is to receive an award from Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew in recognition of his achievements.

Porsche, who lists current Formula One driver Max Verstappen

as his idol, met with Governor Narong at Phuket Provincial Hall last Friday to showcase the trophies he has recently won as he continues to impress on the track.

He will be returning to Provincial Hall next month to officially receive the award from Governor Narong as part of the monthly provincial meeting.

Since winning two qualifying races at the 2021 Toyota True Visions Junior Kart Championship at Bira Circuit in Pattaya on Mar 12-13, Porsche has continued to dominate the 8-9-year-old age category.

On April 24 he maintained his



Porsche and his parents (left) with Governor Narong. Photo: PR Phuket

form at Bira Circuit by winning the final of the True Visions Toyota Championship to become overall champion.

At the Rotax Max Challenge 2022 Round 2 at Bira Circuit on

May 8 Porsche was in complete control as he not only won the actual race but finished in first place in all three qualifying rounds.

Then, on the weekend of May 21-22, he won Round 2 of the ROK Cup, once again at Bira Circuit.

Governor Narong congratulated Porsche on not only his outstanding achievements within his sport but also for representing Phuket and helping to enhance the image of the province. He added that he looked forward to welcoming the youngster at Provincial Hall to receive his award next month.

Also receiving an award for her outstanding achievements in

athletics, cycling and swimming was local girl Wassana Yim-in, a para-athlete who represents Thailand at national level.

The 24-year-old visually impaired athlete from Koh Kaew received an honour on National Sports Day last year after her performance in the 2021 Road Para-Cycling World Championships in Portugal where she finished in second place in her classification out of 17 other international contestants.

Ms Wassana is currently studying a five-year bachelor's degree in physical education for children with special needs at Yala University.

The Phuket News