

PHUKET BEACH TOURISTS EYED BY AUGUST > PAGE 3

SLOW RESTART



Bar staff on Bangla Rd on Tuesday (June 30) ready to reopen Wednesday night. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

BANGLA BARS REOPEN AS COVID PUB RULES REMAIN TO BE CLARIFIED BY OFFICIALS

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The reopening of bars along Patong's famed Bangla Rd on Wednesday (July 1) was to be a slow start, Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA) President Weerawit Kreuasombat told *The Phuket News* this week.

Only some 20% of venues in the area were to open out of pure necessity, or take the plunge to see if opening now is feasible, Mr Weerawit explained on Tuesday, little over 24 hours before the usually bustling street was to reopen.

The move follows Taweessin Visanuyothin, spokesman for the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) in Bangkok, announcing on Monday (June 29) that all night entertainment venues may reopen but must strictly adhere to health guidelines set out to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Night entertainment venues, including pubs, bars, karaoke venues, beer halls and beer gardens, will be allowed to remain open until midnight. Health and physical distancing measures and monitoring will be required, along with the enforcement of social distancing rules. Customers must use

the Thai Chana app to check in and out, Mr Taweessin explained.

Mr Weerawit said that only about 20% of the 324 venues registered as PEBA members were expected to reopen this week. "More will reopen later. They will start to open in the coming week," he said.

The bars will reopen regardless of whether or not they can enforce all 22 rules announced last week, Mr Weerawit confirmed again on Tuesday.

As of Tuesday morning, and even following a meeting with Patong Mayor Chalermluck Kebsup, Mr Weerawit confirmed that he had still

yet to receive a copy of the rules to be enforced.

CCSA spokesman Mr Taweessin on Monday mentioned only some of the rules to be applied, but did not clarify which of the 22 rules were to be enforced, or if all 22 rules were to be upheld.

Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Thanit Sermkaew also confirmed to *The Phuket News* on Tuesday that his office had yet to receive the official rules to be applied to pubs, bars and other entertainment venues.

Among the 22 rules announced last week to be presented to the...

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'New normal' beach rules in force at Patong



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News



Tourism basics needed for restart > p5

Bangla gets green light to reopen

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...CCSA for approval were that all staff must wear face masks and face shields, but performers may wear face shields only. No bottles were to be served, all drinks were to be served in glasses. No pool table games (including snooker and billiards) and no playing of darts were to be allowed.

Further, the number of guests is to be restricted to allow for social distancing, with at least two metres between tables, or partitions installed, to ensure patrons are seated at least one metre away from each other.

Undermining the main reason people frequent such popular venues, the draft rules also called for groups to be limited to five persons, and guests were to be prohibited from dancing and singing,



A worker tests a new pedestrian crossing across Bangla Rd. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

gathering, shouting and wandering around the premises

"I have no idea what the rules will be, but we will open anyway," Mr Weerawit said, adding that some of the first venues to open will do so at 6pm.

"If the full list of 22 rules for pubs, bars and entertainment venues are to be applied, we won't be able to enforce all

the rules, because enforcing all these rules is impossible.

"But we can follow some of the rules, such as social distancing, wearing masks, checking temperatures," he said.

"I spoke with Mayor Chalermkluck about this, and asked her to relax the rules [if all 22 rules are officially required]. I think she will re-

ceive the actual official notice tonight [Tuesday]," he added.

Mayor Chalermkluck told *The Phuket News* on Tuesday that she, too, had yet to receive a copy of all the rules to be enforced.

"The next thing to do is follow up with the CCSA about the rules. This is very important for the entertainment industry in Patong," she said.

"I will help and consider being flexible with the rules for entertainment businesses in Patong, because the rules announced by CCSA are the general rules for many places. But some of these rules are not appropriate for businesses here. We have to apply the right rules and optimise them for businesses in Patong," Mayor Chalermkluck added.

Mr Weerawit dismissed pubs and bars being singled out in other countries over the past week as hotbeds for starting a "second wave" of COVID-19 infections.

"I do not care what some people claim is the risk of being in a bar. If the government is genuinely concerned about the risk of COVID-19 spreading, then it is not just about bars, pubs and entertainment venues. The risk of COVID-19 spreading applies anywhere where people are around, not only at bars and pubs," he said.

Mr Weerawit left Phuket late Tuesday to attend a meeting with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Tourism in Bangkok on Wednesday (July 1), where he was to submit a formal request for the government to provide assistance to businesses in tourism-dependent Patong critically affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The request is to ask for the government to provide free water and electricity to suffering business owners to help alleviate basic operating costs, to assist with negotiations with landlords to provide rent relief and for the government to provide SME loans for stricken businesses in Patong.

The request also is to ask to extend the nightly closing time from midnight to 4am, and for the government to help provide equipment necessary for small businesses to check for possible COVID-19 infection among their customers.



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Explosive device falls from tree in Patong

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING A HOME-made explosive device that fell from a tree at a construction site on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd in Patong last Saturday (June 27).

Patong Police and Phuket Tourist Police were called to the scene, in front of the Hangout Phuket Lokal hotel, at 9:30am.

The area was sealed off while police inspected and safely recovered the device.

The device was found after a crane being used to carry out renovations to the front of the hotel bumped some trees, causing the device to fall to the ground, construction contractor Suwan Khamkom, 40, told the police.

The device was wrapped in plastic and bound with white tape, he added.

Seeing the device fall to the ground, workers at the site went to investigate, and



The bomb was found after a crane brushed some small trees. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

and quickly informed hotel owner Parawee Karasek, 53, and the police. EOD officers arrived and recovered the device, explained Maj Ekachai Siri of the Phuket Tourist Police.

Police asked Ms Parawee to join them for questioning at Patong Police Station in the hope of uncovering the origin of the device.

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Beach tourists eyed for August

Narumon Kasemsuk
& Dusida Worrachaddejchai

Phuket and Phi Phi Island are two of five locations targeted to host beach holidays as early as next month as the government is working with designated destinations to accommodate tourists under the travel bubble scheme, says the Tourism and Sport Ministry.

"There are signs Thailand may restart the international market again in August, earlier than previously expected in September or October, as Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak asked the ministry to prepare for tourism to reopen," Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn told the Bangkok Post on Tuesday (June 30).

He said the first batch of international arrivals can visit these destinations on a quota basis, depending on the capabilities for PCR (polymerase chain reaction) testing and the healthcare capacity in each province.

Five destinations in three provinces are being discussed for pilot projects to test the ability of the tourism sector to cope with the outbreak: Phuket, Koh Phi Phi in Krabi, and Koh Samui, Koh Pha-ngan, Koh Tao in Surat Thani.

International flights from countries that have travel bubble agreements with the Thai government



Tourists may be back on our beaches sooner than expected.
Photo: The Phuket News / file

should fly directly to those provinces. If these tourists transit in Bangkok, tourists won't be allowed to leave the airport, said Mr Phiphat.

"We have to start tentatively with provinces where GDP relies heavily on tourism revenue, which means communities will not oppose

incoming guests," he said.

If this model proves successful in August, Thailand can expand tourism destinations available for international tourists to other provinces.

Even with the phased reopening for the international market, Mr Phiphat said total foreign arrivals

this year may not exceed 10 million. The figure stands at 6.7mn and attracting 1mn guests per month has become impossible, he said.

Santisuk Klongchaiya, chief executive of Thai AirAsia (TAA), said the airline is planning to boost the domestic market by introducing

an "air ticket buffet" called unlimited passes worth B2,999 for domestic routes.

The sales target is 100,000 passes from June 29 until July 5, with a travel window from July 20 to Dec 17.

This is the first time TAA has used this type of promotion to mitigate its financial stagnancy.

TAA will increase domestic flights to 140 flights per day from July, up from 80 flights at present.

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said after the Cabinet approves the tourism stimulus packages in a meeting on Tuesday (June 30), hotel and airline operators can register in the system as service providers on July 1. Tourists can use the benefits from mid-July.

He said domestic tourism has seen positive signs after four phases of relaxation nationwide. To find clear indicators for business, the agency will use a stress test to measure hotel occupancy in each region, said Mr Yuthasak.

This test has found the overall occupancy rate in Thailand has to exceed 27.9% for the business to stay afloat.

"Thai tourism has overcome its rock bottom, when occupancy rates plunged to 0-5%," he said. "We have to boost domestic demand to drive occupancy rates above the critical point."

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New beach rules rolled out

Face masks to be worn at all times while on the sands

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Officials and Tourist Police are ramping up their campaign to ensure that people at Phuket beaches, especially at Patong, observe the 'new normal' rules, including the requirement to wear a face mask.

"For now, Patong Municipality has already allowed people to relax and do activities on the beach, but we found some people ignoring the requirement to wear face masks," Patong Mayor Chalermkluck Ketsup told *The Phuket News*' Thai-language sister newspaper *Khao Phuket*.

"We have already ordered lifeguards and municipal officers to remind them," she said.

"We installed signs about the disease-control measures and set up officer teams to take care of people on the beach," Mayor Chalermkluck added.

"We understand that some people want to feel the beach and sea atmosphere, but please wear face masks to protect against the virus from spreading. Please be disciplined without any reminder needed



Signs of Mayor Chalermkluck wearing a mask have been posted along Patong Beach. Photo: Patong Municipality

from any lifeguards or officers," she urged.

Sirawat Kriangkrai from the Department of Public Health and Environment's Sanitation Division at Patong Municipality told *The Phuket News* that the requirements for visiting the beach was now considered the "new normal".

"This to prevent a second wave of COVID-19," he said.

However, Mr Sirawat did give the face-mask rule at the

beach some breathing space.

"If you are swimming or exercising alone, your face mask can be removed, but try to avoid groups of people," he said.

"Also make sure to bring sanitising gel to wash your hands. You must bring this by yourself," he added.

Mr Sirawat explained that sanitising gel may lose its effectiveness if left in the heat for extended periods. "It may

lose efficiency, therefore we recommend that people bring their own," he said.

On the other rules, Mr Sirawat was just as stern.

"Do not play sports or do activities that require touching each other, and maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metres from other people. You can come as a family and stay in a group, but try to avoid interacting with other people or other groups," he said.

"And do not gather to eat or drink," he added.

Snr Sgt Maj Nittaya Bungthong of the Phuket Tourist Police told *The Phuket News* that Tourist Police patrols check along Patong Beach every day.

"Most tourists are cooperating very well in complying with the public health regulations and the 'new normal' as determined by Patong Municipality," Snr Sgt Maj Nittaya said.

However, COVID-19 is not the officers' only concern.

"In addition to observing the 'new normal', people also have to follow the rules for swimming safely," Snr Sgt Maj Nittaya said.

"Playing in the sea during this period, with strong waves, can be dangerous. That is why safe swimming areas have been set up where lifeguards are on duty to provide assistance at any time," she said.

"When you come to the beach, please follow all the rules. Take care of yourself and swim only in the designated areas," she added.

Additional reporting by
Chutharat Plerin

Holidays bring alcohol ban, long weekend

TEMPLES ARE BEING ASKED TO ensure that 'new normal' health guidelines will be observed for the Asarnha Bucha and Khao Pansa Buddhist holidays this weekend (July 4-5). All visitors to temples must wear face masks and be provided hand sanitiser. They must also observe social distancing and large gatherings must be managed in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, explained Saroj Kansirilasiri, Director of the Secretariat of the National Buddhism Office.

The auspicious Buddhist holidays Asarnha Bucha Day and Khao Pansa (Buddhist Lent), also called "Vassa", will be observed Saturday and Sunday (July 4-5), respectively.

As both are major religious holidays, the sale of alcohol is banned by law across the country on both days. As such, the alcohol ban will start at 00:01am Saturday (July 4) and conclude at midnight Sunday night (23:59pm July 5).

As both holidays this year occur on the weekend, the Cabinet last week proclaimed that the following Monday and Tuesday (July 6-7) will be substitution public holidays.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Rungrote Thakurapanyasiri confirmed



Image: National Office of Buddhism

to *The Phuket News* that the ban on the sale of alcohol will be enforced on the major religious days only.

"The ban on the sale of alcohol will be enforced on Asarnha Bucha Day and Khao Pansa, but there will be no ban on the substitution day public holidays," he said.

The public holidays will bring a four-day weekend for government officers from Saturday through Tuesday (July 4-7). Over the four days, most government offices on the island will be closed, including Phuket Immigration Office, the Employment Office, the Land Transport Office and the island's three District Offices. All main bank branches will be closed, but branches in shopping centres will remain open.

The Phuket News

'Back to basics' tourism urged

Recovery first, say experts, but move away from dependence

The Phuket News
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Phuket Governor Narong Woonchiew has been told that Phuket should stick to its strengths in restarting the island's economy, promoting the natural attractions in the area along with the island's tin mining history and food and culture as the main proponents for initially drawing tourists back to the island.

The call for "back to basics" tourism came at a seminar at the Prince of Songkla University Phuket campus on Thursday (June 25), held to discuss and present a "white paper" on strategies to restart the island's economy.

At the meeting, the Governor was told that the pandemic had already cost Phuket B160 billion in lost revenues.

Experts at the seminar pointed out that Phuket was not expected to have any more than 5 million tourists in total this whole year, with 1.5mn of those being Thais.

However, according to a report of the seminar, the Governor was also urged to help develop the island's economy to be not so dependent on tourism alone as an estimated "80-90%" of the island's



Phuket Governor Narong Woonchiew at the meeting on June 25. Photo: PR Phuket

income derived from tourism.

"When we have a problem with tourism activities due to the incidents such as the outbreak of COVID-19, the economy is greatly affected," the report said.

Developing other sectors through public-private projects would help stimulate the economy and help the island cope with other situations that may occur in the future, the report added.

The "white paper" noted that industries that should be developed in parallel with tourism included the marina industry, education industry, health and wellness industry, tuna export industry, local food industry, and sports and events.

"These industries have both opportunities and obstacles," the report said.

However, the white paper indicated that proper development of the

alternative industries, in collaboration with the private sector, could help to contribute up to B350bn a year to the island's economy.

"The income generated can also be distributed to local communities and create job opportunities in the area," the report added.

Governor Narong, who arrived on the island to take up the post as Governor only on June 19, welcomed the suggestions.

"I am happy to hear all comments that lead to problem-solving and the development of Phuket, with the government, private sector and the people all working together," he said.

"I will act as a leader and a supporter, as Phuket is now going through a most difficult situation," he added.

Governor Narong also visited the Phuket Social Security Office last Friday, though it was not reported what he was informed of there. Social Security Office (SSO) Secretary-General Todsapol Krittawongwiman was in Phuket in person a month ago (May 27) to support the work of social security officials on the island.

"I came to inspect the working and management of the Phuket office, as I was informed that around 100,000 people registered to receive relief funds as they have been af-

ected by the economic impact of COVID-19," Mr Todsapol said.

"Every day, around 1,000 people come to the office to register. One thousand people per day is the highest number in Thailand," he added.

However, Mr Todsapol also said that 80% of the 100,000 or so people on the island who had registered to receive COVID-relief support payments from the SSO had already received those payments.

That was not the case a week earlier when workers from Patong's nightlife industry, left out of work and without any income to support themselves, staged a protest in front of the Social Security Office in Kathu.

Phuket Chamber of Commerce President Thanusak Pungdet last month asked for social security payments for unemployed to be extended for further three months as the money provided by the government was already running out, leaving people left jobless without any form of income.

That was on June 10. Weerawit Kreuasombat, President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA), confirmed on June 23 that no officials had contacted him about the extra social security support for former entertainment industry workers left without any income.

COVID lockdown fails to curtail Phuket road deaths

TENS OF THOUSANDS of people left out of work leaving Phuket to go home, no tourists, a nightly curfew for nearly three months, an alcohol ban and the deadly Songkran holidays being "postponed" has not stopped 34 people from dying on Phuket's roads since the start of the year.

Dr Wiwat Seetamanotch, Vice President of the Phuket office of the Road Safety Policy Foundation, told *The Phuket News* Tuesday (June 29) that the combination of factors this year due to the COVID-19 outbreak had greatly reduced the number of drivers on Phuket's roads.

However, the number of deaths and injuries had not even been halved compared with the Phuket road-accident death rate for last year.

As of Monday, 34 people had died and 3,828 people had been injured in 3,862 accidents in Phuket from Jan 1 to June 29, according to the official ThaiRSC statistics, which are compiled from Ministry of Health government hospital reports and police reports.

In comparison, 92 people died and 10,113 were injured in 10,206 accidents throughout all of last year. In 2018, 92 people died and 9,514 were injured from 9,606 accidents.

ThaiRSC gave a breakdown on the deaths and injuries so far this year as follows:

Muang District – 16 dead, 2,116 injured in 2,442 accidents; Kathu – 8 dead, 651 injured in 753 accidents; Thalang – 10 dead, 569 injured in 633 accidents.

"We know that there was much less traffic on the roads in the past three months, and this overall saw a decrease in the number of accidents. The curfew and alcohol ban also affected people's behaviour a little bit, but it did not help much in preventing the number of deaths," Dr Wiwat explained.

Dr Wiwat flatly attributed the continuing high road-accident death rate in Phuket to recklessness and speeding.

"Think about it, the roads have been very clear, so drivers like to drive faster because they see nothing in their way," he told *The Phuket News*.

"This is plain reckless-



One of the new overhead speed-camera road signs installed on Thepkrasattri Rd. Photo: PR Phuket

ness, and when an accident happens, the people involved suffer much greater injuries as a result of the speed they were doing," he explained.

"The speed involved makes it much more difficult to survive the impact injuries, and this factor has even affected the Accident Severity Index for Phuket," Dr Wiwat said.

About 80% of the deaths so far this year that involved a motorbike involved the rider not wearing a helmet, Dr Wiwat noted.

"And the main reason for the accidents clearly has been speeding," he said.

Dr Wiwat maintained that road-safety campaigns would

continue to raise awareness of the deadly issue.

"I still urge all drivers to improve their driving behaviour, to obey the traffic rules and to not exceed the speed limit, to make our roads safer," he said.

Speed cameras

The Phuket Highways Office last week unveiled four new overhead signs installed mostly on Thepkrasattri Rd that have been fitted with speed cameras in the hope of getting motorists to slow down.

The project cost B6,556,000, explained Phuket Highways Office Chief Somwang Lohamut.

In addition to being fitted with speed cameras, the overhead signs also display the speed of vehicles as they pass underneath, he added.

One of the overhead signs has been installed at the 13km milestone marker on Thepkrasattri Rd (Route 402) north-bound at Baan Maak Prok in Mai Khao.

Two others have been installed on Route 402, at the 21km and 31km roadside milestones between Maak Prok and Klok Kloi in Phang Nga.

The fourth has been installed on the "Airport - Muang Thalang Rd", at the 26km milestone.

"We will start to record data of drivers exceeding the speed limit from July 1 [Wednesday]," Mr Somwang told *The Phuket News*.

The data will be sent to the Highways Department in Bangkok so they can use the information in making policy decisions, he explained.

The speed cameras are not yet in use, he added, noting they will come online soon.

"I am coordinating with police in Phuket so that they can be provided the photo

taken, the license plate details, and the time and date of the person caught speeding.

"The delay is that we need our system to be connected with their network. I expect this to be done by August," Chief Somwang said.

"I want to stop drivers speeding. I have received many complaints from local residents saying they are afraid of the accidents caused by people speeding. They fear that their lives and their property are at risk from these drivers," he added.

"Also, it costs time and money to repair the damage these drivers cause. They hit and damage light poles and traffic islands," Chief Somwang said.

"One light pole costs B30,000 to replace, and it costs B6,000 per metre to replace a damaged guard-rail. The driver that causes this damage must pay for this, but it wastes time for officials to keep fixing these things," he added.

Tanyaluk Sakoot

In case of emergency

Phuket expat golf coach driving help for emergency services

The Phuket News
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One long-term Phuket resident is intent on driving positive change across the island – but it has nothing to do with the popular American's renowned golf prowess. Instead Jeff Craig, who teaches at Laguna Golf Club, has been helping fund and provide much needed medical equipment for emergency services across the island.

Jeff is well known in Phuket, especially in golfing circles. He moved here from his native US in 1995 to teach golf at the then newly opened Banyan Tree golf club, now Laguna Golf Phuket, where he is currently based.

A trained paramedic, it quickly became evident to Jeff back then that emergency medical systems (EMS) across the island were somewhat lacking. He volunteered at Thalang Hospital when he had the time and became acquainted with several people from the Kusoldharm team.

"At that time there were about 15 full-time employees who lived at the Kusoldharm temple in Phuket town," Jeff explained.

"We had two pick-up trucks that pretty much serviced the whole island and basically, no medical equipment. Over the years we were able to procure more equipment and after the tsunami,

with the donations, we were able to buy some proper ambulances."

Lack of funding

After a five-year spell back in the US and a successful stint managing a golf course in Yangon, Jeff returned to Phuket's shores last October.

"When I got back here I decided to dedicate myself not only to teaching golf at Laguna but also improving the emergency medical system even more," he explained.

It is an unfortunate but widely acknowledged fact that any cardiac arrests that occur out of hospital do not end well, even in countries with sufficient EMS systems and funding in place, such as the US, UK and Australia. With a distinct shortage of funding in Thailand, the EMS has therefore suffered from not receiving enough quality equipment.

"Since we moved back in early October, I have been to eight different cardiac arrest incidents and needless to say they have not gone well," commented Jeff.

"The emergency services and hospitals here very much do the best they can with what they have but the principal issue is that they don't have the defibrillators that deliver the critical shock to a heart that is just going into cardiac arrest," he added.

Jeff firmly believed that a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) he helped administer late last year could have had a better outcome if he had access



From left: Song Ya EMS, Thalang Hospital nurses, Jeff Craig, Kusoldharm Muang Mai EMT's. Photo: Jeff Craig

to his own automated external defibrillator (AED) although the high costs associated were prohibitive.

Shortly after, he was playing golf with some long time Phuket friends when he mentioned the incident and his desire to help raise funds to enable acquisition of the appropriate equipment.

"They were more than happy to not only sponsor an AED for me, but also for the several teams of the Thalang district, which was fantastic news," said Jeff.

"Whereas ideally I would like every Phuket ambulance to have an AED, it was a case of prioritising the ones I felt could benefit most immediately," he added.

He decided to provide one to Thalang Hospital who required a portable AED to complement the cardiac monitor that is affixed to the inside of their truck.

Song Ya EMS received one due to the fact that their machine was older and not reliable and they service a large area.

One was provided to Kusoldharm Muang Mai, an experienced and very responsible team who consistently receive a very high call volume and are a

substantial distance from the hospital.

The fourth device was donated to a gentleman named Ple who is the head of the Kusoldharm division of the Cherg Talay area and has his own ambulance which he paid for himself.

"The only thing he was really lacking was an AED," said Jeff. "I had been hoping to get him one for months and now he is all set."

Jeff also retained a device himself which he installed in his truck and that was used at a cardiac arrest incident in Cherg Talay just a week later. Unfortunately, efforts were unsuccessful but it gave the person a much higher chance of survival.

"I am very thankful for the three men that donated the B360,000," commented Jeff.

"I put in some of my own money forward to pay for extra defib pads, batteries and a few bits and pieces of medical equipment for the Cherg Talay subdistrict Or Bor Tor as well.

"It will be a long road ahead to really get these ambulances and services up to a good level but this was a great start."

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Solving a water crisis



SUSTAINABLY YOURS

Palmer Owyong

Your body consists of 60% water. You can survive only three days without it. We use it for food, drinking, cooking, bathing, cleaning and washing. Water IS life. We take it for granted in the misguided belief that we will always have enough. Just turn on the tap and it all seems so limitless. But imagine being without it during this global pandemic when we are implored to wash our hands. Such a small thing can mean the difference between life and death.

The World Problem

According to a study by the United Nations, by 2025 1.8 billion people will find themselves suffering from water scarcity, while 5bn people will find themselves under water stress.

Like the rest of Thailand, Phuket's water crisis comes from a growing population, increased tourism, urbanisation and a rise in agricultural and industrial usage. Climate change exacerbates the issue by creating longer dry seasons and drier wet seasons.

Human activities are also polluting both surface and groundwater. These come from agricultural runoff, sewage and industrial waste.

According to the Provincial Waterworks Authority (PWA), the island needs 80 million cubic metres of water per year. While the current system only produces 48mn m3 per year, leaving an annual deficit of 32 million. By 2027 that number is projected to rise to 90mn m3 and 103mn m3 by 2032.

Proposed Solution

The principle proposed solution is to build a water pipeline from Phang Nga to Phuket at the cost of over B3.5bn. The project is expected to begin construction in 2023. However, there are several issues with this plan. The most obvious is that it is exorbitantly expensive and the water shortage could be solved with far less money.

Second, it would be environmentally destructive, disrupting aquatic ecosystems, killing wildlife and creating a large carbon footprint. Third, it would



Bang Neow Dum reservoir in January this year. Photo: PR Dept

likely create the same contentious water disputes that California and Colorado are embroiled in regarding the rights to the Colorado River. In the long term, a new pipeline is unlikely to solve the problem because as climate change worsens droughts will become more common, which will leave both Phuket and Phang Nga short of water.

The Silicon Valley of Water Technology

Israel is a country of 10mn people, 60% of which is desert. Despite living in an inhospitable environment which receives little rainfall, it has become the leading innovator in water management and is nicknamed the Silicon Valley of water technology.

Since 1952 the country has transformed itself from a parched country to a self-sufficient grower of fruits and vegetables and has enough excess water that it exports it to its neighbours, according to Seth Siegel, author of Let There be Water: Israel's Solution for a Water-Starved World. All while dealing with one of the fastest-growing populations in the world, droughts from climate change and robust economic growth.

In fact, Israel has become so adept at managing their water scarcity that they are now assisting California, India, Egypt, Jordan and several Sub-Saharan African countries in managing their own crises.

So how did this arid desert country become a leader in water management? Siegel points out that it's not one thing,

but several that the country got right. They started by educating their citizens from a young age about the importance and scarcity of water. They created technology such as drip irrigation, which applies a measured amount of water directly to the roots of the crop, eliminating evaporation and reducing water usage by 40 to 70%.

They removed water subsidies so that each household pays the full price, forcing them to use it sparingly. They installed cutting edge water meters and leak-detection systems to prevent un-

necessary water loss. They recycle 87% of their wastewater, making them the world leader. Spain is number two with 20%. Finally, they have the most efficient desalination plants in the world, which provide 80% of their drinking water.

Next week in Part II of this article we will look at applying specific water-conservation and water-use strategies to Phuket.

Palmer Owyong is an environmental activist working with the Kamala Green Club and the Global Sustainability Hub.

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POP QUIZ

- Who is credited with discovering penicillin?
- What is the first letter of the Greek alphabet?
- In the Harry Potter series of books what is the name of the wand shop?
- Brontophobia is the fear of what?
- Who is the current Prime Minister of Israel?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

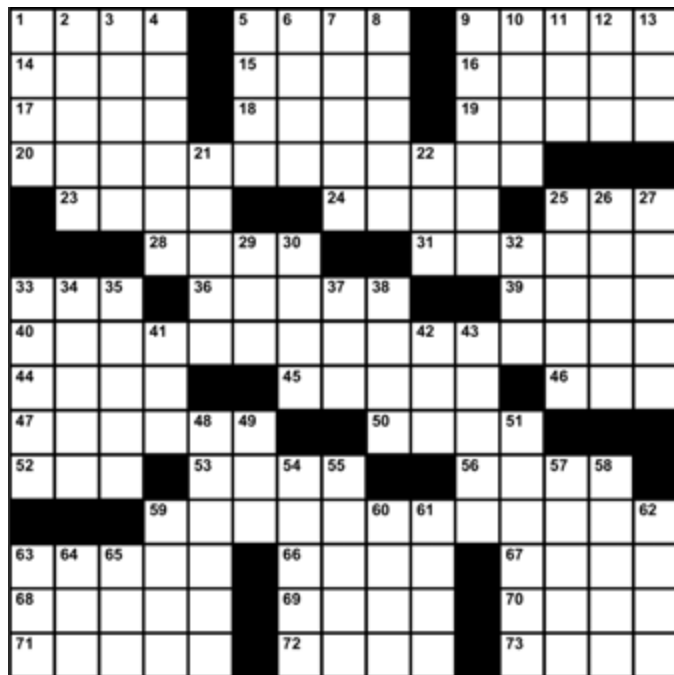
Across

- Angry state
- Superman to Lois Lane
- Certain clergyman
- Decorative case
- Start, as a savings account
- Native Alaskan
- Tractor trailers
- Diving bird
- Precious fur
- Description of darkness
- Snap
- Penn name
- "Kill Bill" star, Thurman
- At sea
- Enters the poker game
- Like some stocks and meds
- Machinery noises
- Boot
- Seemingly more-favorable conditions
- Source
- Remy's brother in "Ratatouille"
- Stick your nose in
- Very
- Poker variety
- "The Lady in ____"
- Sports channel
- Blue or purple flowered plant

Down

- Peppermint, for one
- Handy
- Of a musical composition
- Budgetary
- Florida city, informally
- Beowulf, for one
- Forever, or close to it
- Set free
- Chief Hindu deity
- ____ the finish
- Young bear
- Feel lousy
- Way to go: Abbr.
- Famous
- Run up the phone bill
- Take over

- Molière comedy, with "The"
- Anxious
- "____ Devil" Barr film
- Get exhausted
- "Yeah, ____!"
- Flirt
- Treasure
- Yielded
- Motor abbr.
- Stated
- One engaged in, suffix
- Professional's camera, for short
- School
- Pick and choose
- Buckeye sch.
- Breathe noisily
- Annoy
- Court legends Archibald and Thurmond
- Key
- Japanese dog
- Kidney or fava
- Check
- A sticky roll
- Pro votes
- Chicago trains
- Bit of A/V equipment
- Largest OH airport



Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Alexander Fleming; 2) Alpha; 3) Ollivanders; 4) Thunder; 5) Benjamin Netanyahu

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

8

percent of the world's currency is physical money – the rest exists on computers.

14

percent of new energy drinks made today are too corrosive to be put in aluminum cans.

64

percent of people bite the head off of a gingerbread man before eating the rest of it, according to a study conducted by Dunkin' Donuts.

500

years is how long some clams can live.

20 million

Americans believe the 1969 moon landing was a hoax, according to recent polls.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Tide's out. Photo: Robert Tosh

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

This week in history

July 3, 1938

World speed record for a steam locomotive is set in England, by the Mallard, which reaches a speed of 125.88 miles per hour (202.58 km/h).

July 4, 1862

Lewis Carroll tells Alice Liddell a story that would grow into Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and its sequels.

July 5, 1954

Elvis Presley records his first single, *That's All Right*, at Sun Records in Memphis, Tennessee.

July 6, 1957

John Lennon and Paul McCartney meet for the first time, as teenagers at Woolton Fete, three years before forming the Beatles.



Catherine The Great by Vigilius Eriksen.

July 7, 1846

US troops occupy Monterey and Yerba Buena, thus beginning

the US conquest of California.

July 8, 1497

Vasco da Gama sets sail on the first direct European voyage to India.

July 9, 1762

Catherine the Great becomes Empress of Russia following the coup against her husband, Peter III. Source: Wikipedia

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16 JUL



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'The consistency the boys showed is so exceptional and we will not stop,' Klopp said after Liverpool won their first league title in 30 years. Photo: AFP

Hungry Klopp planning to build on Liverpool title win

FOOTBALL

AFP

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp says his newly crowned English champions are hungry for more silverware after ending a 30-year wait to win the league title.

Klopp's men have already smashed one record by winning the league with seven games to spare and could break a series of other landmarks.

They are on course to set a new record points tally and winning margin, currently holding a 23-point lead at the top of the Premier League table.

The German, who has revitalised Liverpool's fortunes since taking charge in 2015, highlighted the importance of last season's Champions League win as an important stepping stone in dethroning Manchester City as champions.

And Klopp called on his players to remain "humble" in the quest for more success.

"The consistency the boys showed is so exceptional and

we will not stop," Klopp said in a videoconference last Friday (June 26).

"We really have to and will stay focused because we see the opportunity. Will not stop doesn't mean we will win everything, we just want to improve," he added.

Even during the trophy-laden 1970s and 80s at Anfield, Liverpool never amassed as many points as they have in losing just two of their past 70 league games.

"It is not over yet, that's the good thing," said an emotional Klopp, who extended his contract until 2024 earlier this season. "The team all look like they have a good few years in their legs."

The club have also tied down a core group of key players to long contracts over the past two years.

'Passion'

Liverpool only missed out on the title last season by a solitary point to City despite amassing a club record tally of 97.

"The consistency comes

from the mix of determination, buying into the idea, character, attitude and personality that makes this group special," Klopp said.

"They are still humble. As long as we stay humble we have a good chance to stay successful in the future too."

Liverpool were just two wins away from the title when the coronavirus pandemic hit English football, forcing a three-month Premier League stoppage.

Supporters ignored Klopp's plea not to gather in large crowds around the club's Anfield stadium as the title was won on June 25, with thousands pouring on to the streets to celebrate.

Klopp, in an open letter to fans in the *Liverpool Echo*, said he "did not love" the scenes that took place at Pier Head.

"I am a human being and your passion is also my passion, but right now the most important thing is that we do not have these kind of public gatherings," wrote Klopp.

"We owe it to the most

vulnerable in our community, to the health workers who have given so much and whom we have applauded and to the police and local authorities who help us as a club not to do this," he added.

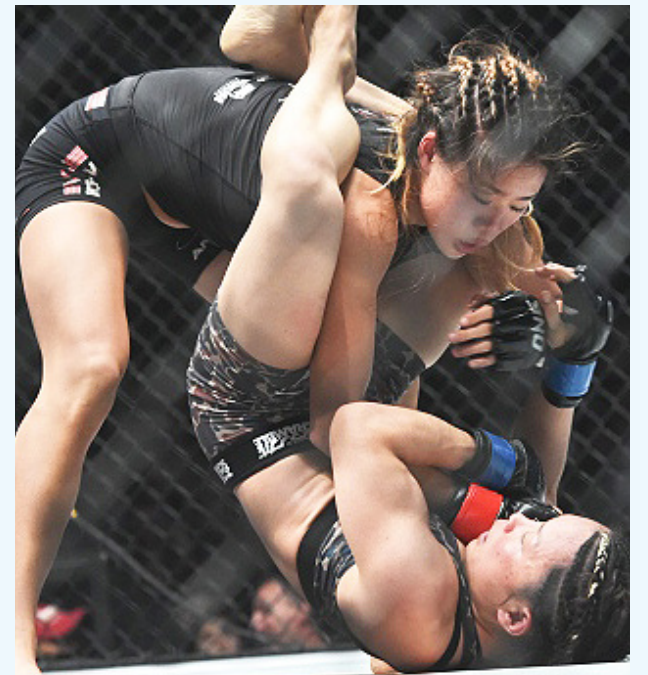
Klopp said fans should celebrate in a safe way in private settings to avoid spreading the disease.

However, the 53-year-old is delighted to bring some joy at a difficult time for many and offer hope and expectation for when fans can return to watching games live.

"What we love is when you have a successful football club in your city, it always gives the city a lift," said Klopp.

"I think at this time all cities in the world need a lift, Liverpool as well, and I am really happy about that.

"This title is a sign that we played a good season but is also a sign for the future. That there is some football you are looking forward to and some atmospheres you are looking forward to and we need that in this moment in time."



Bangkok will host ONE's return on July 31. Photo: AFP

ONE Championship to make Bangkok return next month

MMA

ASIA'S LARGEST mixed martial arts promotion, ONE Championship, will return behind closed doors in Thailand next month after a five-month break because of the coronavirus, officials said on Monday (June 29).

ONE, which promotes cards across the region in mixed martial arts, Muay Thai and kickboxing, last put on a major show at the end of February.

The Singapore-based company has since cancelled several events and slashed 20% of staff, although it has also revealed a US\$70million (B2.2 billion) funding boost from institutional investors.

With virus outbreaks slowing in many parts of Asia, the company said its flagship events would restart with an event without fans in the Thai capital Bangkok on July 31.

"Most national borders remain closed in Asia, and

this has posed unique logistical and operational challenges," ONE's CEO Chatri Sityodtong said.

The first three major bouts of the "ONE: No Surrender" event have been confirmed.

Among fighters taking part are ONE flyweight Muay Thai world champion Rodtang "The Iron Man" Jitmuangnon, Petchdam "The Baby Shark" Petchyindee Academy, and "The Boxing Computer" Yodsanklai IWE Fairtex.

ONE had already put on fights in its Hero series, feeder events for the main championship, in China in June, before deciding to resume major shows.

The US-based Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) on May 10 became one of the first sports to restart post-coronavirus.

UFC has so far successfully put on six shows in tightly controlled environments in Jacksonville, Florida, and Las Vegas.

AFP

Phuket Raceweek 2020 cancelled

SAILING

IT WAS CONFIRMED ON MONDAY (June 29) that the Phuket Raceweek 2020, due to take place between July 16-19, has been cancelled.

Organisers stated that they had spent the past month striving to secure a temporary host venue for what would have been the 17th edition of the occasion.

Additionally, they had sought clarification and permission from the Thai government in regards to social distancing rules at sporting events in order to run a sailing regatta, but to no avail.



Image: Phuket Raceweek

Ultimately, they confirmed there was no alternative but to cancel this year's event.

The focus now turns to the Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek 2021 event, held in conjunction with Title Sponsors resort Cape Panwa Hotel and joint Host Sponsor Kantary Bay Hotel. Further information can be accessed at www.phuketraceweek.com

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Sport

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AMBITIOUS RETURN FOR F1

FORMULA ONE

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Formula One isn't the first sport to resume from coronavirus-induced hiatus, but its 15-race, four-continent plan to return to business certainly makes it the most ambitious.

This weekend's Austrian Grand Prix (July 5), the first of three races in a row, will mark the beginning of a racing schedule of unprecedented intensity. Eight European races are crammed into 10 weeks, and while the sport is yet to confirm the composition of its next tranche of events, its intention is to travel to Eurasia, Asia and the Americas before concluding with three Grands Prix in Bahrain and Abu Dhabi in December.

F1 is existentially wed to its international footprint. Its 'world championship' designation is dependent on the series traversing at least three continents, forcing it into a painful logistical challenge in a



This weekend's Austrian Grand Prix will mark the beginning of a racing schedule of unprecedented intensity. Photo: AFP

time of unpredictable border closures and lengthy quarantine times.

Adding impetus to the restart is the fact the sport cannot afford not to race. Formula One is almost entirely dependent on the dual-income streams of circuit host fees and broadcast rights, and without racing it receives neither. In turn the prize money pool runs dry, risking the collapse of independent teams reliant on championship payments. Already Williams has put itself up for sale and McLaren has sacked a

quarter of its workforce. Attempting to press on is the sport's only option.

'Enormously costly'

The stakes are high, and the aborted Australian Grand Prix in March still hangs heavy over the sport as an example of the price of failure. The cancellation of what should have been the season's first race after a positive COVID-19 test was hugely embarrassing thanks to the dithering of administrators and the race organiser, but it was also enormously

costly, with Formula One forgoing the race host fee having already paid for the fruitless return trip to the Antipodes.

To mitigate the risk of failure the sport that departed Australia three months ago will look markedly different to the one that will arrive in Spielberg this week for the first of two back-to-back races at the Red Bull Ring.

Each team will be restricted to 80 personnel, reduced from upwards of 120 at the busiest races, all of which will be tested every five days. The wearing of face masks and the use of a specifically designed contact tracing app will be mandatory.

Teams will be isolated from each other and in most cases divided among themselves to reduce the risk of spread inside one team and through the paddock, and away from the circuit personnel will be restricted to their hotels and separated from the public.

The podium ceremony will be dramatically altered, and spectators will also be banned, though F1

optimistically hopes at least some fans will be allowed access before the end of the year.

'A deep sigh of relief'

Formula One is confident these measures will be enough to keep it safe from the disease, so much so that it is adamant that any positive test, even if it triggers the withdrawal of a team, will not force an event to be called off.

And that's to say nothing of the racing itself, which will be subjected to the unprecedented rustiness of drivers and engineers alike, who will be returning from the longest break of their professional careers.

Some predict chaos, which will add only more stress to teams already burdened by the new COVID-19 operating environment and short on spares owing to factory shutdowns.

The sport will breathe a deep sigh of relief once racing finally gets underway this Sunday, 217 days after the 2019 season ended. But until then tension will remain high for Formula One to begin its ambitious return to business.

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