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EMPTY SANDBOX

A row of sun loungers sits empty on Patong Beach. Photo: Patong Municipality

TOURISM FIGURES URGE EASING COVID MEASURES IN LAST GASP EFFORT TO SAVE PHUKET SANDBOX

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Representatives from Phuket tourism businesses have submitted a formal request to Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew asking his office to revise some of the rules regarding one-day tours for Phuket Sandbox tourists, allowing them to re-enter Phuket after leaving the province without having to be subjected to yet another COVID test.

The request, submitted last Friday (Aug 27), hopes to prevent further discouraging any potential tourists from wanting to holiday in Phuket.

One of the points listed in the request submitted last Friday – as explained by Wirintra Paphakityot-phet, President of the Phuket Travel Agents Association – was that tourists

who tested negative on arrival and two more times during their stay in Phuket should be allowed to re-enter the province after their one-day trips to other Sandbox areas without the need to test again.

The same should apply to car and boat drivers, tour guides and other staff participating in the trips, she added.

“If they are fully vaccinated, they should not have to present test results which increases the costs for tour operators,” Ms Wirintra said.

Under the ‘Sandbox 7+7’ scheme launched last month, fully vaccinated tourists can spend their first seven days in Phuket, during which they are not allowed to leave the island, but then can complete their 14-day observation period in one of several other approved Sandbox destinations, including Khao Lak in Phang Nga, Phi

Phi Island in Krabi and Koh Samui in Surat Thani Province.

In turn, Governor Narong last Saturday (Aug 28), announced, “As for the screening measures for people from outside the Phuket area, it is currently under discussion with related parties to obtain complete information.

“It is expected that on Monday, August 30, we will come to a conclusion about the screening measures for people entering the Phuket area so that we can announce an order in Phuket Province that will come into effect on September 1, 2021,” he said.

However, as of late Tuesday (Aug 31), less than 24 hours before any new entry requirements were to come into effect, neither the Governor nor any official Phuket agency had made any announcements as to what the entry

requirements would be.

The call to ease Sandbox travel requirements for re-entering Phuket follows hotel bookings plunging after many British tourists decided to head home instead of facing quarantine on returning to the UK, after Thailand was added to the UK’s ‘red list’ of countries for COVID-19 (see page 6).

Meanwhile, according to Phuket Immigration, as of last Saturday (Aug 28) there were 5,091 Phuket Sandbox tourists still on the island. By Monday (Aug 30), just two days later, that number had fallen by nearly 1,000, to 4,167.

The ongoing outbreak of COVID-19 infections across the island, and elsewhere throughout the country, has had a serious impact on the Phuket Sandbox scheme, representatives of local tourism organisations said at the meeting last Friday...

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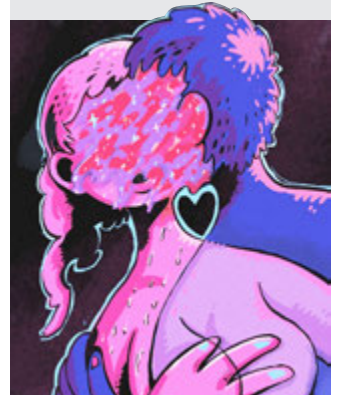
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**‘Big Joke’ checks
safety ahead of
Russian influx**



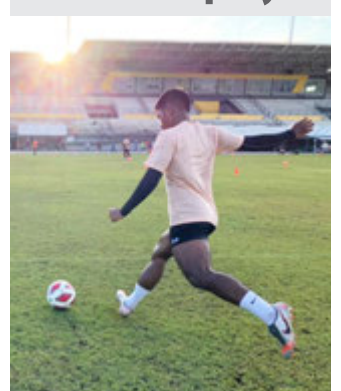
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News



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Patients in COVID care flee custody

PHUKET GOVERNOR Narong Woonciew on Tuesday (Aug 31) announced that two patients seen fleeing the field hospital set up at the Prince of Songkla University (PSU) Phuket campus in Kathu had returned.

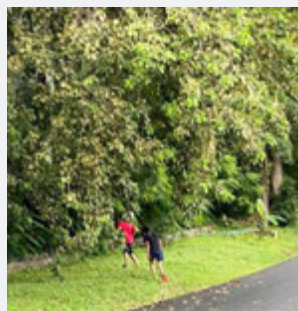
However, Governor Narong clarified that two patients had fled a different COVID care facility, in Karon.

The announcement came one day after Gov Narong had announced to an assembly of police officers in Phuket Town that officers had checked and confirmed that no COVID patients had escaped any COVID facilities on the island.

The about-face followed Dr Busaya Santisat, a doctor serving patients at the PSU facility, reporting through her Facebook page last Sunday night (Aug 29) that patients were seen fleeing a field hospital.

"I want to consult superior officers. We, medical staff, cannot handle this. If they flee, can we just close the door and let the police catch them?" Dr Busaya said in her post.

"If those who have fled the hospital have been treat-



Dr Busaya Santisat raised the alarm by posting photos of two men fleeing one facility.

ed with medication and do not have any symptoms, can we just send them back to do house isolation? Military police who come to stand by [at PSU] cannot give any help, but just inform us," Dr Busaya added.

Gov Narong on Monday said that police, Navy and other military personnel and relevant officials had been stationed at COVID care facilities across the island to ensure that patients remain in "Community isolation".

The report of the 'false alarm' escapees at PSU prompted a full check on all patients in COVID quarantine, Gov Narong said.

The checks uncovered drugs smuggled into one facility, resulting in more officers being deployed to boost security at the centres, he said. *The Phuket News*

Booze ban stays as COVID restrictions extended

The Phuket News
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Schools are to remain closed and the ban on restaurants serving alcohol or allowing alcohol to be consumed on the premises remains in place after a new order was issued extending the COVID restrictions in effect across Phuket.

The order, No 4978/2564 issued by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew last Sunday (Aug 29), came into effect on Wednesday (Sept 1) and is to remain in effect until at least Sept 14.

Under the order, all educational institutions on the island are ordered to remain closed except for those conducting "pilot teaching" and studying in private schools under the project "Phuket Safety School Sandbox" in accordance with current disease control measures and only with approval from the Phuket Provincial Disease Control Committee.

The order gave no explanation of the "Phuket Safety School Sandbox" project.

Non-formal education classes of less than five participants may also continue, but all other classes are to be conducted online.

Meanwhile, all pubs, bars and other "entertainment" venues are to remain closed,



Gov Narong at the meeting last Friday. Photo: PR Phuket

as are all venues for cockfighting, fish fighting, bird races, chicken races and gambling venues as well as boxing stadiums, venues for snooker, billiards or any other pool table establishment.

Computer game shops and internet cafes are also to remain closed.

However, now removed from the list of venues that must remain closed are swimming pools for public use operated by government offices or private entities are allowed to open, as well as boxing schools and all kinds of martial arts schools, including Woosoo, Karate, Taekwondo, Muay Thai, International Boxing, Judo, Aikido training centres.

Restaurants and other food and beverage outlets may open for their usual hours, but the ban on serving, selling or al-

lowing alcohol to be consumed on site remains in effect.

Fresh markets and walking street markets must limit the number of customers at the market, and maintain social distancing of four square metres per person.

The order also increases the maximum number of people allowed to gather at an approved event from 50 people to 100 people. Events or activities held by officials are exempted.

"People should refrain from organising social events in the form of parties, banquets or festivities during this time unless it is a traditional ceremony such as a funeral, ordination or wedding. If the activity cannot be postponed, then it is to be held in accordance with all COVID protection measures," the order notes.

Convenience stores are allowed to operate only between 4am and 11pm.

Sports fields or places for outdoor exercise, parks, courtyards, open-air public activity areas may still remain open until 9pm and are allowed to host competitions with a limited number of visitors.

Places or indoor exercise such as courts, gyms, fitness, yoga, aerobics, exercise classes, badminton may remain open until 9pm, with the number of users limited according to the size of the area.

Such indoor exercise venues without air conditioning must have open space and good ventilation, and must limit the number of service users to use no more than 75% of the area. Air-conditioned rooms at such venues must not use more than 50% of the area and service providers and users must be fully vaccinated and follow the D-M-H-T-T-A disease prevention and control measures.

All government offices and workplaces are to arrange for staff to work from home where appropriate.

Government officers are prohibited from leaving the province unless it is for urgent business and may do so only with written approval from superior officers.

Tourism operators urge relaxing restrictions to save Phuket Sandbox

Continued from page 1

...Phuket over the past week has experienced record numbers of new infections, with the latest record set on Monday (Aug 30) marking 256 new infections on the one day. Over the preceding seven days, Phuket had recorded 1,351 new infections.

Regardless, local tourism operators called for strict COVID-19 restrictions to be eased to help the island's battered tourism-dependent economy to recover.

Thanet Tantipiriyakit, president of the Phuket Tourism Council, said the latest cases were not caused by tourists but by local activities, reported the *Bangkok Post*.



Sarayuth Mallam, chief adviser to the Phuket Tourism Council, warned that if the island were put under a protracted lockdown, it could spell doom for the Phuket Sandbox scheme. Photo: PR Phuket

Disease control measures should be eased to allow visitors who are fully vaccinated and pass swab tests to enter the province to boost economic

recovery, he said.

Chernporn Kanchanasaya, president of the Federation of Thai Industries' Phuket Chapter, said September will be a

pivotal month. It is essential to vaccinate as many local residents as possible to shield them from the virus.

She also said the Digital Economy Promotion Agency is expected to set up smart checkpoints to screen visitors in October.

"The best measures must be put in place before people are allowed to enter Phuket," she said.

Sarayuth Mallam, chief adviser to the Phuket Tourism Council, warned that if the island were put under a protracted lockdown, it could spell doom for the Phuket Sandbox scheme.

"Foreign consuls have said foreign visitors already feel deceived having arrived in

Phuket. If the province is locked down again, no visitors will come at all," Mr Sarayuth said.

"Tourists from Bangkok and Europe will disappear during the high season. We need to strike a balance to coexist with COVID," he added.

Tourists from Europe want to dine and have a beer and wine together, but right now they cannot do anything. Many have said they have felt cheated for three months now.

"If Phuket was not ready, then why reopen? Without an easing of the curbs, all will be ruined," Mr Sarayuth said.

Phuket Governor Narong said local authorities were stepping up efforts to contain the surge of infections as quickly

as possible. Many of the new cases were identified through proactive screening by antigen test kits, he said.

With the spikes in local infections, the prospects for the Phuket Sandbox scheme may look dimmer now than when it first started, Governor Narong said.

"We have to do everything we can to get through this difficult situation and hope case numbers will slow down.

"We have to join forces and move forward. This is a life-and-death situation for the future of Phuket Sandbox," Governor Narong admitted.

Additional reporting by Bangkok Post

Safety push ahead of Russians

The Phuket News
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Pol Lt Gen Surachate 'Big Joke' Hakparn, currently serving as a 'Level 9 Adviser' to the Royal Thai Police attached to the Prime Minister's Office, arrived in Phuket last Thursday (Aug 26) to review tourist safety measures ahead of what expects to be an influx of Russian tourists in November.

Lt Gen Surachate explained to the Thai press that national health authorities have approved to welcome tourists who have received the Sputnik V vaccine to come through under the Sandbox scheme, announced by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Yuthasak Supasorn last week.

"So I'm sure that more Russian tourists will come to Phuket in November, and the situation of Phuket Sandbox will get better and better," he said after a meeting with high-ranking Phuket police officers at the Phuket Sandbox Emergency Operation Center (EOC) at Phuket Provincial Police headquarters in Phuket Town.

"I came today to follow up



Pol Lt Gen Surachate 'Big Joke' Hakparn at the meeting in Phuket last week. Photo: PR Dept

the work that the Royal Thai Police General-Commissioner [Pol Gen Suwat Jangyodsuk] ordered Phuket police to do in his last visit," he added.

"The thing that I want to focus on today is the safety measures for arrivals, tourists and local people for travelling by air, land and sea. Right now, people wanted on arrest warrants must not be allowed to enter Phuket," Lt Gen Surachate said.

"Right now, we are using technology to help our officers at the Phuket Check Point; at Phuket International

Airport, at both the domestic and international terminals; as well as at the nine main piers in Phuket, which we have allowed to open for people to enter and leave the island," he continued.

Of note, Tha Chatchai Police at the Phuket Check Point, guarding the only entry point onto the island by road, on Aug 23 reported already arresting 11 people attempting to enter Phuket while having outstanding warrants against them.

Police started checking domestic arrivals at the check-

point for outstanding warrants after national police chief Pol Gen Suwat Jangyodsuk ordered them to do so on Aug 6 as a reactive measure following the murder of 57-year-old Swiss tourist Nicole Sauvain-Weisskopf near the Ao Yon Waterfall. Ms Sauvain-Weisskopf had entered Thailand under the Phuket Sandbox scheme.

"For the other 26 piers which are not open for people to use for entering and leaving the island, I have already ordered officers from the Phuket Provincial Police

and the Tourist Police to talk with owners of the piers to install CCTV cameras. There must also be staff to check the CCTV at all times in order to protect against people illegally entering Phuket," Lt Gen Surachate continued.

"Tourist Police have already classified 126 tourist attractions on the island into three groups: high risk, risk and normal. I have ordered them to work with local police to examine the locations. Every attraction must have a team of police assigned to take care of each location," he added.

"Sometimes tourists like to explore the places hidden away from people. To take care of tourists with our limited number of officers we need to cooperate with local police and with local officials, as well as community leaders such as Kamnan [subdistrict chiefs]," Lt Gen Surachate said.

"At this stage, we are giving much intention and effort to improving our safety measures to welcome tourists; we expect to have many of them in this fourth quarter," he added.

"The measures we are creating will focus on safety

and human and organisational performance. For example, I have ordered officers to check not only the piers but also the shipyards.

"We have had experience with boats sinking because of unqualified shipyards. Phuket has about 12 shipyards, and I have already ordered officers to examine all of them. If we found any of them unqualified, we will inform officers at the Phuket office of the Ministry of Industry to shut them down," he assured.

Lt Gen Surachate avoided mentioning the sinking of the tour boat Phoenix in 2018 that killed 47 Chinese tourists in Thailand's worst single-vessel maritime disaster.

Lt Gen Surachate was Deputy Commander of the Tourist Police at the time. He was also the only official to recognise that of more than 400 tour boats operating in Phuket waters, 200 had failed to meet basic safety standards in the aftermath of the Phoenix disaster.

"We are fixing all holes to create the highest safety standards and boost the confidence of tourists, in order to welcome tourists in the fourth quarter," Lt Gen Surachate concluded.

Tourist rescued in kayaking scare

AN AMERICAN TOURIST was safely rescued and brought back to Phuket after he was injured on rocks on an island just offshore from Yanui Beach, on Phuket's southwest coast, last Sunday (Aug 29).

The American man had rented a kayak and paddled out to the island, but was unable to make it back to Phuket, explained Lt Col Ekkachai Siri of the Phuket Tourist Police.

Phuket Tourist Police officers were informed of the man's predicament at about 4:50pm after the tourist had called the Tourist Police 1155 hotline, Lt Col Ekkachai confirmed.

The tourist, who Lt Col Ekkachai declined to name but estimated to be about 25 years old, had arrived in Phuket under the Phuket Sandbox scheme, Lt Col Ekkachai also confirmed.

Tourist Police along with a lifeguard from Nai Harn Beach boarded a jet-ski to recover the man from the island. As the jet-ski neared the shore, they could see him waving at them.

The tourist told police that he had gone kayaking from Yanui Beach out to the island, Koh Man. While on the island, he had climbed up onto a rock and slipped



The American Phuket Sandbox tourist was safely brought back to shore. Photo: Naiharn Surf Lifesaving Club

down, injuring his leg.

While back on shore at Yanui Beach, the man pointed out that he had asked the kayak rental operator whether he could paddle to the far side of the island.

The American was adamant that she said he could.

The kayak rental operator was adamant that she said he couldn't.

Lt Col Ekkachai confirmed that the tourist had suffered only scratches along his legs.

The tourist was brought back to Phuket safely and escorted back to the hotel where he is staying in Wichit, Lt Col Ekkachai said.

Phuket for weeks now has been experiencing typical "southwest monsoon" weather for this time of year, with strong winds and passing storms making travel on

open water around the island dangerous.

Last week, a German tourist couple were safely rescued and brought back to Phuket after they were blown offshore by a passing storm while kayaking off Phuket's east coast.

The dangers of being blown offshore while kayaking off Phuket has previously made international headlines following the disappearance of Polish tourist Mateusz Juszkiwicz, 26, and Werakan Siriprakon, 23, from Nakhon Sawan, in December 2019.

The couple were last seen kayaking off Yanui Beach, where the American had rented his kayak from last Sunday.

Despite days of searching by air and sea rescue teams, Mr Juszkiwicz and Ms Werakan were never found.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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Low: +26°

Wind 7 m/s

MON SEP 6

High: +32°
Low: +25°

Wind 7 m/s

TUE SEP 7

High: +32°
Low: +26°

Wind 7 m/s

WED SEP 8

High: +31°
Low: +26°

Wind 11 m/s

THU SEP 9

High: +31°
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Wind 11 m/s

Accountant charged for B33mn swindle

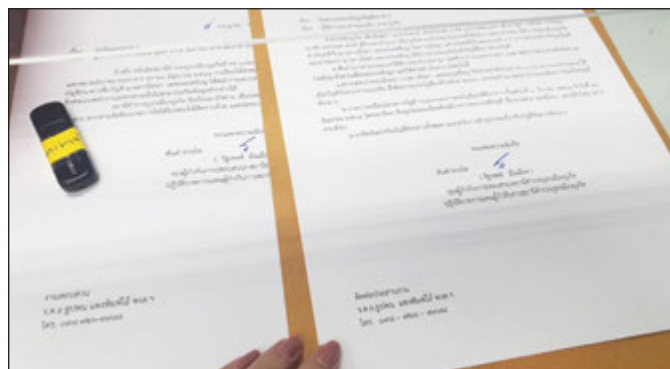
The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

An accountant with a Phuket luxury property management firm has been arrested and is facing charges for embezzling B33 million from the company's accounts.

Capt Thapaporn Pangpimlo of the Phuket City Police confirmed to *The Phuket News* that Piyada 'Ann' Petchlorrian, an accountant with The Cape Residences, is facing charges for the theft, which reportedly was carried out through transactions over the past six to seven years.

The police investigation into a complaint filed against Piyada is complete, Capt Thapaporn confirmed.

"We have forwarded the case to the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office to proceed with charges of theft and theft from an employer," Capt Thapaporn said.



The police report signed by Phuket City Police Deputy Commander Lt Col Rattthakhet Manmueng. Photo: Supplied

Piyada was taken into police custody in June after the complaint was filed. She was held at Phuket Provincial Prison while the police investigation continued.

However, Capt Thapaporn said that he was unable to confirm whether or not Piyada was still in custody.

"I don't know. I have finished my part. For the court process, you must ask the public prosecutor whether Piyada will be allowed to post bail or not. They will not inform us,"

Capt Thapaporn said.

Capt Thapaporn declined to answer any further questions, including whether or not any personal bank accounts that the money was transferred to had been frozen while the investigation was ongoing.

Capt Thapaporn did say that the amount embezzled from the company may have been as high as B35 million.

An officer of the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office who declined to be identified has now confirmed that the

Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office has already approved the case for criminal charges to be pressed against Piyada.

"Right now, the duty of the public prosecutor's office is finished. We have already filed an order to the court [to present the case in court] on Aug 9," the officer said.

"The prosecutor who is responsible for this case is Mr Supoj Ruengroj," the officer confirmed.

However, the officer refused to provide any contact information for Mr Supoj, but offered to act as an intermediary.

The officer later contacted *The Phuket News* to say, "I already asked the prosecutor, and he doesn't know whether she has asked to post bail or whether the court has approved bail or not. For the investigation by police, the report has already been sent to the court, so if you want to know more you need to call the Phuket

Provincial Court."

The officer declined to answer any further questions.

According to documents and information provided to *The Phuket News*, Piyada joined The Cape Residences some seven years ago.

During that time more than B33mn was transferred to 12 private accounts through 104 smaller transactions.

One owner of a property managed by the company allegedly had US\$25,000 transferred to fake construction accounts by the accountant six years ago.

More money was allegedly taken from the company's capital expenditure ("capex") account and utility bills account.

While working for the luxury property management firm, Piyada was on a salary of B25,000 per month.

Her husband returned B995,000 "out of fear and to do the right thing", *The Phuket News* was told.

B50mn disaster fund spent fighting COVID

THE PHUKET PROVINCIAL Government has spent all B50 million of the provincial disaster emergency fund on projects to counter the spread of COVID-19 across the island, and already spent nearly another B15mn from another B50mn allocated to Phuket to fight the spread of the virus.

Phuket Vice Governor Vikrom Jakthee revealed the news at a provincial-level meeting held at Provincial Hall on Aug 23.

Of the B50mn that was held as the province's standing disaster relief emergency fund, B49,731,535 had been disbursed through 12 payments, Vice Governor Vikrom said.

Only B268,465 of the standing disaster relief fund remains, he confirmed.

Of the B49.7mn spent, B32,743,402.17 was spent on projects already completed. The remaining B12,492,909.93 had been allocated to projects that are still ongoing, he said.

V/Gov Vikrom did not specify which projects had received which amounts of money. It was also not disclosed what the outstanding B4,495,222.90 had been dedicated to.

With the standing disaster relief fund all but depleted, the Comptroller-General had provided another B50mn for Phuket of-



Phuket Vice Governor Vikrom Jakthee revealed the news at Provincial Hall last week. Photo: PR Phuket

ficials to continue funding projects to counter the spread of COVID-19, V/Gov Vikrom continued.

"Each province in the country has been allocated B50mn as a special budget to spend on COVID-19 protection measures," he added.

Of the new B50mn anti-COVID budget, the Phuket Provincial Government had already disbursed B14,793,775.30, V/Gov Vikrom confirmed.

Again, it was not specified which projects had received how much money.

"The remaining B35,206,224.70 has not been spent," V/Gov Vikrom said. *The Phuket News*

Phuket requests 470,000 vaccine doses

THE PHUKET PROVINCIAL Government has filed a formal request for 470,000 doses of COVID vaccine to provide as a third 'booster' jab in Phuket, Vachira Phuket Hospital Director Dr Chalermpong Sukontapol has confirmed.

Dr Chalermpong did not specify which vaccine was requested to provide the booster jabs.

"We have already filed a request to the central government for 400,000 doses as the third dose for the general public, and another 70,000 vaccine doses specifically for people who are older than 60 years old and those who have [one of the seven recognised] chronic diseases," Dr Chalermpong said on Aug 23.

"The doses of vaccine will be used to boost our people's immunity and will help the Phuket Sandbox continue as the role model under the goal to open the country [to tourism] in October," he said.

"For the current vaccination campaign, we have been continuing to provide vaccination injections, especially to people who are older than 60, those with the seven chronic diseases, and women who are more than 12 weeks pregnant, as these groups of people are considered as at risk of infection and developing severe symptoms," Dr Chalermpong said.

"We are providing Sinovac as the first dose and AstraZeneca as the second dose for them, but elders will receive two AstraZeneca doses



An elderly citizen receives a vaccination injection at Jungceylon in Patong. Photo: Patong Municipality

for sure," he said.

"Right now, our number of new infected cases has been increasing every day because we have been conducting proactive screening in communities across the island. Most of the new cases are 'Green' patients who are already fully vaccinated with two doses of Sinovac. They do not have any symptoms, or have only light symptoms just like having a normal cold," he said.

"They are taken to the field hospitals and the COVID-19 Care Centers, which are now being set up in every subdistrict [on the island]. Our health officers and staff have closely checked their symptoms while they are in quarantine at the venues," he continued.

"I believe that we will be able to control and decrease the number of new infected cases soon, as we have good cooperation from local administrations for setting up the COVID Care Centers and from the people themselves who are being placed in quarantine," Dr Chaerlmping concluded.

The Phuket News

Loan shark debt collection erupts into street brawl

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Thalang Police are investigating how a visit by debt collectors for a loan shark turned into a brawl spilling out into the street in Baan Pru Samphan, Tambon Thepkrasattri, last week.

The incident was brought to the police's attention when 55-year-old shop owner Pranee Tayang reported to Thalang Police last Friday (Aug 27) how several "able bodied" men had arrived at her shop to collect outstanding payment for a loan that she and her husband had taken out from a private individual.

The incident, which occurred on Aug 25, was recorded on video, showing several people striking each other repeatedly, with many of the blows being closed fists landing on heads. The video was posted online, and went viral among Phuket residents.

In reporting the incident to Lt Col Kraisorn Boonprasop of the Thalang Police, Ms Pranee explained that she and her husband had borrowed B6,000 from a local loan provider.



The argument erupted into a brawl, which spilled out onto the street. Screenshot: Supplied

The loan was taken out over a month ago, along with another party, bringing the total amount borrowed to B11,000.

The terms of the loan was "20% interest", Ms Pranee said, noting that in cash terms the interest alone amounted to B550 a day.

The most recent loan repayment was due on Tuesday last week (Aug 24), but she and her husband were unable to make the payment due to the rain, she said.

Explaining this to the loan agent evoked grave insults against her parents, Ms Pranee noted.

On the evening of the next day (Aug 25), several large men entered the shop demanding payment. An argument broke out after one of the men called her "a disrespectful word", resulting in the brawl seen in the video clip, she explained.

Her husband and her son had objected to the word used against her. Her husband was injured in the fight, as were two of the debt collectors, she noted.

One of the men in the fight was struck in the windpipe with a rod, she added.

However, It was not reported who struck first.

Ms Pranee confirmed that she had taken out "informal loans" several times previously and had repaid them all on time with no incidents, but on the day of the incident she admitted to paying late because of the rain.

Thalang Police Deputy Chief Lt Col Anukul Nuket said that he is currently questioning people from both parties involved in the brawl.

He added that he was waiting for the results of medical examinations of those injured, and for reports of officers investigating the scene of the fight.

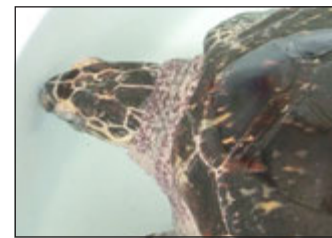
Kraisorn Pantip, Phu Yai Baan of Moo 8, Thepkrasattri, called on local residents in the area not to take out any loans from "informal providers".

Several households in the village were known to have borrowed money from loan sharks, he said.

"We never encourage people to borrow money through informal loans because the village itself has a village fund. There is a savings fund which people can borrow from to come up with additional capital," he said.

Kata turtle stomach clogged with plastic

MORE THAN 300 PIECES of trash, mostly plastic, have been recovered from the faeces of a green sea turtle rescued from Kata Beach in July, and who is now in care at the Sireetarn Marine Endangered Animals Rescue Center based on Cape Panwa, Wichit.



The turtle is slowly getting better in care at the centre. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

The turtle, weighing three kilograms and 28 centimeters long, was found by a local resident on July 23 and taken to the center, explained Pathompong Jongjit, a marine biologist at the center, which operates as part of the Phuket Marine Biological Center under the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR).

"On that day, it looked exhausted. From x-rays taken we could see that its digestive tract was clogged with trash," Mr Pathompong told *The Phuket News* on Wednesday last week (Aug 24).

In total, 349 pieces of trash weighing 127 grammes have been recovered from the turtle's faeces, Mr Pathompong said.

"In six instances the turtle excreted only marine trash," he said.

Examination of one instance saw 191 pieces of trash

weighing 67g being identified, Mr Pathompong noted.

"The trash was 49% plastic fibers, 19% soft plastic, 16% hard plastic, 10% from plastic bags, 4% from plastic bottles and 2% sack fibres," he said.

"The turtle is gradually getting better. The turtle can now eat food by itself, but before this we had to feed it with liquid food by tube to its stomach," Mr Pathompong noted

"We have also given treatment for wounds it had on its front fins and neck," he said.

"The turtle is now safe and healthier, but we still need to give it close care," he added.

"I feel very down when I see marine animals injured or struggling with trash like this; this should not be a problem that animals are subjected to," Mr Pathompong said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Fresh kratom prisoners released

A TOTAL OF 15 PRISONERS INCARCERATED for possession of fresh kratom have been released from Phuket Provincial Prison now that possession of the plant in its natural state has been removed from the Narcotics Act.

No Phuket provincial officials or Phuket officers from the Department of Corrections have recognised the prisoner release following the change in the law, which came into effect on Aug 24.

However, an officer of the Registration Department at Phuket Prison agreed to comment to *The Phuket News* last Thursday (Aug 26) on condition of anonymity.

"We have already released a total of 15 prisoners who were sentenced only under the change of possession of fresh kratom; they were released on Tuesday," the prison officer confirmed.

"About 60-70 prisoners are in the prison for other charges in addition to possession of fresh kratom. We have already filed a list of the prisoners' names to the court for consideration of having their sentences reduced," the officer added.

"On Aug 30, we will also release another 129 prisoners who behaved well and received royal pardons issued on the birthday of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun (Rama X) on July 28," she said.

"These prisoners have behaved well and most of them have only a couple of years left to stay in the prison. The 129 prisoners are only one of three groups to be released, but I do not know when the second and



Phuket Provincial Prison. Photo: The Phuket News / file

third groups will be released," she added.

The Department of Corrections last week reported that 1,297 prisoners were serving jail sentences for kratom-related charges across the country.

Of those, 1,038 were already serving sentences handed down, with the remaining 259 being detained while waiting for the court to rule on the charges against them, reported state news broadcaster MCOT.

Only 121 people throughout all of Thailand were serving sentences in prisons for possession of fresh kratom only, the report noted.

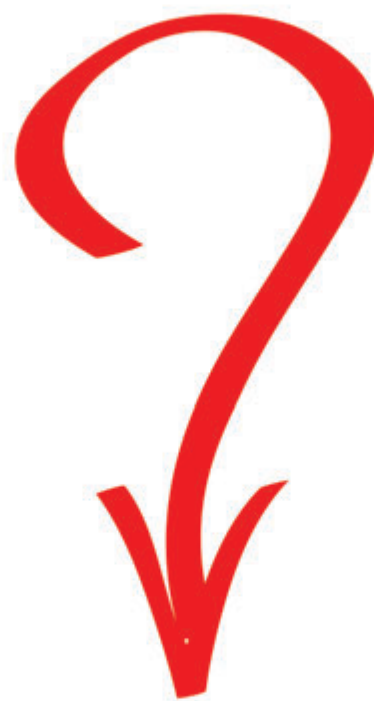
Of those, 20 had already been sentenced, while 101 were still awaiting trial to conclude.

After speaking with the prison officer in Phuket, it was not made clear whether 15 of the 20 prisoners serving sentences already handed down were released in Phuket.

The Phuket News



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Cultural projects touted to support Sandbox

MINISTER OF CULTURE Ittipol Khunpluem last week revealed projects to support the Tourism Sandbox scheme under 45 'roadmaps to boost the economy' in Phuket and other provinces across the country.

"To support the government scheme to open Phuket and other provinces as pilot areas to welcome vaccinated tourists, in order to boost the national economy during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Culture has 45 roadmaps [sic] to support the opening of the other provinces," Mr Ittipol said.

"Right now, we have three projects in Phuket. We have cancelled the entrance fee to the Thalang National Museum located in Moo 3, Srisoonthorn, from July 1 until December 31, and are holding a special exhibition on cave art and ancient life from July 29 until the end of October.

"We also created a 'Phuket Cooking Fever' game which aims to raise the economic value of Phuket food, following the recognition of Phuket as a Creative City of Gastronomy by UNESCO," he added.



The entrance fee to the Thalang National Museum in Phuket is being waived.

"For Koh Samui, we have created and [continue to] support a community tour. For Krabi, we support tourists to join historical and local lifestyle tours. For Pattaya we hold cultural streets and markets as well as a tour for making merit," Mr Ittipol said.

"For other provinces, we will have four main types of projects. One is to support community tourism in 23 provinces. The second is to support religious tourism in eight provinces by creating routes for making merit at and famous temples. The third is to create a calendar to promote local or regional events in 24 provinces, and the last type of project is to develop learning centres and create campaigns to promote tourism and the cultural products of Thailand ('CPOT') in 10 provinces," he said. *The Phuket News*

UK cancellations hit hotel bookings hard

Bangkok Post

Hotels in Phuket are seeing an influx of cancellations from the UK, while existing guests are checking out early to avoid being kept in costly self-paid quarantine when they return home.

The UK announced last Friday (Aug 27) that it would move Thailand to its red list from the amber list, effective from Monday (Aug 30), because of the high COVID-19 risk in the country, the *Bangkok Post* reported.

When the news broke, hotels taking part in the Phuket Sandbox tourism reopening programme received a large number of cancellations from UK customers, said Marisa Sukosol Nunbhakdi, the president of the Thai Hotels Association (THA).

Other guests who now face the prospect of a quarantine on their return to the UK were rushing to leave.

"Some of them had just arrived a few days ago but have to prepare to leave as the price for quarantine facilities



A tourist takes a picture on a beach in Phuket, which has been open to fully vaccinated international visitors since the start of July. Photo: Bangkok Post

in the UK is too expensive. They said it would cost them around £2,200 or B71,600 for a 10-day package," said Ms Marisa.

She said the situation is a setback for the tourism reopening plan, noting that the COVID risk in Phuket and some neighbouring destinations was quite low compared with other parts of the country.

"It's unfortunate that most of those destinations have much fewer COVID-19 cases,

while the infection rate among international travellers was even smaller," she added.

At that time, Phuket had recorded 25,030 arrivals under the Sandbox programme, with just 75 inbound travellers found infected with the virus.

The THA, she said, would like authorities to make the international community aware that COVID is well under control in most of southern Thailand, as the Sandbox programme for fully vac-

nated international visitors is a critical first step toward the success of reopening.

Worapol Ungtrakul, assistant managing director at Sunset Beach Resort and Oceanfront Beach Resort and Spa, said existing guests from the UK started to leave Phuket before the deadline on Monday and a lot of bookings for September had been cancelled.

"Most of them didn't want a postponement but are asking for a full refund as they were not certain about the situation," he said.

His hotel had around 20-30% occupied, with UK guests a significant portion of the total.

"It's difficult to predict the situation in the last quarter as guests will opt for last-minute bookings rather than snatching early-bird deals like before, because the Certificate of Entry (COE) application allows them to apply for one month before the trip," said Mr Worapol.

"Some of them avoid advance bookings because our regulations keep changing and could affect their travel plans."

Dine-in sees restaurants recover 50% of income

THE THAI RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION has informed the government's Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) that the reopening of restaurants to dine-in customers will help restaurateurs recover about 50% of normal income.

The association has also asked the government to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Thai and migrant workers in the restaurant business, as soon as possible.

President of the Thai Restaurant Association, Thaniwan Koonmongkon, said that the CCSA's resolution to relax disease-control measures, particularly the granting of permission for restaurants to reopen their businesses to dine-in customers while following all precautionary measures, is beyond expectations, with 75% capacity allowed for outdoor dining spaces.

The decision will improve the overall situation, leading to an increase in sales volume. However, it also depends on how well restaurateurs manage their customer base.

After the reopening becomes effective, the sales volume of restaurants should increase from 20% to at least 50%, helping businesses to survive. Food businesses in Thailand are valued at B1.4 billion a day. Once the sales volume reaches 50%, or about B700 million a day, restaurants will be injecting B21bn into the economy a month.

Ms Thaniwan added that the government should provide COVID-19 vaccines to



The impact of the CCSA allowing restaurants in dark red zones to reopen has been deemed vital. Photo: NNT

Thai and migrant workers in the restaurant business.

Although the Ministry of Public Health has allowed the general public to register for COVID-19 vaccination equally, many migrant workers and some Thai workers in different sectors are not able to access the registration process due to various factors.

Only 200,000 workers in the restaurant business are insured under Section 33 of the Social Security Act, while many other workers are not registered.

Therefore, the Thai Restaurants Association has encouraged restaurant workers to register for vaccinations; the information will be submitted to the Ministry of Public Health, so as to allocate more doses of vaccine to meet the demand, she said. *NNT*

English Premier League Predictions

thephuketnews.com/predictions.php

Booster shots for 3mn Thais starts this month

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

COVID-19 vaccine booster shots will be administered to about 3 million Thais who have already received their two shots starting later this month, according to the Department of Disease Control (DDC).

"Which vaccine type will be used depends on the availability of the vaccine supply at that time," DDC director-general Opas Karnkawinpong said last Saturday (Aug 28).

A source at the ministry said AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines will initially serve as the booster shots because by that time there will be enough supplies from the two manufacturers.

Among the 3mn people to get the booster shots, many of them are likely to be those who already received two shots of Sinovac vaccine at least three months previously, the source said.

The announcement came as permanent secretary for public health Kiattiphum Won-



A man receives a COVID vaccination at Narathiwat Hospital. Photo: AFP

grajit stated the latest wave of COVID-19 infections is showing signs of slowing down.

The country logged 14,666 new coronavirus cases on Monday, the fewest since July 27, along with 190 COVID related fatalities, the Public Health Ministry reported on Tuesday morning.

As a result, hospital bed occupancy rates in Bangkok and surrounding provinces have dropped, particularly among green- and yellow-coded patients with mild symptoms.

As for transmissions in the provinces, infections were

still detected in communities, markets and camps for construction workers, he said, adding that health authorities were instructed to ramp up proactive mass testing using antigen test kits (ATKs).

Those who test positive will be placed in home and community isolation systems to prevent the spread of the disease to other areas, Dr Kiattiphum said.

He said infections still spread among family members, causing deaths among vulnerable groups which had not been vaccinated.

He stressed the need to vaccinate people aged 60 and older, and those suffering from underlying illnesses that put them at risk, such as diabetes, obesity, chronic respiratory disease, heart and arterial disease, as well as women who have been pregnant for at least 12 weeks.

With new cases slowing down, the CCSA announced the easing of COVID-19 restrictions on certain businesses in dark-red zone provinces, including restaurants, shopping malls, beauty salons, massage shops and parks, effective from Wednesday.

The changes include allowing restaurants to resume dine-in services, at 75% capacity in outdoor dining spaces and 50% in air-conditioned locations.

But all service staff must have two doses of vaccine and be tested with ATKs every 5-7 days. The guidelines also require customers to show proof of vaccination before they can enter restaurants to dine. The curfew from 9pm-4am remains in effect for at least two weeks.



Hat Rin beach. Photo: Bangkok Post file

Box jellyfish sting kills boy on Koh Pha-ngan

SURAT THANI

A NINE-YEAR-OLD Israeli boy died after being stung by a box jellyfish while playing in the water at a beach on Koh Phangan island last Saturday (Aug 28).

Poonsak Soponpathumrak, the Koh Pha-ngan district chief, reported the incident to governor Wichawut Jinto after the boy's death had been confirmed.

Mr Poonsak said the boy and his family were playing in the water at Hat Rin beach, in front of Seaview Sunrise lodging house at Moo 6 village in tambon Ban Tai, about 5:30pm last Saturday.

The father heard his son initially cry for help and then run up onto the beach. The boy had red marks on his right arm and legs that appeared to be sting marks. He then

complained of feeling unwell and dizzy.

The father poured vinegar onto the stings and called Koh Pha-ngan International Hospital immediately although the boy died on the way to the hospital.

Mr Poonsak said signs written in three languages had been put up at Hat Rin beach by the village committee, warning tourists to go into the water only at designated areas, which were surrounded by nets to protect them from box jellyfish. Bottles of vinegar were also provided at these spots to treat jellyfish stings.

It seemed the boy had been playing in the water outside the netted area, he said.

Varawut Silpa-archa, the minister for natural resources and the environment, said he had been briefed on the incident and expressed condolences to the family.

Bangkok Post

Learn to live with COVID, says PM

BANGKOK

PRIME MINISTER PRAYUT CHAN-O-CHA has set a new target to prepare the country for a future with COVID-19, according to sources at Government House.

Chairing a meeting of the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) last Friday (Aug 27), Prayut proposed a shift in the country's COVID-19 management strategy so people can "learn to live safely with COVID-19", in recognition of the ever-changing nature of the virus which may never be fully eliminated from society, the sources said.

In light of this, the CCSA is targeting to strike a balance between COVID-19 control measures and allowing people to go about their normal lives and economic activities, according to the sources.

The prime example of this approach is the Phuket Sandbox scheme which started on July 1, followed by the Samui Plus model on July 15.

They form the backbone of plans to restart the battered tourism industry and reopen the country under DMHTT guidelines, referring to social distancing, mask-wearing, hand-washing, temperature-checking and using the Thai Chana app.

Prayut also reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting research and development of domestic vaccines under the government's public health development strategy so that Thailand can be self-sufficient in terms of vaccine production, the sources said.

The development of a local mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, known as ChulaCOV-19, by a



New target for Prayut. Photo: AFP

research team at Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Medicine, meanwhile, holds some hope for Thailand.

The team recently announced the vaccine's success in its first phase of human trials and expects to seek registration for emergency use in April next year.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet on Monday (Aug 30) approved another B44.3 billion in the budget for funding COVID-19 relief measures in the 29 provinces worst hit by the outbreak.

This budget is for financing relief measures for workers registered under Sections 39 and 40 of the Social Security Act for a period of one month, during which the government's COVID-19 restrictions will continue to impact them, he said.

This brings the total budget approved by Cabinet for this purpose to B77.7bn, government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said. Bangkok Post

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The Absence of NO is not a YES

Illustration courtesy of ThaiConsent.

ON CAMPUS

Milla Budiarto

Ten years ago, when Wipaphan 'Nana' Wongsawang was 19 years old, she was sexually assaulted. She kept it to herself for two years, until one day her friend had a similar experience and confided in her about it. Together, they reported the friend's assault to the police, but were met with indifference.

While researching online trying to help her friend's case, Nana stumbled upon the term 'consent' and learned that the word 'consent' doesn't really exist in the Thai language. Inspired by this new-found insight, she saw an opportunity to break the silence through education about consent. She was motivated to challenge gender power imbalance and determined to dismantle the systemic rape culture in Thai society. Through an acquaintance, I was lucky enough to meet with this courageous young woman virtually and talk with her about her journey.

In 2015, Nana created ThaiConsent (Website: www.thaiconsent.in.th; Facebook: Thaiconsent), a platform for Thai people to anonymously share their personal stories surrounding sexual consent to raise public awareness. Some of the stories published are accompanied with illustrations created by Nana herself or other volunteer artists to capture and engage the audience visually.

First and foremost, sexual consent means actively and enthusiastically agreeing to participate in any sexual activities with someone. Consent involves a clear, honest and open communication between the partners – talking about their wants, needs and expectations. Consent is about setting your personal boundaries and respecting each other's limits. Consent cannot be given by someone who is underage, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, unconscious or asleep. Silence is not

consent. Any sexual activity without consent is sexual assault or rape.

Although sex education is taught in Thai schools, Nana feels that the curriculum is outdated and severely inadequate. Students are taught merely about reproductive body parts, sexually-transmitted diseases and pregnancy prevention. The curriculum portrays sex the same way as drugs: to stay away from it as far as possible. The idea of sexual consent is rarely discussed. Consequently, boys and girls did not learn that in order to have a healthy, romantic relationship they must always ask for consent before engaging in any sexual activities. Even importantly, they are not taught that they can always say no to sex.

Nana says that in Thai society, the deeply ingrained gender stereotypes and imbalance of power often unfairly put the blame on the victims, who are disproportionately women, when they are sexually assaulted. This distorted perception of gender roles leads to the perpetual victim-blaming of women, while excusing the perpetrators. Men and gender nonconforming people also experience sexual assaults and can be subjected to unfair victim-blaming. Victim-blaming is destructive, it is frequently used to scrutinize, minimize, control and silence the victim. Normalizing sexual assaults and rape is known as rape culture.

In the context of sexual relationships, Nana explains that the prescribed gender roles in the society and the manifestation of power imbalance often prevent women from expressing their needs and feelings. When the woman declines to engage in a sexual activity, the man sometimes thinks that he can talk the woman into it by relentlessly pursuing and pressuring her. Nana points out that in Thai language a term for this is *dtéu* (ดื้อ), which means to keep insisting until the other person reluctantly succumbs to the pressure.

Since launching ThaiConsent, Nana says that the feedback she received has been overwhelmingly positive. Up



to now, ThaiConsent has racked up almost 56,000 followers on its Facebook page and 21,500 followers on Twitter.

"This opens up the way for Thai people to talk about sex in a non-pornographic way. So, it's quite new. Now survivors can feel more empowered through this, whether they get legal justice or not," she says.

ThaiConsent is run by a group of volunteers based in Bangkok. Despite having very little funding, Nana and the team remain focused and undeterred. ThaiConsent is currently developing a comprehensive web platform where people can ask questions, share stories, and connect with others in the community in a safe and supportive environment.

The journey to achieve gender equality and to eliminate rape culture may seem like a daunting task to undertake, but it is not impossible. It requires tremendous hard work, dedication, perseverance and unwavering conviction, because change doesn't happen overnight.

Nana concludes, "If someone starts somewhere, things are bound to change. During the past five years, I have seen the change with my own eyes. Even though my background is in graphic design, this does not stop me from doing what I do with ThaiConsent. If I can change one person's life, for me, that is progress."

Understanding about consent is ultimately sexual assault prevention. Any form of sexual assault is a severe violation of human rights. We must challenge gender stereotypes and stand up against rape culture. Let's start – or join – the conversation.



Wipaphan 'Nana' Wongsawang.

NOTE: The interview with Wipaphan 'Nana' Wongsawang was transcribed by Sarah Avedikian.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of PSU Phuket and its employees or official policies of PSU Phuket.

Milla Budiarto is an international affairs officer at the International Affairs Centre, Prince of Songkla University (PSU) Phuket Campus. This article was featured in 'The Phuket Collegiate Magazine', the university magazine published by Milla at PSU Phuket. For more information, visit: <https://www.phuket.psu.ac.th/en/magazine> or to share ideas with Milla email: magazine@phuket.psu.ac.th

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Put Your 'Helping Hands' Together

ADVERTORIAL

By 5 Star Marine

With more work to do now than ever before, 5 Star Marine together with their partners are still working around the clock to offer a vitally needed helping hand. Behind the scenes there are many others who contribute and support the core team – working quietly in the background. Today we wanted to say 'Thank You' to those who continue to help despite the constant challenges and seemingly endless needs of the community.

August 2021 was the biggest month so far for Life Bag donations; despite the restrictions facing volunteers, lack of domestic travel and the relatively small trickle of Sandbox guests. Efforts to support vulnerable families and communities have been taking place for over 1.5 years (a massive 80 weeks), with multiple donations each week focussed on specific in-need and at-risk communities.

The situation on the ground unfortunately remains critical with many people still requiring direct food relief, so 5 Star Marine continue to deliver week in week out, and for this they are thankful for the help they receive.

Amy and Nando at **Sutai Muay Thai** have committed to every packing and donation effort from the very begin-



A heartfelt 'Thank You' from 5 Star Marine to all the people who have helped – and are still helping – to bring much needed supplies to communities across Phuket and the surrounding islands.

ning; donating their time, energy and providing this continuous effort from their base at Sutai Muay Thai gym in Surin. The gym has been turned into a makeshift base for the packing and distribution of Life Bags across the island and beyond. Additionally, these delivery efforts use Sutai Muay Thai trucks and staff as well as 5 Star Marine's speedboats to access some of the most at-risk areas, allowing this charity effort to go further afield reaching impoverished smaller villages and islands communi-

ties. Amy and Nando, thank you for always volunteering, never tiring, and bringing such positivity to our volunteering efforts.

UWC Thailand International School, coordinated by Kru Heidi and Kru Remke, have provided very welcome assistance as part of their community and Extra Curricular Activities (ECAs). Whilst right now no large-scale volunteer packing is allowed at Sutai Muay Thai, both students and teachers of the school continue to help

on and off campus, packing thousands of Life Bags, helping us collectively match the ever-growing demand.

A final heartfelt thank you goes to **Phuket Has Been Good To Us**, and Tina Hall and Graham Haslam in particular. Never ones to let challenges get in the way of collaborating to effectively support the most vulnerable communities, these teachers and volunteers not only make a difference in the lives of underprivileged Thai children via their educational and extra-curricular activities, but they are also a core team behind the 5 Star Marine Life Bag operations. Whether packing, co-ordinating or providing transportation support – nothing is too much for them and they are always there and ready to help out, no matter how short the notice is!

The reality today is that the need remains in the community and 5 Star Marine will continue to do what they can to get us through this stage of the pandemic. They are immensely thankful to all the unsung heroes across the island and beyond, without whom we could not keep these efforts going week after week.

To Amy, Nando, Kru Heidi, Kru Remke, Tina and Graham; and everyone who has lent a hand or donated, thank you. There are thousands of people in our communities whose lives have benefited from your generosity and commitment.

Stay safe and be kind, from the 5 Star Marine team.

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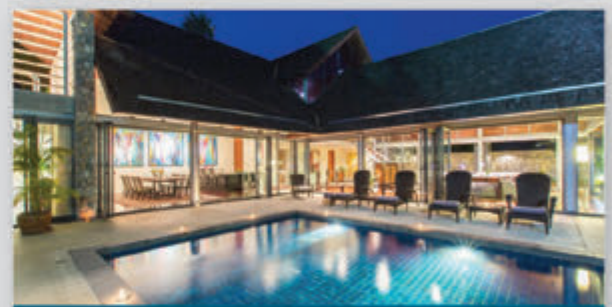
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POP QUIZ

1. What is the official colour for Phuket Province?
2. Besides Thailand, which two countries have coasts on the Gulf of Thailand?
3. Which battle was the last pitched battle fought on British soil?
4. Which company owns the trademarks and products of Parker Brothers and Milton Bradley?
5. Clyde Chestnut Barrow and Bonnie Elizabeth Parker were better known as who?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Donkeywork
5. Window type
10. "Love Will Find ____"
14. Puente ____
15. Winter wear
16. Radial, e.g.
17. Con escapes from the "City of Festivals"?
20. Demagogue, for short
21. Plays mind games
22. Exigencies
23. Aces, sometimes
24. ____ lox
26. Some are secret
29. Diminish
30. Carney, to pals
33. Medicinal balsam
34. Daring Sufi
35. Former French coin
36. Con escapes from the home of ESPN?
40. Before now
41. Defeat
42. Italian magistrate
43. Nevertheless
44. British cape
45. Grim Reaper prop
47. 2.54 centimeters
48. Chutzpah
49. Scandinavian currency

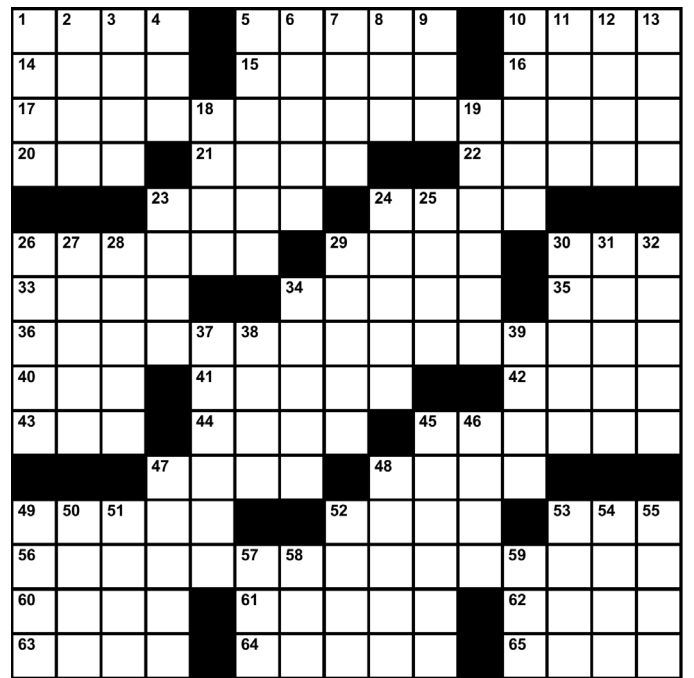
Down

52. Greek letter
53. ____ de deux
56. Con escapes from resort peninsula?
60. Drone, e.g.
61. Tyrone ____
62. American record label
63. Snoop Dogg song
64. Sock fabric
65. Kid brother, e.g.
1. Pack (down)
2. Medley
3. Common contraction
4. Down and dirty
5. Works
6. Libertines
7. Chafes
8. Squeeze out
9. Police, with "the"
10. Addled
11. Owl-ish?
12. Bone-dry
13. Cravings
18. Bee, to Opie
19. Flip
23. ____ probandi
24. "____ Lunch"
25. Auricular
26. Safely distant

27. Deep valley
28. "The Hippopotamus" poet
29. Marriage announcement
30. English race place
31. ____ draft
32. Student getting one-on-one help
34. Kin
37. Dig
38. Powerful cartel
39. Romantic interlude (var.)
45. Shiny fabric
46. Attack with nails
47. Dickey
48. Bananas
49. Dole's running mate, 1996
50. Shag rugs
51. Bribes
52. Murti
53. Corn ____
54. Song and dance, e.g.
55. "Laugh-In" segment
57. ____ system (re: blood)
58. Neither's partner
59. Western Pacific island

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Pink; 2) Cambodia and Vietnam; 3) The Battle of Culloden (in 1746 near Inverness); 4) Hasbro; 5) Bonnie and Clyde



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

single mouthful of krill consumed by a blue whale has as many calories as an average person consumes in roughly 180 days.

7

percent of all US households don't have a bank account.

70

percent of millionaires in the US don't consider themselves 'wealthy'.

600

places in Australia are named after the emu.

2.7 million

pages is how much evidence prosecutors had in pressing sex trafficking charges against Ghislaine Maxwell

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Ao Sane sunset. Photo by Terry Braverman

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

This week in history

Sept 3, 1878

Over 640 die when the crowded pleasure boat *Princess Alice* collides with the *Bywell Castle* on the River Thames.

Sept 4, 1781

Los Angeles is founded as El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora La Reina de los Ángeles de Porciúncula (The Village of Our Lady, the Queen of the Angels of Porziuncola) by 44 Spanish settlers.

Sept 5, 1698

In an effort to Westernise his nobility, Tsar Peter I of Russia imposes a tax on beards for all men except the clergy and peasantry.

Sept 6, 1492

Christopher Columbus sails from La Gomera in the Canary Islands, his final port of call before crossing the Atlantic Ocean for the first time.



'David' by Michelangelo. Photo by Jörg Bittner Unna

Sept 7, 1776

Ezra Lee makes the world's first submarine attack in the *Turtle*, attempting to attach a

time bomb to the hull of HMS *Eagle* in New York Harbor.

Sept 8, 1504

Michelangelo's 'David' is unveiled in Piazza della Signoria in Florence.

Sept 9, 1947

First case of a computer bug being found: A moth lodges in a relay of a Harvard Mark II computer at Harvard University. Source: Wikipedia

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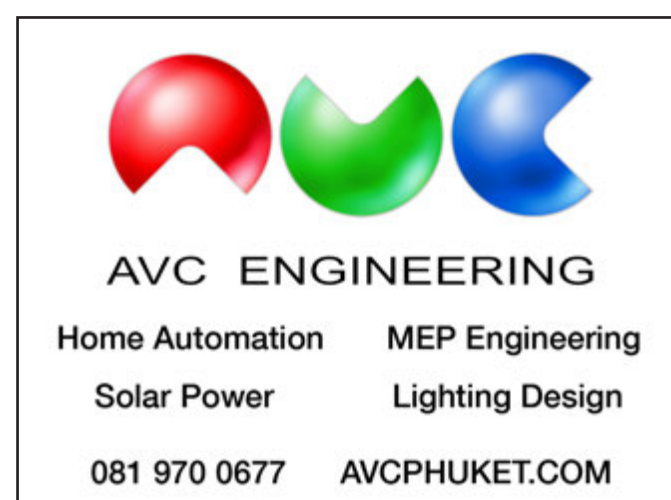
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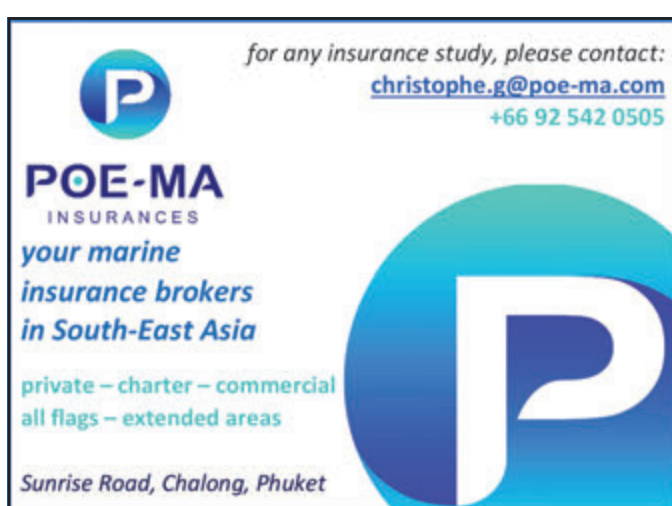


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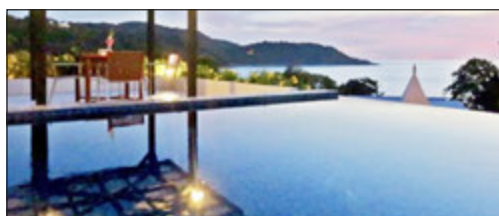
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MULTI-NATIONAL PHUKET COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO HELP

During the last 18 months a group of French, Belgian, English, Swiss, American and Thai expatriate friends have been carrying out humanitarian activities to support and encourage our most disadvantaged Thai friends.

On Saturday Aug 28, 2021 they distributed 5kg bags of rice per family, bags of food, clothes and milk for the children in the Nai Harn lake area. With friends' help they are fundraising to renew donations to continue to distribute in several municipalities such as Rawai, Kathu, Pa Khlok, Rassada and Chalong. They are looking for new supporters in order to be able to support destitute people without jobs and who have had no income to survive for a long time. Contact Madame Thoye Manin on Facebook for more details.



PHUKET RALLIES TO HELP KOH LIPE

Koh Lipe has over 460 families in dire need of food and staple items; including 300 Sea Nomad families (together with those on the nearby island of Koh Adang).

There are individuals and businesses located on Koh Lipe who are coordinating efforts on the ground. Family Song Bungalow in Koh Lipe are helping to distribute food, but are in need of donations towards this cause.

Last week, 5 Star Marine in Phuket coordinated with Satun Pakbara Speedboat Club located in the Satun province. Whilst 5 Star ordered and paid for supplies from afar, Satun Pakbara Speedboat Club was able to collect and deliver these vital food packages to Koh Lipe directly using their own staff and boat.

If you would like to donate towards the efforts of the Family Song Bungalow in Koh Lipe, or One Phuket, the details can be found on their Facebook pages.



Pongsakorn sets world record

PARALYMPICS

Bangkok Post

Wheelchair racer Pongsakorn Paeyo broke the world record as he won Thailand's first gold medal at the Paralympic Games at Tokyo's Olympic Stadium last Sunday (Aug 29).

Thailand's wait for its first gold medal at the COVID-delayed tournament ended on day five of competition after the 24-year-old from Khon Kaen retained his 400m T53 title with a time of 46.61, breaking Canadian Brent Lakatos' old mark of 46.82 set in June 2019.

Pongsakorn, who also set a new Paralympic record of 47.31 earlier in the day, won both the T53 400m and 800m events at the Rio Paralympic Games five years ago.

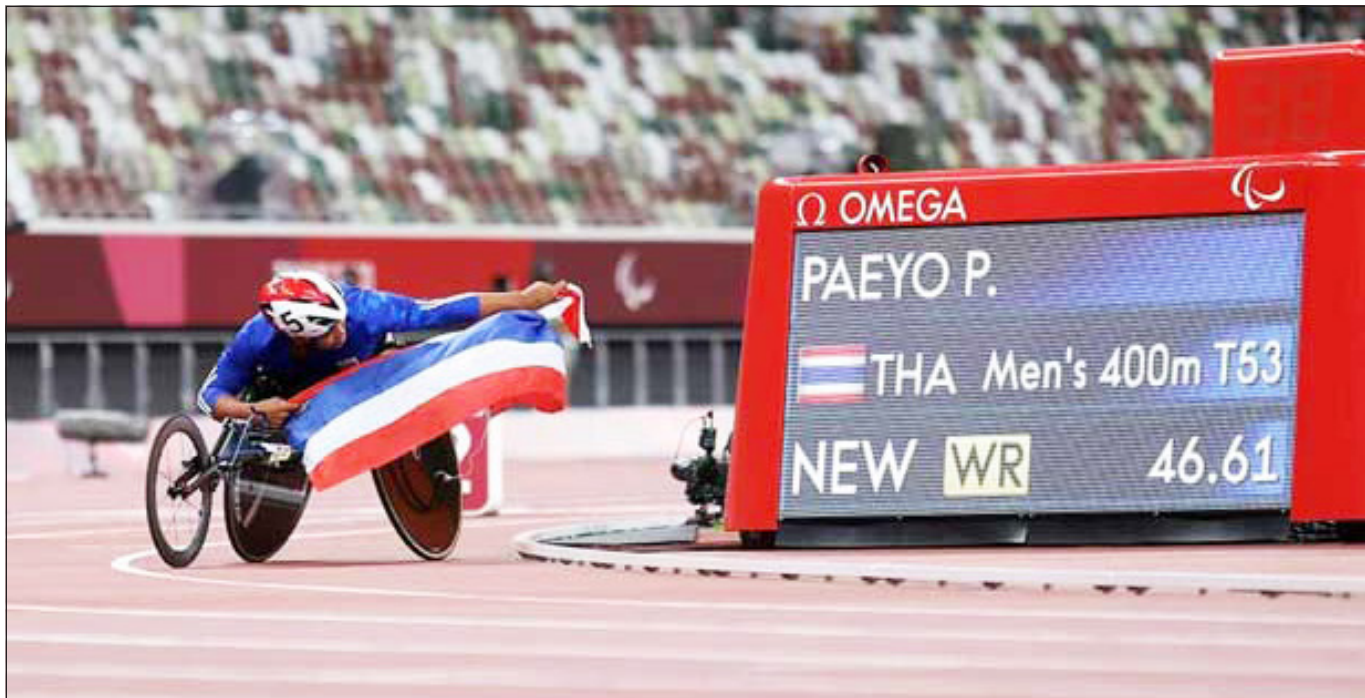
Lakatos came second in 46.75 while Vitalii Gritsenko of the Russian Paralympic Committee was third in 49.41.

Pichet Krungget, the other Thai in the race, finished fifth in 49.96.

'NO SURPRISE'

Pongsakorn's old high school coach has praised him for the hard work and determination that earned him gold while setting a new world record.

Sakol Thapsombat was wheelchair athlete Pongsakorn's first trainer, when he was at Srisangwan School in Khon Kaen province.



Pongsakorn Paeyo celebrates after setting a new world record in the 400m T53 wheelchair racing event at the Tokyo Paralympics last Sunday (Aug 29). Photo: SPADT Facebook account

Sakol said his protege's success in setting the new world time when winning a gold medal at Tokyo came as no surprise. Pongsakorn had shown the skill and dedication needed to be a winner since he was a student.

He began training in the racing wheelchair at Srisangwan, his childhood school, when he was 11 years old. Two years later the school sent him to the national sports competition in Sukhotai in 2009, and he came back with two gold medals.

That was the start. He was later sent to train in Bangkok as a national wheelchair racer and became one of the most successful paralym-

pians in the country.

"I am very proud of this student," Sakol said. "He is an inspiration for other students at the school to follow his example."

Pongsakorn, who was born with his disability, said before the Thai team left for Tokyo that his goal was to set a world record in the 400m race, after a recent strong showing in national and international competition.

The Sports Association for the Disabled of Thailand saluted him on his historic victory.

"Getting the gold medal is great. But the greatest [achievement] is to break the world record," the association

said. "Thank you for giving all Thais smiles, hope and happiness."

Former world champion Pongsakorn was set to defend his 800m T53 title yesterday (Sept 2).

SILVER STAR

Meanwhile, another Thai wheelchair racer, Athiwat Paeng-nuea, missed out on a 400m T54 gold medal by a fraction of a second as Daniel Romanchuk of the United States crossed the finish line in 45.72 while the 18-year-old Thai clocked 45.73.

It was a disappointment for Paralympic debutant Athiwat, who set a new Games' record of 44.87 in the heat.

China's Dai Yungquiang was third on 46.20 while two other Thais Saichon Konjen and Putharet Khongrak, who won the T54 5,000m bronze last Saturday, came fourth and eighth respectively.

High jumper Angkarn Chanaboon finished seventh in the men's T47 final with a leap of 1.89m. The gold medal went to Roderick Townsend with a new world record of 2.15m.

Putharet Khongrak won bronze in the men's 5,000m T54 category last Saturday and table tennis star Rungroj Thainiyom and wheelchair fencer Saysunee Jana also won bronze for the Kingdom.

Wheelchair fencer Say-

sunee Jana claimed the first medal for Thailand at the Games when she won a bronze in the women's epee individual category B event last Thursday (Aug 26).

The Thai star defeated China's Zhou Jingjing 15-8 in the bronze medal match on the second day of competition at the COVID-delayed biennial tournament.

The Chiang Mai native apologised to the Thai fans for her failure to win gold.

"I'd like to thank all Thais for your moral support," she said. "I'm sorry that I could not reach my target of winning gold. I did my best."

The 47-year-old said she was looking forward to the next Games in Paris in 2024.

"I want to go to Paris and I will work harder," said Saysunee.

She will receive a B3 million bonus from the National Sports Development Fund.

According to the agency's reward scheme for Paralympians, a champion will get B7.2mn and a silver medallist B4.8mn.

Saysunee won gold medals at the 2004 and 2012 Games and took silver in Rio five years ago.

Table tennis star Rungroj Thainiyom also won bronze for the Kingdom last Thursday taking the collective medal haul at time of press to five.

The Kingdom took six gold, six silver and six bronze medals at Rio 2016.

Additional reporting by AFP

Russell reaps rewards despite washout

FORMULA ONE

THE BELGIAN GRAND PRIX last Sunday (Aug 29) will be remembered as the shortest race in Formula One history, declared after only two laps in torrential rain, but for George Russell it was the first podium finish of what is sure to be many more.

F1's return from the midseason break for the Belgian Grand Prix had all the makings of a classic, with intermittent rain hampering Friday practice and persistent showers turning qualifying on Saturday into a wet-and-wild thriller.

But rain that promised so much for the latest chapter of the tight title fight between pole-getter Max Verstappen and championship leader Lewis Hamilton proved overwhelming. So severe was the Sunday deluge that a grand total of three official laps were completed behind the safety car over an event duration of three

hours and 45 minutes before race control conceded the sun would set sooner than the rain would ease.

Verstappen was declared the winner, and the top 10 in qualifying order – less Sergio Perez, who had crashed on his way to the grid – were awarded half points.

To say this was a damp squib would be an understatement given the sheer volume of water involved.

Though there was little Formula 1 could do about the weather, the outcome was nonetheless controversial for the final three laps run behind the safety car shortly before the race was called off.

'FARCE'

The regulations state that more than two laps must be completed to meet the definition of a grand prix and achieve a final classification, and the drivers speculated afterwards that sending them out in unimproved conditions was a cynical ploy by F1 to avoid being up for a refund claim from the Belgian organisers for failing to host a race.

"Money talks, and the two laps to start the race is all a money scenario," Hamilton told Britain's Sky Sports after the declaration, and he later took to social media to describe the afternoon as a "farce".

F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali rebuffed the claim, protesting that race control only followed the regulations in trying to get racing underway.

With the Dutch Grand Prix following immediately this weekend (Sept 3-5), the fallout is likely to be curtailed. The effect on the championship is anyway limited, with Verstappen closing the gap to title leader Hamilton, who was classified third, from eight points to three.

But for Williams driver George Russell, who was classified second, the furore around the race will have felt like distant background noise as he took his first step onto a Formula 1 podium.

The 23-year-old Briton has long been heralded as a future F1 great, having arrived in the sport in 2019 with three junior titles to his name and Mercedes backing, but his Wil-



George Russell has long been heralded as a future F1 great. Photo: AFP

liams machinery has hamstrung his results.

Indeed it took him until the Hungarian Grand Prix in August, his 48th Williams start, to score his first points for the team, ending its two-year points drought.

In Budapest Russell was emotional for having finally delivered a score for his F1 alma mater, but in Belgium he was pleased and composed. The podium had been just reward for qualifying a sensational second on a sopping-wet Saturday track and a neat underline on his growth and achievements racing quietly in the field's lower reaches.

And while more than likely it will be his final podium for Wil-

liams, he's unlikely to have to wait much longer for his next rostrum appearance. Mercedes boss Toto Wolff admitted he's made a decision on whether Russell or Valtteri Bottas will partner Hamilton next season, and an announcement is due imminently, once the other driver finalises a deal with another team.

Few expect anything other than a richly deserved promotion for Russell to the title-winning Mercedes team next season, with whom many more podiums and race victories are almost certain and by which time the bizarre circumstances of the Belgian Grand Prix will have long faded from F1's collective memory.

Michael Lamonato

Misfiring Gunners in trouble

FOOTBALL

Ben Tirebuck
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

The international break this weekend comes at an ideal time for under-fire Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta after his side's disastrous start to the season which sees them sitting bottom of the league after three games.

It is the first time since 1954 that the Gunners have lost their three opening games of the league season with last Saturday's (Aug 28) 0-5 hammering by Manchester City really exposing many of the issues facing the club.

It would be churlish to be overly critical of any team being overturned by City, the reigning champions with an embarrassment of riches in a deep squad populated by household names and seasoned internationals.

However, it is the manner of the performance that will most trouble Arteta. There is no shame in getting beat by any team but doing so with an obvious lack of application and a sub-standard attitude is not acceptable, least of all by the legion of Arsenal fans who



Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta is a man under serious pressure. Photo: AFP

demand better.

By the end of the game against City Arsenal had managed to retain only 19% of possession and registered only one shot at goal – and that was off target. It is little wonder they have still yet to score in the Premier League this season.

Injuries have hampered the playing personnel, with £50 million (B2.2 billion) signing Ben White the most obvious absentee, although the responsibility is on whoever steps into the team to not only take their chance personally but to give their all and perform

with pride for the team. BBC reporter Simon Stone summed it up perfectly when he said, "the Gunners defence was so flimsy, it scarcely did justice to their status as a Premier League outfit."

For a central defensive partnership of 1.82 metre tall Calum Chambers and 1.88 metre tall Rob Holding it was sheer embarrassment to see the diminutive figure of City's Ilkay Gündogan rise above them both to head in the opening goal after just seven minutes, thus opening the floodgates for what was City's biggest ever win

against the Gunners.

'SHELL SHOCKED'

Granit Xhaka will take much of the blame for the outcome last weekend, and rightfully so. As an experienced professional the onus on him to lead and set the example to younger players around him was significant. Yet his mindless foul on João Cancelo 10 minutes before half time exemplified the lack of discipline and focus throughout the club right now and resulted in him receiving the 11th red card of his career. The fact his manager offered a gesture of sympathy as the

ejected player passed him was worrying as there was no defence against his conduct.

Arteta looked shell shocked throughout as City bombarded his team into submission, likewise afterwards as he tried to explain the debacle when, in all truth, there was no real explanation to be given.

It is, admittedly, only three games into the campaign but the signs are ominous. The opening day defeat against newly-promoted Brentford set the tone and served as an indication of the tepid performances that were to follow. Critics have pointed to Arteta's penchant for constantly changing his line-up and tactics, perhaps even over complicating things. Simon Jordan, the former Crystal Palace chairman turned pundit on *TalkSport*, believes Arteta simply isn't ready for the Arsenal job.

"Arteta is a lot of theory and not enough practice – meaning he may not be fit for purpose at this moment in time," Jordan said on Monday.

"This group of players aren't strong enough for him to learn his trade with and he won't be given the forbearance for much longer," he added.

His opposing manager last weekend Pep Guardiola, who Arteta was assistant manager under at City before taking the Arsenal job, disagrees.

"I am not talking about a friend, I am talking about a professional," Guardiola said. "I don't have any doubts. He is so strong, he will recover, he will analyse and I am pretty sure he will be back on track."

The first game back for Arsenal after the break is against Norwich who are one place above them in the table. It is a huge game that the Gunners simply have to win. Then they face Burnley, always a tough test and especially so for a fragile team currently so low on confidence. They will need to stand tall and be counted or else risk being bullied into another defeat.

After that is the north London derby against Tottenham who, just to rub salt into the wounds of the Arsenal faithful, currently sit top of the table, the only team with a 100% record.

To say that encounter will be a spicy affair is a gross understatement. Arteta will just be hoping that between now and then he has done enough to cling onto his job.

Cristiano back at Old Trafford

FOOTBALL

Continued from page 16

Premier League champions City had been widely linked with a move for the forward after missing out on England captain Harry Kane.

However, United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer hinted a deal was in the offing during his pre-match press conference on Friday ahead of the team's Premier League trip to Wolves.

"Cristiano is a legend of this club, he's the greatest player of all time, if you ask me," said Solskjaer, who played alongside Ronaldo.

"We've always had a good communication. I know Bruno (Fernandes) has been talking to him as well. He knows what we feel about him. If he was ever going to move from Juventus, he knows that we're here."

United announced a deal with Juventus has been agreed with the transfer "subject to agreement of personal terms, visa and medical."

"Everyone at the club looks forward to welcoming Cristiano back to Manchester," the Red Devils added in a statement.

Sky Sport Italia reported that the English giants offered Juve €28 million (B1 billion), agreeing a two-year deal with the superstar attacker worth €25mn per season.

Ronaldo won the first of his five Champions League titles and was first crowned the world's best player during his first spell at United.

In total he scored 118 goals in 292 games, also winning three Premier League titles, one FA Cup and two League Cups.

"The idea of him going to Manchester City was torture. If there is a big player available Manchester United have to be in the market



Ronaldo and former teammate, now United manager, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. Photo: AFP

for that player," former United captain Gary Neville told Sky Sports.

"They've bolstered the squad with a proven goalscorer, a club legend, and what it is going to do is give the club an incredible 12 months."

Despite missing out on the title to Inter, Ronaldo still topped the Serie A goal charts last season, edging out Romelu Lukaku, who joined Chelsea last month for a club record £97 million (B4.4 billion).

Ronaldo also rolled back the years at Euro 2020 to win the Golden Boot despite playing just four games as Portugal bowed out at the last 16.

United have already significantly strengthened their squad with the signings of Jadon Sancho and Raphael Varane during the transfer window as they aim to win the Premier League for the first time since 2013.

Ronaldo joins already loaded group of attacking options for Solskjaer featuring Sancho, Bruno Fernandes, Edinson Cavani, Marcus Rashford, Anthony Martial, Mason Greenwood and Paul Pogba.

He is expected to make his second United debut at home to Newcastle on Sept 11. AFP

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Sport



Paeyo wins first Para gold for Thais > p14



Phuket Andaman FC players in training. Photo: Phuket Andaman FC Facebook page

PINCHER MOVE

Phuket 'Lobster' to tackle Blue Dragon League

FOOTBALL

The Phuket News
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket has a new local football team after it was announced last Wednesday (Aug 24) that Phuket Andaman FC will enter the new season following the recent acquisition of Patong City.

The team, nicknamed 'The

Lobster', will compete in the Blue Dragon Thai League 3 Southern Region division in the upcoming 2021/22 season and will play all their home games at Surakul Stadium in Phuket.

The team will be coached by former Thailand international Worawan Chitavanich, also known as "Smart Midfielder", who has experience managing both domestically and abroad and who will be

actively involved with recruiting new players for the team.

The announcement was made at a press conference at the ground by Thammawat Wongchareonyot, President of the Phuket Sports Association and the President of Phuket Andaman FC who was joined by Maj Gen Rungroj Thakurapunyasiri, who will act as club advisor.

Also present were Rewat Areeerob, President of Phuket

Provincial Administrative Organization; Thanusak Phungdej, chairman of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce; Thammawat Wongchareonyot, President of the Phuket Sports Association; Ravi Chandran, Managing Director of Laguna Phuket Group; and Damrong Chaisena, Director of the Sports Authority of Thailand in Phuket Executive Committee.

Mr Thammawat explained that the playing field and

training ground facilities were being prepared to the highest standards to enable the team to perform. He also confirmed that coach Worawan is in the process of identifying and securing his playing staff.

The team recently acquired the services of former Thai international defender Pratum Chuthong, promising young left-back Nathan Rongdej and will be looking to add further quality playing personnel in

the coming weeks.

Teams in the Thai League 3 can register and use four foreign players on the field in each game which must include at least one player from an Asian Football Federation (AFC) member country.

The 'Lobster' start their campaign on the road tomorrow (Sept 4) against MHCON Surat City. The start of the season has been delayed twice due to COVID-19 regulations.

Ronaldo returns to Manchester United

FOOTBALL

THE FOOTBALL WORLD WAS left stunned last Friday (Aug 27) when it was announced Cristiano Ronaldo would be re-joining Manchester United from Juventus after it was widely believed bitter rivals Manchester City were in the driving seat for his signature.

The Portuguese star said he achieved "great things" at Juve after United confirmed a deal had been sealed to bring him back to

Old Trafford where he excelled in his previous spell.

The 36-year-old made his name on the world stage in six years at United between 2003 and 2009 before moving to Real Madrid for a then world record transfer fee of £80 million (B3.58 billion).

He became a legend at Madrid, scoring a remarkable 450 goals in 438 matches in a glittering nine-year spell that included four Champions League triumphs and winning the Ballon d'Or for the

world's best player four times.

Ronaldo joined Juventus in 2018 and won two Serie A titles, but his time in Turin did not live up to expectations.

Hopes he would end the Italian giants' 25-year wait to become champions of Europe were thwarted as Juve failed to get beyond the Champions League quarter-finals in the past three years. Last season were also deposed as Italian champions by fierce rivals Inter Milan.

"Today I depart from an amaz-

ing club, the biggest in Italy and surely one of the biggest in all of Europe," Ronaldo posted alongside a compilation of best moments at Juventus on Instagram.

"The 'tifosi bianconeri' always respected me and I tried to thank that respect by fighting for them in every game, every season, every competition.

"In the end, we can all look back and realise that we achieved great things, not all that we wanted, but still, we wrote a pretty beautiful story together."



Manchester United have re-signed Cristiano Ronaldo. Photo: AFP

'LEGEND' RETURNS

United's swoop capped a tumultuous 24 hours during which Ronaldo initially seemed poised to join rivals Manchester City.

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