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BAR NONE



Venue operators on Bangla Rd are under tightened scrutiny by health officials. Photo: PPHO

PATONG VENUE OPERATORS CAUTIONED AS COVID CASES ON BANGLA RISE

The Phuket News
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Phuket officials this past week have ramped up their efforts to prevent any clusters of COVID-19 infections spreading through Patong's nightlife area, namely along Bangla Rd, after the number of new cases started to rise.

Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong last Saturday (Nov 27) confirmed that alcoholic beverages may be sold and consumed on premises at any permitted venues across the island only from 11am-2pm and 5pm-11pm.

"The Phuket Provincial Public Health Office reports that the rate of new infections in Phuket is increasing, and is linked to Bangla Rd, Patong,

and massage workers and freelance bar staff," Vice Governor Pichet said.

"Active case finding results on Soi Bangla on 26 November 2021 found that of 792 people tested, 21 returned positive results," he added.

Vice Governor Pichet repeated that the number of musicians performing at the same time at a venue is limited to five. "It is forbidden for them to touch each other, between singers, musicians and customers. It is forbidden to sing with customers, or even for performers or even staff to sit with customers

"Dancing is prohibited, including by performers in a dance show," he said.

The public health guidelines for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19, called the "COVID Free Setting", must be adhered to, espe-

cially measures for food or beverage outlets with music performances, V/Gov Pichet emphasised.

The warning followed mass testing of staff from venues along Bangla Rd, and came after officers from the PPHO patrolled Bangla Rd on the night of Nov 26 to ensure venues were complying with COVID measures.

Health officials last month closed several "restaurant-bars" on Bangla Rd for three days each for intensive disinfecting after staff tested positive for COVID. As part of the measures to prevent infections in Patong, all venue staff must be tested by ATK every seven days.

"In addition, there has been an increase in the number of infections at schools in all three districts, and the rate of use of all types of hospital

[or recovery] beds has increased," V/Gov Pichet also said.

However, V/Gov Pichet also noted that most of the patients receiving medical care were "Group 608" patients suffering any one of seven recognised medical conditions that place them at higher risk of serious infections. Most of the patients had not been vaccinated, he added.

"There is a risk from the easing of measures and the increasing group activities in traveling to Phuket," V/Gov Pichet said.

V/Gov Pichet repeated that the government's policy on reopening the country to tourism relied on four premises: vaccinations, "Universal Prevention" measures, COVID Free Setting and testing by ATK (antigen test kits)...

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News



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Green light for New Year all-nighter

The Phuket News
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The sale of alcohol will be allowed across Phuket through the night of New Year's Eve, following a new provincial order issued over the weekend.

According to the order, "It is forbidden to serve alcoholic beverages between 11 PM and 6 AM the following day. ** Except for the night of December 31, 2021, [vendors] can continue [selling alcohol] until 06.00 the next day."

The actual order was signed by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew last Saturday (Nov 27), but posted online early last Sunday morning (Nov 28).

The order issued was another extension of the standing order to regulate which venues, services and establishments may open and which ones must remain closed under the current COVID measures,

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The notice issued announcing the reprieve on alcohol sales from 11pm Dec 31 to 6am Jan 1. Image: PR Phuket

and the conditions that any venues that are allowed open must comply with.

The previous standing

paragraph regulating the sale of alcohol at venues was repealed, and replaced with a new revised version that

specifically allowed vendors to sell alcohol from 11pm Dec 31 through to 6am Jan 1.

All other conditions for

the sale of alcohol remain in effect, including the current interrupted service hours in effect that restrict venues to sell alcohol only from 11am to 2pm and from 5pm to 11pm.

Also specifically noted in the order as to remain in effect is the limit of five musicians performing at any one time, and with strictly no contact between musicians and other performers, and service staff and customers.

Dancing remains strictly prohibited, as are any organized dance performances.

Under the new order "gaming venues" for cock-fighting, fish fighting, horse racing, bullfighting, boxing and bird racing, and other venues regulated under the Gambling Act can now open with special permission from an "authorized person". A four-page set of guidelines for such venue operators was also published along with the order.

Temporary boxing stadiums may now open for live broadcast events, but only with special permission and in full compliance with COVID Free Setting measures set out by the government, the order noted.

Any person who violates or fails to comply with the order may be charged under Section 51 of the Communicable Diseases Act 2015, which incurs a fine of up to B20,000, the order warned.

Any breach of the order may also constitute an offense under Section 52 of the Communicable Diseases Act, which may be punished by a fine of up to B100,000 or up to one year in prison, or both.

Offences against the order may also be punished under Section 18 of the Emergency Decree, which may incur punishment of up to two years' imprisonment, or a fine not exceeding B40,000, or both, the order warned.



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COURTYARD
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Phuket Town

Nightlife staff face mass testing

Continued from page 1

"The strategy relies on officials focusing on surveillance, especially on events, schools, hotels, markets, camps, tourist attractions and infections in communities," he said.

"A local outbreak action plan has been set out and we have set social measures for establishments and agencies to seriously implement measures for enforcing COVID-19 Free Setting and COVID-19 Free Area requirements are complied with," he added.

"This includes communication and promotion of 'Smart Control', 'Living with COVID-19' and 'Universal Prevention' measures, including law enforcement," V/Gov Pichet noted.

The Phuket Provincial Government is continuing its campaign for people in the area to be covered by 100% vaccination.

V/Gov Pichet explained that the PPHO has asked business operators to bring any Thai and foreign workers who have not been vaccinated to be vaccinated at the five government hospitals on the island: Vachira



Nearly 800 Bangla staff were tested for COVID on Nov 26. Photo: PPHO

Phuket Hospital. Chalong Hospital, Patong Hospital, Phuket Provincial Hospital and Talang Hospital.

The workers may be brought to the hospital every Monday - Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm, except for lunch break. However, if the worker is to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine, registration is required, he said.

"In addition, the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office is open to provide the first Sinovac injection every Monday - Friday from 9am to midday throughout November," he added.

"This service is open for

everyone, including Thai people, foreigners, migrant workers and people from other provinces," V/Gov Pichet said.

As for the campaign to vaccinate children in Phuket 12-17 years old, 30,690 of the target total 33,393 children have registered to be vaccinated, representing 91.9%, V/Gov Pichet continued.

"Of those who have registered, 29,981 people have received the first dose of vaccine, representing 97.7%," he said.

A further 28,235 had already received their second vaccination injection, representing 92%, he added.

Police deny 'robbing' tourists

Traffic police in Patong defended as only doing their duty

The Phuket News
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Phuket Provincial Police have defended their officers standing in front of a restaurant in Patong after a post online accused police of "destroying tourism" and quoting foreign tourists as being "robbed".

The response by Phuket Provincial Police, saying that the police officers were only doing their duty as traffic police, was posted online late on Nov 24.

The response came after a post on the "Phuket Sandbox – SHA Plus" Facebook page on Sunday (Nov 21) showed a photo of police officers in front of the "Kitchen" restaurant, located next door to the well known TaiPan nightclub on Rath-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, at the intersection with Bangla Rd.

The message posted with the photo accused police officers of "destroying tourism" and quoting foreign tourists as being "robbed", the Phuket Provincial Police noted in their response.

"Phuket Provincial Police asked for information about such cases," the response noted.

"It is a [police] duty to set up traffic checks according to normal



The photo that accompanied the post that accused police of 'destroying tourism' and 'robbing' foreigners. Photo: via Phuket Provincial Police

duties. The order [to set up the traffic check] was clearly supported properly with the intention to reduce traffic accidents," it added.

"Some tourists are not familiar with the roads and do not know the traffic laws, and because of different laws, traditions and cultures, this may cause accidents and harm to the motorists themselves or others and the property of the tourists

themselves," the Phuket Provincial Police said.

"This is in accordance with the regulations and laws that have given them powers [to enforce traffic laws], without discrimination regardless whether [the motorist is a] Thai or foreigner, for the peace of the people as a whole," the response said.

From October 16 to November 23 this year Phuket has seen 374,117

Thai tourists arrive on the island, of whom 2,507 committed traffic offenses, representing 0.67%, said the post.

The number of foreigners arriving in Phuket amounted to 36,549 people, of whom 129 committed traffic offenses, accounting for 0.43%, it added.

"Statistics of deaths and injuries from traffic accidents in Phuket in 2019 saw 129 deaths, 117 serious

injuries and 4,785 minor injuries," the Provincial Police continued in their response.

"From the statistics of traffic offenses committed by tourists, it can be seen that the arrest rate of offenders is less than 1% of tourists, whether Thai or foreigners," the response said.

"But when looking at the statistics of injuries and fatalities from traffic cases, it can be seen that the number of deaths and injuries is quite high. Therefore, I [or we] would like all citizens and tourists to be aware of the observance of traffic rules in order to reduce injuries [and harm done to] life and property."

"Reduce risks, avoid dangers, create discipline, obey traffic rules" the post concluded.

With no single officer named as responsible for the official response to accusations of police "robbing" people, namely foreigners and tourists, the response was signed off with, "Best wishes from Phuket Provincial Police Spokesperson Team".

Over the past week, *The Phuket News* has received independent reports of "heightened police activity" that appears to have been targeting foreigners in several areas across the island, including Kamala, Cherng Talay, Chalong and Rawai.

Counterfeit cough medicine factory raided in Rassada

POLICE AND HEALTH ministry officials have raided an illegal cough medicine factory in Rassada, north of Phuket Town, seizing more than 21,000 bottles of cough medicine and other materials with an estimated value of B30 million.

The raid followed officers from Division 4 of the Royal Thai Police Consumer Protection Crime Suppression Division and officers from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) investigating the source of cough medicine used by suspects caught in Nakhon Sri Thammarat and Phuket with the drug cocktail "4 x 100" ("Four Times One Hundred").

Of note, news of the raid was reported by the Royal Thai Police Consumer Protection Division in Bangkok. Phuket police who took part in the raid have yet to report their role in the joint operation.

Officers on Oct 28 armed with a search warrant raided a location in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, but found the place empty of any contraband, reported Consumer Protection Division police.



The contraband cough medicine seized in Rassada. Photo: Royal Thai Police

Further investigation led them to an address in Soi Lak Kongsri in Rassada, Phuket, after one suspect confessed that he had ordered the cough medicine from a "Mr Teerawat" (last name withheld), who also goes by the name "Mr Dan", the report said.

Police and FDA officials together with officers from the Phuket Provincial Police, Phuket City Police and the Phuket Provincial Health office (PPHO) raided the Rassada address on Nov 17, finding the haul of illegally produced cough medicine.

Armed with a search warrant from the Phuket Provincial Court to search the premises, officers found materials and equipment for the production of cough syrup Diphenyl.

In total, 21,250 bottles labelled "Diphenyl Expectorant Syrup" were seized, along with raw materials for production. The labels on the bottles were marked that the medicine contained drug formula registration number 2A 58/60.

Officers also seized 7,237 empty medicine bottles, 80,000 bottle caps, 1,840 empty boxes, 1,200 sections of bubble wrap and seven machines and other items of equipment used for producing the medicine.

The suspect arrested confessed that no permit had been issued for the premises to produce medicine and admitted that all items seized were his, the report said.

The items seized and the suspect are now in police custody as police continue their investigation for further legal proceedings, the report noted.

The suspect is currently facing charges under the Drug Act 1967 for manufacture of counterfeit drugs, selling counterfeit drugs, producing and selling modern drugs without permission, the police confirmed.

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Woman blames AZ jab for hair loss

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A second Phuket person has blamed COVID vaccination for severe hair loss, this time a 41-year-old saleswoman at a motorcycle dealership in Phuket Town.

Mananya 'Ann' Phuekpoom, 41, told reporters last Friday (Nov 26) that she started noticing her hair falling out in clumps after she received a third-dose "booster injection" of AstraZeneca on Sept 16. The vaccination was administered by intramuscular injection, she noted.

Ms Mananya had previously received her first and second vaccination injections, both Sinovac, on May 18 and June 14, respectively.

"When I got home [after the AstraZeneca injection], I didn't feel well. I had a fever for about two days. I had a headache, joint pain, and I felt cold and tired," she said.

"I noticed my hair was starting to fall out about a week after the vaccination. When washing my hair, it fell out in clumps. It fell out when I used a hair dryer, and even when I just ran my fingers through it," she added.

With her hair loss continuing, Ms Mananya went to seek help at a private



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

clinic on Oct 10, where after blood tests she was told that she had anemia.

"The doctor prescribed medicine, which I have to pay for myself. Sometimes I do not have enough money and I have to request a salary advance from my boss," Ms Mananya said.

Ms Mananya is certain the vaccination injection caused her hair loss. "This has never happened before, not even with the other vaccination injections, and none of my relatives have suffered hair loss," she said.

"I want good treatment now. My friends and family want me to get back to my life as it was before. I want the

responsible agencies in Phuket to take some responsibility because now it's very difficult both in terms of living and coping with treatment costs, which is totalling tens of thousands of baht," Ms Mananya said.

"Initially, I was told that it would take three to six months for my hair to recover, but my condition still has not improved despite the treatment I have been getting. Now the doctor will not guarantee that it will return to the same as before," she added.

"Life is difficult and I am requesting the relevant agencies to help," Ms Mananya said.

Ms Mananya's plea for assistance follows Bodin Saeliang, 19, a first-year vocational school student in Phuket, claiming that his extreme hair loss started after he received his second injection of the Sinovac vaccine. Mr Bodin went public with his claim on Nov 17.

Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Kusak Kiat-tikoon responded to Ms Mananya's plea last Saturday (Nov 27), saying that Ms Mananya needs to consult with specific doctors who can run thorough tests to determine whether the vaccine was responsible for her hair loss or not as at this stage they are unsure.

Dr Kusak noted that Ms Mananya had been diagnosed with anemia which coincided with her receiving the three injections. However, he added that further tests were necessary to determine the exact cause of her hair loss. Her case has been noted by the PPHO and is under investigation, Dr Kusak added.

The PPHO added that anyone who believes they have experienced side effects after receiving a COVID jab should consult with a hospital or contact the PPHO Insurance office for preliminary treatment.

Kalim Beach restaurant fined for blocking off public parking spaces

A RESTAURANT IN KALIM Beach has been fined after being found guilty by police of obstructing traffic by placing a series of traffic cones in a public parking lot.

Attention was brought to the issue following a slew of complaints on various social media platforms that the restaurant, Mermaid de Sea Phuket, had illegally blocked off areas in front of its premises using the cones and that numerous cars, believed to be those of customers, had parked irresponsibly as a result, blocking traffic flow.

Officers from Patong Police station visited the site on the evening of Nov 25 to inspect the complaint, and confirmed that a fine of B1,000 had been issued the following day for breach of Road Traffic Act 2522 stipulating obstruction of traffic is forbidden.

Police confirmed that they had discussed the incident with the manager and staff of the restaurant and that they understood that by placing the cones in a public parking area they were



Photos: Patong Police Station

breaking the law and forcing cars to park elsewhere which, in turn, was blocking traffic.

No arrests were made as the fine and a warning was deemed appropriate. The restaurant manager and staff acknowledged this and agreed to cooperate moving forward.

Police used the incident to issue a general reminder that blocking off public access areas and obstructing traffic is a crime and asked for people to respect the law and cooperate in future.

The Phuket News

Fisherman drowns in Thalang canal

POLICE HAVE CONFIRMED THAT a man reported missing who had earlier been fishing in a canal in Thalang last Friday (Nov 26) has been discovered drowned.

The incident occurred at a section of the canal behind the Thalang branch of the TOT in Moo 1, Thepkasattri.

Police were alerted to the situation by a group of men who had been fishing nearby and who had attempted to rescue the stricken man. Pol Lt Col Sin Saichit, deputy police chief at Thalang Police Station, and fellow officers were joined at the scene by workers from the Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation, Muang Mai Branch, where a large group of local villagers had gathered.

A witness account from 21-year-old Sukhum Sanguankaew, who was at the same location fishing with five friends, recounted that he saw a man attempting to cast a net into the water not far from where he and his friends were situated.

When he glanced again, Mr Sukham noticed that the man had disappeared and assumed he had fallen into the water. Mr Sukham and his friends then took to the water in an attempt to retrieve the man but were unable to locate him which is when they then raised the alarm to the authorities for help.

Officers opened a drainage dam to allow the water levels to recede somewhat before beginning the search



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

which lasted over an hour.

The body of the man was finally discovered in an area of the canal heavy with overhanging trees and where a number of fallen trees had amassed before being brought back onto land and announced dead at the scene. The body was then taken to Thalang Hospital for further examination and to determine the exact cause of death.

One early possible cause suggested was that the man had suffered cramps or some sort of seizure as he cast the net which saw him tumble into the water and render him unable to save himself from drowning although the official cause has yet to be confirmed.

Police later confirmed the victim as 32-year-old Chakkraphat Deechaichan, a ceiling technician originally from Sisaket Province. They confirmed that they have informed Mr Chakkraphat's family who will take his body for religious service after the post-mortem has been completed by doctors at Thalang Hospital.

Eakkapop Thongtub

FBI joins anti-trafficking efforts

The Phuket News
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Department of Special Investigation (DSI) Director-General Traiyarit Temhiwong last week led a major conference in Phuket aimed at ramping up efforts to combat human trafficking into the country.

Joining the conference, held at Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa, Merlin Beach on Nov 25, were 135 representatives from major anti-crime agencies including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Investigation for United States Homeland Security (HSI), Australian Border Force (ABF) immigration unit and the Office of the Diplomat of the Norwegian Police Service.

Representatives from international NGOs included ASEAN-ACT, Hanns Seidel, IOM Thailand, UNODC, the IJM Foundation, A21 Thailand Foundation, Ford Freedom International Foundation, Operation Underground Railroad, Alliance Anti-Traffic (AAT) and the Labour Protection Network (LPN).

Local enforcement was



The major anti-human trafficking conference was held in Phuket. Photo: PR Phuket

represented by officers from the Office of the Attorney-General's, Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command (based in Phuket) and the Anti-Human Trafficking Division of the Royal Thai Police Immigration Bureau.

At the three-day conference, on Nov 24-26, Mr Traiyarit said that the Thai government has given importance to the problem of human trafficking.

"It has been raised on the national agenda that all sectors must help resolve. The Minister of Justice [Somsak

Thepsutin] has ordered the agencies under his supervision that the prevention and suppression of human-trafficking offenses must be taken seriously and decisively.

"The Department of Special Investigation therefore, together with government agencies and many international network partners, are holding this workshop to take lessons in the 'Prosecution of transnational crimes in human trafficking'," he said.

The topics of the workshop included the development of a public policy process that

leaves "no person behind", paving the way for the implementation of an ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Mr Traiyarit explained.

"Especially women and children," he said.

Other topics discussed among the major organisations included the investigation of human-trafficking cases in transnational crimes, and care and remedies for victims in human trafficking cases.

"There will be integration of cooperation in the form of network partners of agencies

in solving human-trafficking problems, to strengthen the guidelines for the prevention and suppression of human trafficking to be sustainable, which will lead to an effective level of human trafficking situation in the TIP Report," Mr Traiyarit said.

Thailand currently remains on the Tier 2 Watch List of the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report released by the US State Department in July.

The report noted, "Corruption and official complicity facilitated trafficking and continued to impede anti-trafficking efforts. NGOs' perceptions of corruption made them reluctant to work with the government or certain agencies in some cases. Some police may have purposely compromised investigations and failed to provide prosecutors sufficient evidence to prosecute trafficking cases. Some law enforcement officials were reluctant to investigate influential boat owners and captains, as well as other offenders who were or had connections to high-ranking government officials."

However, the DSI was singled out for its stance against human trafficking.

"Observers reported DSI officers resisted intimidation by influential individuals connected to trafficking cases," the TIP report said.

Mr Traiyarit highlighted the attendance of Pol Gen Thammasak Wicharaya, Deputy Secretary-General to the Prime Minister, and thanked him for his presentation on "Developing the Potential of Officers Working in the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking".

"The Department of Special Investigation absolutely gives importance to the prevention and suppression of human trafficking. It focuses on the suppression and prosecution of human trafficking offenders as a network of international organised crime, influential people, and government officials involved in human trafficking," he said.

"In terms of protection, the DSI focus is on strengthening cooperation between government agencies and the private sector. In reporting incidents, reporting clues, or enhancing the body of knowledge to those involved to form a concrete partnership in the prevention of human trafficking offenses," he concluded.

New OrBorTor chiefs elected

THE PHUKET OFFICE OF THE ELECTION Commission of Thailand has announced the informal results confirming the newly elected officials to serve as Chiefs of six Tambon Administration Organisations (OrBorTor) in Phuket following the elections held last Sunday (Nov 28).

Manoch Puchalad, with 2,858 of the 6,855 votes cast, was elected the new Chief of Cherg Talay OrBorTor, replacing MaAnn Samran, who did not run for re-election.

Chula Dumlak was elected Chief of Kamala OrBorTor, Kuakiat Jitkua as the sole candidate was elected Chief of Koh Kaew OrBorTor, Sarawut Seesakukham was elected Chief of Mai Khao OrBorTor, Trin Panyawai was elected Chief of Sakhu OrBorTor, and Sittichai Chantawat was elected Chief of Thepkrasattri OrBorTor.



Manoch Puchalad celebrates his election as the new Chief of Cherg Talay OrBorTor.

The PEC noted that the results at this stage were "informal" as only a preliminary count. A full recount will be held and a period to allow for complaints to be filed will be observed before the ballots are sent to Bangkok for confirmation by the central office of the Election Commission of Thailand.

The Phuket News

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Andaman food festival opens at Patong Beach

MINISTER OF TOURISM and Sports Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn was in Phuket last Friday night (Nov 26) to inaugurate the “The Great Escape of the Andaman Sea” food festival, a three-day event that showcases some of the finest locally available cuisine.

Mr Phiphat was joined by Pichet Panapong, Deputy Governor of Phuket, to open the Thai taste festival at Patong Beach which aims to promote provincial tourism and help generate income for local businesses and entrepreneurs affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 40 restaurants from Phuket and the surrounding areas of the Andaman province such as Thung Yi Pheng, Khlok and Krabi will be showcasing their dishes for attendees to savour along the Patong beachside walk. There will also be Thai cooking classes available using locally sourced ingredients led by renowned local chefs.

Leveraging the recognition by UNESCO of Phuket as a Creative City of Gastronomy, the Tour-



Photo: PR Phuket

ism Authority of Thailand (TAT) said it expects over 14,000 local and foreign tourists to attend the event across the weekend with a projected income generation of over B17 million. Of that total the TAT estimates around B7.5mn will go to over 8,000 local business owners.

The festival offers tourists a great opportunity to enjoy not only local food options but the cultural diversity and southern lifestyle that the region is famous for including the popular beaches, said the organisers.

All health and safety precaution measures in relation to COVID-19 will be in place during the festival and attendees are requested to fully respect these when present.

The Phuket News

Marine Dept eyes terminals for large tour cruise ships

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Marine Department will hire a consultant to research the viability of building ship terminals for large cruise liners along the Andaman coast.

Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan revealed the news at a meeting held to bring the project to the public's attention at the Pullman Phuket Panwa Beach Resort on Nov 25.

Mr Amnuay said that the Marine Department wishes to hire a consultant to conduct the study and draft a master plan for the development of cruise ship terminals on the Andaman coast, namely the provinces of Ranong, Phang Nga, Krabi, Phuket, Trang and Satun.

The study will assess the economic, engineering, environmental and social suitability factors, and the environmental impact assessment of the project, Mr Amnuay said.

“The study report will also analyze the private sector's investment in the project to



Photo: NNT

ensure it is in accordance with Sections 22 to 31 of the Public-Private Partnership Act B.E. 2562 (2019) and to listen to the opinions and suggestions of those involved in the project development,” he said.

“The project is expected to be a comprehensive study of information in all aspects, as oceans cover three-quarters of the world. Cruise ships have an advantage in the size of the service area they can cover. At the same time, cruise ships are a service that can be moved closer to areas with potential tourists, which is another dimension of travel,”

Mr Amnuay said.

“It combines travel with amenities, accommodation, fine dining, recreation and convenience combined with tourism at attractions that are sometimes more inaccessible or difficult to reach than other means of transport,” he added.

Mr Amnuay noted that popularity of large cruise liners had declined after the advent of cheap long-distance flights, and were now more popular for smaller ships conducting shorter regional tours.

“Therefore we are looking into the idea of using ships

to develop and create more diverse tourism routes, by expanding maritime routes to beautiful areas around the world. Such travel is still popular and has continued to expand due to characteristics of cruise travel that are unique,” he said.

Cruise line tourists tended to have high purchasing power, Mr Amnuay said.

“The short voyage periods that bring large numbers into the port cities, as well as long advance routing, have resulted in the development of the relevant infrastructures that can accommodate and impress cruise tourists to return to the port city and tourist attractions over a longer period of time,” he said.

“If seriously supported by government policies in port infrastructure and transport links, consistently improving regulations and supporting cruise ship operations is a key factor in the success of a country and region in promoting cruise ships to bring more tourists into the country and bring in significant local revenue,” Mr Amnuay concluded.

Phang Nga tourism still suffering

THE MAJORITY OF SOUVENIR shops, restaurants and massage shops in the Khao Lak coastal area of Phang Nga province have seen no signs of recovery despite the country having reopened to foreign tourists for over three weeks.

The beach-resort area is still quiet with only a small number of visitors, mostly from Germany, who decided to make Thailand the destination for their holidays.

Chayabol Hirankanokkul, president of the Phang Nga Tourism Association, hoped the tourism business



Public Health Deputy Minister Sathit Pitutecha talks with tourists in Takuapa. Photo: Apinya Wipatayotin / Bangkok Post

will get back to normal by early next year, judging from the increase in advance room bookings. Around 50% of rooms are already booked for next month, he said.

He said tour operators are

now ready to welcome tourists by complying with the ministry's COVID-19 safety measures. “All hospitality staff have already received full vaccine doses, including a third jab. They are the first priority to get the vaccine,” he said. “We are confident the tourism business can live together with the disease so there is no need to shut down the country again.”

According to the association, tourism revenue is usually around B54 billion a year, but plunged to B30mn during the pandemic. Bangkok Post

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Omicron will not affect reopening, says Phiphat

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

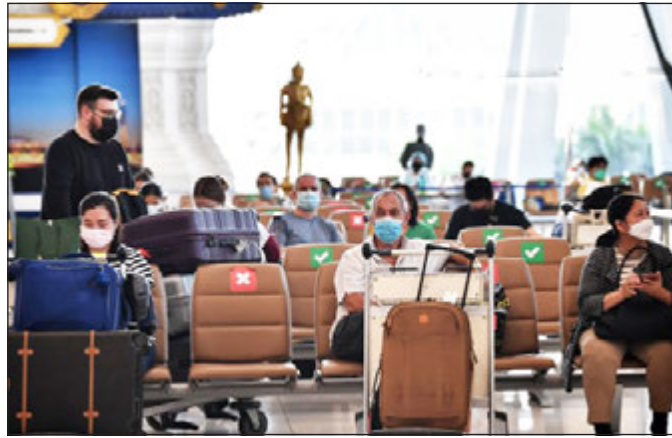
Thailand will not take a step back from the reopening plan despite uncertainty over the Omicron COVID-19 variant, Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said on Monday (Nov 29).

Phiphat will also propose a more relaxed approach on alcohol sales to lift the festive sentiment.

"Nobody wants another border closure as it was really difficult for us to reopen the country," he said. "Our economy still suffers from the crisis, so there will be no more border seals unless we are in a very critical situation."

He said international travellers during the first 29 days of reopening numbered over 100,000, double the number of tourists after three months of the Phuket Sandbox. The figures proved that a quarantine-free strategy is the right way to attract tourists, he said.

As the country recorded 200,000 tourists in the first



International visitors await instructions from health officials inside the arrival terminal at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, on Nov 1. Photo: AFP

11 months, the ministry expected 300,000-400,000 tourists would visit Thailand by year-end, thanks to the winter season.

However, the plan to replace RT-PCR tests with antigen test kits for the Test and Go scheme from Dec 16 has to be postponed until there is more clarity on the Omicron variant to prevent possible caseloads of over 20,000 per day as seen during the recent wave.

"We have to accelerate the vaccination plan for residents which could help guard ourselves against the possible

new wave," said Phiphat. "By December, our country will complete 110-120 million doses for the entire population and such protection will at least avoid severe conditions for those who are infected."

The number of vaccines required for the tourism industry is approximately 3.5mn doses, of which 3mn were requested by the Tourism Council of Thailand. The ministry will coordinate with the Public Health Ministry to allocate booster jabs for tourism employees as soon as possible.

Phiphat was due to discuss

with the Cabinet on Tuesday about allowing the sale of alcohol in blue zone areas until after midnight during year-end celebrations and unlocking sales from 2-5pm as the current rules don't permit alcohol sales during those hours.

The proposal will be submitted to the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration for approval.

Phiphat said the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) will organise countdown events in five regions including Ayutthaya, Nakhon Ratchasima, Chiang Mai, Phuket and Chonburi with a budget of B100-120mn, focusing on supporting local artists.

TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said the new variant hasn't affected travel sentiment so far.

However, the European market has started to see slow bookings in December due to concern over another lockdown triggered by the spread of the new variant.

But if there's no threat from Omicron, the number of international arrivals this year should reach 500,000.

Select African arrivals to face 14-day quarantine

BANGKOK

PEOPLE WHO ARRIVE from countries in Africa not subject to a ban will still have to quarantine for 14 days and be tested repeatedly for COVID-19, amid worldwide concern over the new Omicron variant of the virus.

Apisamai Srirangson, a spokeswoman the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration, confirmed on Monday (Nov 29) that travellers would not be allowed into Thailand if coming from eight African nations as of yesterday (Dec 2).

The countries are Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Dr Apisamai said people arriving from other African countries would be quarantined at specific facilities for 14 days and be tested for COVID-19 three times. They could not enter the Sandbox quarantine programme.

Those who had arrived since Nov 15 and had been discharged from quarantine before 14 days were being traced and monitored until the 14th day after their arrival. There were nearly 200



CCSA spokeswoman Apisamai Srirangson. Photo: Bangkok Post

of them, she said.

People coming from African countries had not been allowed to enter Thailand under the Test and Go programme.

At time of press, Dr Apisamai said the Omicron variant had been detected in the eight African countries and in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Britain, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hong Kong, Israel and Australia.

Those who arrived from southern African countries prior to Dec 2 would be quarantined for 14 days and during this time be given three RT-PCR tests for COVID-19.

Dr Apisamai said from Nov 1 to 27, 1,007 people had arrived in Thailand from southern Africa and none had tested positive for COVID-19 during their quarantine.

Bangkok Post

Frenchman faces deportation for Facebook post controversy

BANGKOK

A 49-YEAR-OLD FRENCHMAN KNOWN for making fun of the Thai junta said last Saturday (Nov 27) he was denied re-entry when he landed in Phuket and faces deportation.

Yan Marchal, who posted a video mocking the now-dissolved National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) in 2019, had returned to Phuket from his home country of France last weekend. He was told by immigration officials that he was prohibited from entering the Kingdom because he was deemed a threat to national security.

Mr Marchal said he was also served a legal notice saying his behaviour indicated he was a possible danger to the public.

According to the legal notice, Marchal will be expelled in accordance with the Immigration Act though it stated that he was permitted to lodge an appeal within 48 hours.

Marchal said last Saturday that he intended to appeal the ban. However, he said he could not contact the French embassy for advice at the time. It is unknown at time of press if he was able to establish contact with the embassy.

Pol Maj Gen Achayon Kraithong, deputy commissioner of the Immigration Bureau, said that the Frenchman is on the blacklist of several agencies and immigration officials therefore decided not to grant him entry.



Yan Marchal was denied entry at Phuket airport last Saturday (Nov 27). Photo: Yan Marchal Facebook

He added that Marchal was flown from Phuket to Suvarnabhumi for the deportation process.

Marchal, who has lived in Thailand for 18 years, was quoted as saying that Thailand is his home and that he has a Thai wife, two children and a business here. He was also quoted as saying that the re-entry ban was likely linked to his social media posts involving Thai politics.

The Frenchman shot to fame when he posted a brief clip ridiculing an NCPO song in 2019. The video had over 1 million views overnight before police asked him to take it down.

Marchal is known to share his political views on Facebook and he has recently turned to TikTok to make fun of politics and already gained a solid following of 600,000.

Wassayos Ngamkham
Bangkok Post

Christmas

GALA DINNER AT COSMO

Enjoy the magic of Christmas whilst taking in the stunning views across Nai Harn Bay, over a sumptuous Buffet Dinner complete with all the trimmings at 7:30pm. South African singer-songwriter Eric Canham will entertain you with festive songs throughout the evening while Santa Claus and his helpers will greet children with gifts.

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Panto returns to Phuket!

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Aho! there me hearties! The festive season is fast approaching and it's time to get into the Christmas spirit with another Pantomime Show!

Last year's Aladdin was a huge success with over 350 people attending three sell-out shows! This year, Theatrx and The Junkyard Theatre will present **TREASURE ISLAND**, a swarthy tale of pirates and hidden treasure. Prepare to be astounded as Jim, Long John Silver and a plethora of pirates take to the stage for 5 shows (including 2 matinees) on December 17, 18 and 19 at Phuket's one and only Junkyard Theatre, next to Ikea on the bypass road.

**HE'S BEHIND YOU!
OH NO HE'S NOT!
OH YES HE IS!**

A truly interactive experience, the British holiday tradition of pantomimes encourages the audience to cheer, heckle, boo and hiss to help Jim defeat Long John Silver, making Treasure Island the perfect choice for family fun.

Designed by John Underwood, the Junkyard Theatre is a unique concept in Phuket. The staging and set are designed using recycled materials from across the island and skilfully created in the extraordinary Underwood Factory. Stepping into the Junkyard Theatre



ignites the imagination with its eclectic and kitsch style, drawing inspiration from its tropical context and juxtaposing vintage antiques with quirky art pieces, all set against a jungle backdrop.

When not supporting the charities of Phuket, the Junkyard stage comes alive for their weekly "A Night at the Junkyard" experience featuring mad hat performances and dance, inspired by the Asian / Expat experience.

To find your way to the newly built Junkyard Theatre stage, step through the verdant leaves of the Grind Cafe and prepare to be breath-taken as you are transported to a world of pirates, parrots and pantomime. Delightful dancing girls will provide numbers to tap along to. Hold on to your hats, me hearties!

Aileen Zara Powell, is welcomed back on stage as our guy-next-door Hero "Jim Hawkins". With her extensive theatre experience, Aileen has also transformed Ben Crocker's *Treasure Island* script into a Panto like you've never seen before... with a Phuket flair, as well as all the heroes and villains plus a talking human-sized parrot, cross-dressing pirates (both ways), ghosts and laughs galore.

Director Joel Adams is keen to provide good-quality and authentic opportunities for everyone to access professional theatre. With over 25 cast members with over 10 nationalities and ranging in age from 11 to 70, Joel is excited to bring countries and generations together on the stage, through his theatre company Theatrx, as well as give the young people of Phuket a fantastic

chance to watch and engage with live theatre.

Tickets include tender chicken bites with fries for the kids or a delicious six-course tapas meal for adults prepared by the talented Chef Ooy and her team at The Grind Cafe. Of course, no theatre experience would be the same without popcorn and the Grind Café have added their special twist to the mix!

Book early to avoid disappointment. It is an act of piracy one might say, that you get an entire night of food and entertainment for just B1,400 for adults and B800 for children. Proceeds will support the local charity, The Good Shepherd Phuket Town, who provide an education to underprivileged children living in the slum areas of Phuket Town.

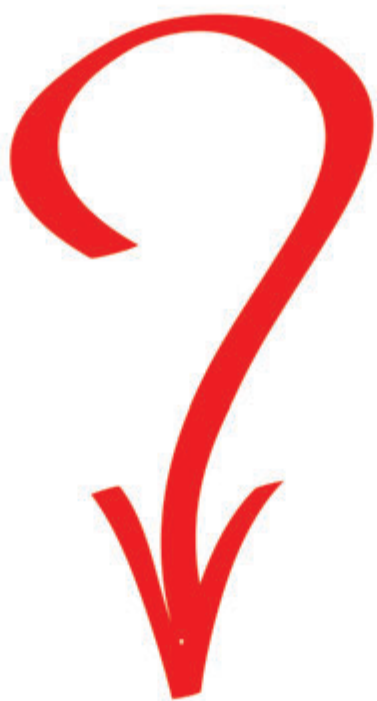
For tickets, contact Chantal at chantal.fernandes@gmail.com, through Facebook (Phuket Christmas Panto) or Instagram (@phuketchristmaspanto).

Two VIP tickets are available to Instagrammers who take a selfie in a pirate's hat or eye-patch and tag @phuketchristmaspanto. So spread the word to salty sea-dogs who wish to participate. We need more crew to defeat Long John Silver!

Fancy dress is, of course, encouraged on the night, and children who sport pirates' hats will be rewarded with chocolate treasures. It's gonna be a wild ride, full of fun, jokes, songs and general madness! Laughter for the whole family! DON'T MISS OUT this year!



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Tale of a champion

ADVERTORIAL

Leonard H. Le Blanc III

On reading 'Fighting for Success' by Lynne Miller, I was reminded that all Thais must master one skill to live in their society. It is the ability to peer behind facades, to see what is actually behind a person's mask, to understand the reality that actually exists and not what is apparent at first glance. In Thailand, little appears at face value. There are always social complexities and intricate relationships that are unseen and unknown. Thais understand this fact of life, new foreigners or expats here do not.

A perfect example is when I was selling anti-corrosive pipe-wrapping tape back in the 1990s. Any buried steel pipe must be protected from corrosion. I brought the Sales Manager from this one UK pipe-wrapping tape company in to see a steel pipe importer in Bangkok one day. Their office was on the second floor in a non-descript, Chinese-owned (means no maintenance or upkeep) office building. The office space was very small, the desks almost touched (we had to slide in sideways); with an old fax, a rotary telephone, some battered filing cabinets and manual typewriters.

We amicably chatted with the owner then departed. On the way down the stairs I explained this firm is the largest importer of steel piping in Southeast Asia. He looked at me like I was mad. I said they don't put their profits into their office appearance, but into their bank account. They have all the tools needed to do business, nothing more. I have seen many companies come here wanting to do business over the decades; some of the largest, most successful firms in the West. Virtually all of them have failed and returned home for the same reason. They did not un-

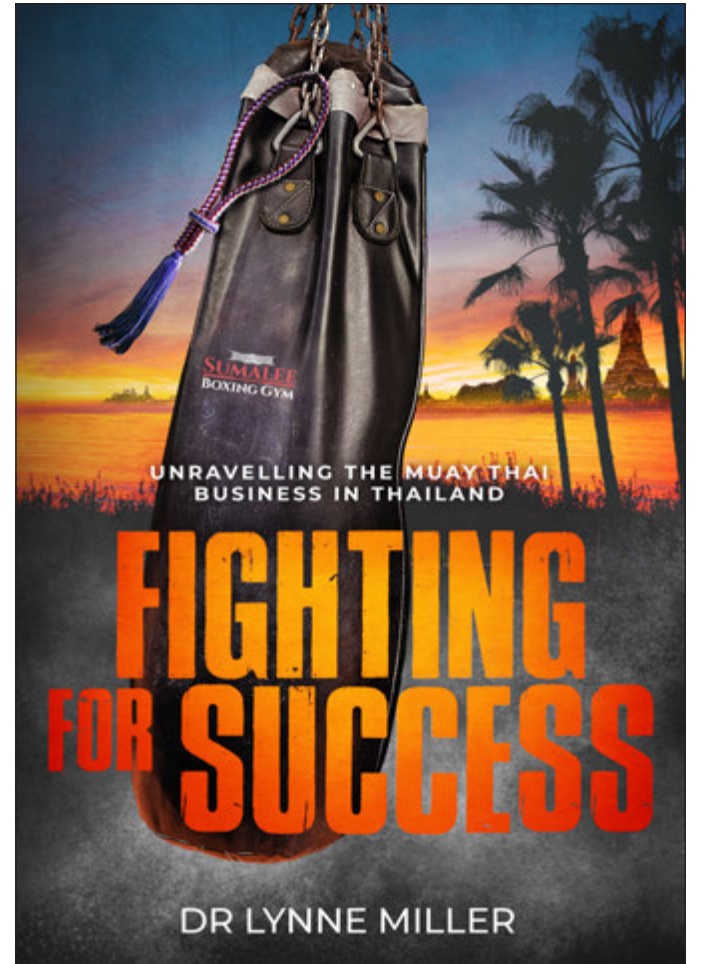
derstand how Thais do their business which is almost the complete opposite in their home countries.

For any foreigner who wants to do business here it looks too easy at first glance. The sun and fun, the sand and tropical scenery, the friendliness and hospitality of the Thais are all an enticing allure (actually it is a steel trap) for the unwary, uninformed business investor. As the old saying in Hollywood goes: "For every face you see on the screen there are a thousand failures." The same is true in Thailand for trying to do business.

Lynne Miller has admirably succeeded in establishing her Muay Thai business here in Phuket in spite of impossibly long odds through sheer grit, great determination, stamina and perseverance. As one sharp wit once said about Lynne, she has done the local business equivalent of climbing up Mount Everest upside down and backwards, without any equipment or oxygen to stand at the peak in ultimate triumph. All done through almost a superhuman, indomitable will.

Lynne's book takes the reader through every single step of her trial-and-error, repeated failures and learning curve which remained vertical for years in the greatest of detail. It is a true primer on how to – and how not to – do business in Thailand. More so, she has ultimately, finally succeeded in the most male-dominated, tightly-controlled, extremely competitive world of Muay Thai. She stands alone as the rare example of a successful Western business woman in a take-no-prisoners, eat-or-be-eaten, sporting community.

The Thais have a saying: The Japanese want to sell US\$1 million of goods in 100 years; the Americans want to sell US\$100 million of goods in one year." What this means is if you come to Thailand, you have to stay here a long time. You cannot give up after a few years, you have to be fanatically dedicated to succeed. Lynne figured this all out early on. She dug in her heels hard, refusing to be beaten or cowed.



She overcame seemingly insurmountable odds to become a true Muay Thai success. She has earned the reader's admiration of a remarkable journey well told. We owe her a debt repaid by readership. Lynne has written a great book.

Published by Sumalee Books, *Fighting for Success* is available in paperback and Kindle on Amazon at: <https://amzn.to/3EFXjeP> and <https://amzn.to/3GIaaii> respectively. Those living in Thailand can obtain a copy direct from Sumalee, either by visiting their office or sending an email to: info@sumaleeboxinggym.com

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POP QUIZ

1. Transylvania became part of which country in 1918?

2. Which legendary Greek character eloped with Helen of Sparta to spark the Trojan War?

3. At the Equator, how fast does the Earth spin on its axis?

4. What was the full name of Dr Henry Jekyll's alternative personality?

5. Which three US states comprise the New York 'Tri-state area'?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across

1. Besides

5. Sludge-like

10. Glitch

14. Continue

15. Tic or synthesis starters

16. Corn bread

17. Executive's preferred exit

20. Ribbon holder

21. It's used to make chemicals and dyes

22. Palm tree

25. Brand

26. Global finance grp.

29. Small islands

31. Legal claims

35. Content of some barrels

36. Asinine

38. Bright thought

39. Rely on management

43. Bit of physics

44. Red cedar

45. Burro

46. Bubba Gump's forte

49. Enterprise captain

50. ESPN sportscaster

51. Portuguese navigator
- Down

1. Baker's dozen?

2. Historical center of Chicago, with The

3. Chewbacca's buddy

4. Finish at

5. Fashion's Taylor

6. Notebook, with top

7. Seize

8. Lots of land

9. Advanced

10. Football, in shape

11. It may be proper

12. Some chips, maybe

13. "How about that!"

18. Draw out

19. Industry big shot
23. Huff and puff

24. Maids of India

26. Specks

27. Jollity

28. A soft mineral

30. Kind of preview

32. Archetype

33. Brusque

34. Flip, in a way

37. "The King"

40. Little bits

41. Cork's place

42. Turkey city

47. Coquette

48. Poetic syllable arrangements

52. Sharpener

54. Charging weapon

55. Earned

56. Some votes

57. Cousin of a bassoon

59. "___ cost you!"

60. Where Jamal Malik grew up

61. Regards

62. Signature piece?

63. Bed-and-breakfast

64. Guitarist Nugent

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Romania; 2) Paris; 3) 1,000mph (1,600kph); 4) Edward Hyde; 5) New York, New Jersey and Connecticut

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
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43						44						45		
46				47	48		49					50		
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	55	56					57			58		59	60	61
62								63	64					
65					66						67			
68					69						70			

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

R	A	P	T		A	G	A	R	S		U	S	E	D
E	T	U	T		N	O	N	E	T		N	O	I	R
F	O	R	D	F	I	A	T	M	E	R	C	U	R	Y
S	M	E	A	R		E	A	R		H	O	L	E	
					L	A	R	S		P	O	E	M	
B	A	D		P	U	P	A		L	A	M	I	A	S
I	D	O		P	H	A	S	E		O	N	L	Y	
B	M	W		M	E	R	C	E	D	E	S	N	E	O
L	I	S	A		E	A	G	L	E		R	H	O	
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J	O	H	N	D	O	E			E	A	G	E	R	
D	O	D	G	E	A	N	D		C	A	R	R	E	R
A	S	I	A		L	E	D	O	N		G	N	A	T
Y	E	N	S		L	D	O	P	A		H	E	S	S

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

day on Venus is longer than 1 year on Venus.

24

hours was how long a ban on using the word "mate" within the Australian parliament building lasted in 2005 before being reversed.

1,250

to 1 is the probability that a plane you're traveling in will get hit by lightning.

3,000

calories and more than 150 grammes of fat are consumed by the average American during a Thanksgiving meal.

1 trillion

dollars is how much Norway has as a pension fund for its 5 million citizens. Roughly \$200,000 for each person.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW

In the shade. Photo by Giulio Sterchele

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

This week in history

Dec 3, 1976

Bob Marley is shot in an assassination attempt in Kingston, Jamaica. He takes to the stage just two days later for the "Smile Jamaica" free concert.

Dec 4, 1872

The American ship *Mary Celeste* is found with no crew on board by the Canadian brig *Dei Gratia*. The ship had been abandoned for nine days but was only slightly damaged.

Dec 5, 1952

Great Smog: A cold fog descends upon London, combining with air pollution and killing at least 12,000 people in the weeks and months that follow.

Dec 6, 1240

Mongol invasion of Rus': Kiev under Daniel of Galicia and Voivode Dmytro falls to the Mongols under Batu Khan.

Dec 7, 1703

The Great Storm of 1703, the great-

Dec 8, 1660

A woman (either Margaret Hughes or Anne Marshall) appears on an English public stage for the first time, in the role of Desdemona in a production of Shakespeare's play *Othello*.

Dec 9, 1937

Second Sino-Japanese War: Battle of Nanking: Japanese troops under the command of Lt Gen Asaka Yasuhiko launch an assault on the Chinese city of Nanjing (Nanking).
Source: Wikipedia

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Photo: Eddie Mallin

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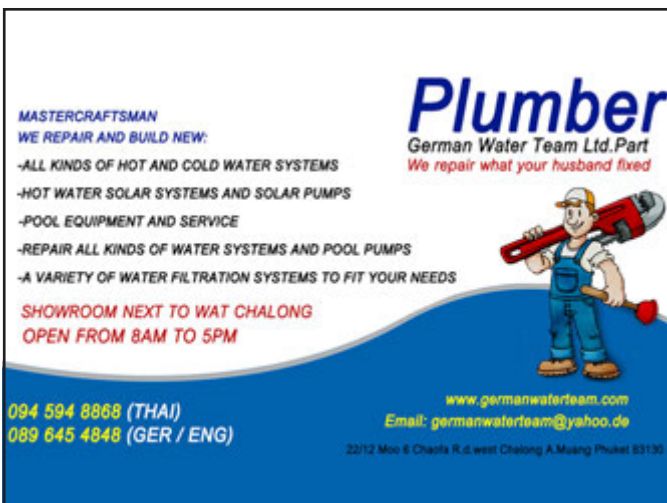


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FRI **3 DEC**

Phuket Town to educate underprivileged children. Great gift ideas, twinkie lights, fun, food, shopping and Christmas music, with 20+ talented local vendors. Sunday from 3 - 8pm @ Raw Cafe & Vegan Bistro, Visit Road Rawai. More on FB - Prelovedtoo. Rawai



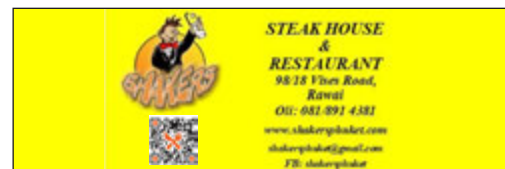
Friday Mussels night

6 PM onwards: Belgian style mussels served with French Fries. All you can eat. Your choice, Your style: Marinier, White wine, Provencal, Garlic & cream, Creamy curry, Blue cheese or Thai style. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 325 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

SAT **4 DEC**


Saturday Brunch

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SUN **5 DEC**


Sunday roast

12PM - 9PM: All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet Beef, Pork, Chicken & Lamb - Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, Fried mushrooms, Grilled Tomatoes - Yorkshire pudding - Roasted Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes - Apple sauce, Gravy, Mushroom sauce, Horse radish, Mint Sauce. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 350 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 175 baht P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381



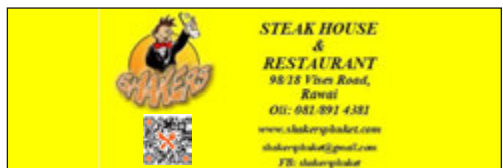
Christmas Market

The launch of the Good Shepherd charity thrift shop pre Loved Too. Proceeds support Good Shepherd

MON **6 DEC**


Pizza Monday

12 PM till closing: 20% discount on all our pizzas We have a kid's playground zone. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

WED **8 DEC**


Wednesday BBQ night

6 PM onwards: All you can eat BBQ buffet cooked to order. Beef, Pork, Chicken, Burgers, Ribs Sausages, Fish, Prawns & Squids, salad buffet and veggies, Choice of potatoes, cold and hot sauces, Bread, Buns & garlic bread. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 395 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

THU **9 DEC**


Joint Chambers Christmas Phuket Sundowners

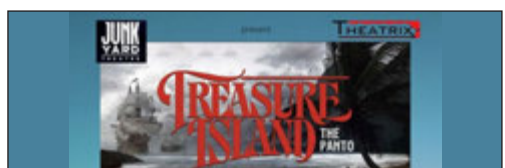
AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand

(AMCHAM), British Chamber of Commerce Thailand (BCCT), Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber of Commerce, CanCham Thailand, Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce (FTCC), German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (GTCC) and the Netherlands-Thai Chamber of Commerce (NTCC), is delighted to invite you to join us for "Christmas Phuket Sundowners" at Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa, on Thursday 9 December 2021, from 18.00 - 21.00 hrs. Please note that the attendees will be asked for their COVID-19 vaccination or ATK / RT-PCR certification to show on entry to the event. 500 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members. 900 THB for non-members.

THU **16 DEC**


Skal Phuket Christmas Luncheon

We are thrilled to invite you to our next event: Christmas Charity Luncheon at The Boathouse Kata on Thursday 16th December from 12.00-14.00. The Boathouse F&B team has kindly put together a superb menu with free flow selected beverages for the afternoon. Also, in the spirit of Christmas and to support those most needing our help in Phuket at this time, donations this year will be going to Skål Phuket's long-time charity partner, Phuket Sunshine Village. Please email secretary@skalphuket.org for further information.

FRI **17 DEC**


Treasure Island the Panto

Theatrical presents, Treasure Island the Panto at the Junkyard Theatre. Three days only - Fri Dec 17 @ 6:30pm, Sat Dec 18 at 12 noon & 6:30pm, Sun Dec 19 at 12 noon & 6:30pm. "Early Bird" discounted ticket donation - children B600 & Adults B1,200 includes Tapas dinner and popcorn special. Proceeds to the Good Shepherd Phuket Town. Bookings - 089 874 2942.


THU **23 DEC**


Xmas Hospitality Golf Challenge 2021

The Xmas Hospitality Golf Challenge 2021 being held at Laguna Golf Phuket, a 12:30pm Shot Gun start, 4-ball Texas scramble. Teams of four players THB 18,000. Entry fee includes green fee, caddy fee, buggy, on-course refreshments, goodie bag and prize giving ceremony at O'Hara's Irish Bar. More info contact Mark on 061 486 6736 or mark.hio1211@gmail.com

SAT **25 DEC**


Christmas Gala dinner at Cosmo

Enjoy the magic of Christmas whilst taking in the stunning view across Nai Harn Bay, over a sumptuous Buffet Dinner complete with all the trimmings at 7:30pm. South African singer - songwriter Eric Canham will entertain you with festive songs throughout the evening while Santa Claus and his helpers will greet children with gifts. THB 3,333 net per person. Children under 2 years eat free; from 2 up to 11 years at 50% off. Reservation, Cosmo at The Nai Harn Phuket, fbreservation@thenaiharn.com, 076 380 200

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F1 Championship in the balance

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Red Bull Racing is scrambling to keep Max Verstappen's title campaign alive against Lewis Hamilton, who's found form just in the nick of time.

After 20 rounds of racing, Formula 1 has arrived at one of the most intense concluding chapters in its history.

Max Verstappen leads Lewis Hamilton by just eight points, and two final races in Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi will decide which of these two titans will pen the final paragraph.

Verstappen has maintained an impressive coolness through his first title-contending campaign to start the decisive double-header ahead. He needs only one more victory to force Hamilton to rely on luck to stay in the fight. Destiny is within his grasp.

Hamilton, despite being the reigning titleholder, has been the underdog of 2021. His inconsistently competitive car has tested to the limit his personal creed, 'Still I rise', and that he continues to keep himself in championship contention is a credit to his season-long transcendence of his machinery.

After all, it was barely three



Red Bull Racing boss Christian Horner (left), seen here with driver Max Verstappen, has been accusing Mercedes of fielding an illegal car for weeks. Photo: AFP

weeks ago that Verstappen looked certain of success, having been 21 points up at the Brazilian Grand Prix with four races to go before Hamilton ignited his latest mighty comeback against the prevailing form.

Indeed it's been such a forceful turnaround that Red Bull Racing considers it suspicious.

For weeks Red Bull Racing boss Christian Horner has been accusing Mercedes of fielding an illegal car, the W12's ferocious straight-line speed the cause of his consternation. He found the Brazilian Grand Prix particularly alarming, with Hamilton

starting from the back of the grid in the Saturday sprint and making 24 overtakes over two days on his way to victory over Verstappen.

'ILLEGAL FLEXING'

The undercurrent of the final quarter of the season has been the Milton Keynes working theory that Mercedes has found a way to make its rear wing bend on the straights to reduce drag and boost velocity. The matter is personal: the RB16B performed a similar trick earlier in the year before the FIA outlawed flexible wings in June.

"I think everyone could see Brazil was not a normal situation," Horner at the previous race in Qatar. "When you... witness marks on rear wing endplates that have been flexing, it's very clear to us what has been going on."

But the marks, which Horner's team identified from close-up photos, are ambiguous, and the Mercedes car has passed a string of recent FIA tests designed to identify illegal flexing. The German marquee is adamant its car is legal.

Horner tempered his criticism

in Qatar, where his team's defeat was more comprehensive than simply down the straights, but he has reserved the right to protest in Saudi Arabia if he's unhappy about Mercedes's performance.

And Saudi Arabia is all about straight-line speed. Billed as the fastest street circuit in F1, it will reward power and low drag rather than the downforce-demanding corners Red Bull Racing considers its own territory. If the protest is going to come, it will be there.

But after weeks of threats there's a sense a protest may never come at all. Either the team has been unable to find evidence compelling enough to formalise its grievances or it has simply been attempting to destabilise Mercedes just as Hamilton strikes unbackable form. Given the acrimony between Horner and his Mercedes counterpart, Toto Wolff, it seems increasingly like an attempt at the latter.

And so Saudi Arabia this weekend feels a lot like a dress rehearsal for the big dance in Abu Dhabi. If Red Bull Racing can help Verstappen to victory, the Dutchman will be able to decide the fight in his favour.

But if Mercedes forges on unperturbed by speculation and unhindered by protest, Hamilton's path to an unprecedented eighth world championship will be clear.

We'll know the answer on Dec 12.

Another hat-trick for Thai mixed pair shuttlers in Bali

BADMINTON

MIXED DOUBLES STARS Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai claimed their third straight title and sixth this year after they won the US\$850,000 million (B28mn) Indonesia Open in Bali last Sunday (Nov 28).

It is the second time the Thai duo have won three successive World Tour events. Dechapol and Sapsiree achieved the same feat when they won the Yonex Thailand Open, the Toyota Thailand Open and the World Tour Finals in January.

They also ended a four-match losing streak against Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino as they eased past the Japanese third seeds 21-12, 21-13 in the final of the BWF World Tour Super 1000 event.

Watanabe and Higashino beat the Thai pair three times this year starting from the Tokyo Olympics quarter-finals, before victories in the Denmark Open final and the



Sapsiree and Dechapol after winning the 2021 Indonesia Open last Sunday (Nov 28). Photo: Bangkok Post

French Open semi-finals.

Dechapol and Sapsiree picked up the \$62,900 winners' cheque (approximately B2mn) for their 10th career title.

The Thai pair won the Indonesia Masters in Bali last week and the Hylo Open in Germany earlier this month.

"Champion again today at Indonesia Open 2021! I'm very grateful," Sapsiree wrote on her Instagram

account after the award ceremony.

Dechapol also posted on his IG, "We are champions. Thank you for all your support."

In the women's singles final, second seed Ratchanok Intanon lost to An Se-Young 17-21, 20-22 as the Korean fourth seed claimed her second title in Bali in as many weeks.

Bangkok Post

Asia draw first blood in final-over ACG thriller

CRICKET

LAST SUNDAY (NOV 28) saw an Phuket Asia side clinch victory in a nail-biting contest at the ACG over the island's Rest of World (RoW) side to take an early 1-0 series lead.

With both sides missing key players, the value of wickets would be crucial in deciding the match in a longer 30 over format.

Asan Fonseka and Manish Sadarangani were entrusted with building a solid platform for Asia although Paddy Ledebouer removed the latter for just 1 run in the 1st over with some help from wicket-keeper Anthony Van Blerk.

Sajal Gaur joined Manish at the crease and the pair managed to forge a 130-run partnership before Sajal (35) was caught by Michael Flowers off the the bowling of Michael Rhys Thomas in the 22nd over.

Flowers then caught Manish (68) off Curt Livermore's spin bowling to bring the score to 136-3, with ROW looking to end the Asian innings early.

Asia captain Seemant Raju was immediately on the counter-attack crashing two huge sixes before seeing



Asia captain Seemant Raju troubling the RoW batsmen. Photo: Siri

his batting partner Imtiyaz Mushtaq (11) clean bowled by Flowers in the 26th over. Raju (32) was caught by Flowers in the final over to leave the score on a defensible 200/7.

Opening batsmen Flowers and Joe Ninan (8) looked to work the singles early on before Pir had the latter caught behind by Manish Sadarangani in the 3rd over. This triggered an early collapse as Manoj struck twice in the same over to remove both Ledebouer (5) and Rishi Sadarangani (4) with the RoW on a troubling 29/3.

Captain Craig Morgan then joined Flowers at the crease

and the former wasted no time in showing his class with some well-timed boundaries, reaching his half-century in the 14th over before being caught by Sajal for 55.

Raju then trapped Van Blerk (8) LBW and bowled Livermore for a duck in the 17th over with the score 124/6.

Despite a fine showing by Flowers (68), he was bowled by MVP Raju to leave the RoW falling agonizingly short with 5 balls remaining.

The next game in the series is scheduled for Dec 12 at the ACG.

Curt Livermore

Professor Ralf aiming to revive Manchester United

FOOTBALL

AFP

Manchester United's new interim manager Ralf Rangnick once mentored Jurgen Klopp and Thomas Tuchel and now "The Professor" will use his studious approach to revive his troubled Premier League club.

United hired Rangnick on Monday (Nov 29) after Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's sacking and the German's role in championing the "gegenpressing" (counter-pressing) philosophy popularised by Liverpool boss Klopp suggests United are about to be dragged into the 21st century.

United lured Rangnick from his role as Lokomotiv Moscow's head of sports and development after learning Paris Saint-Germain were not willing to part with Mauricio Pochettino at present.

That could turn out to be a blessing in disguise if the 63-year-old can emulate the success enjoyed by his devoted pupils at Liverpool and Chelsea.

Klopp used Rangnick's tactics to become a Premier League and European champion at Liverpool, while Chelsea boss Tuchel is an ardent admirer after United's new manager gave him his first coaching job at Stuttgart.

Klopp and Tuchel swear by the intense scheme Rangnick first adopted after watching Valeriy Lobanovskiy's



Ralf Rangnick, seen here when he was head coach of RB Leipzig during the German Cup Final against Bayern Munich in 2019. Photo: AFP

Dynamo Kiev in the 1980s.

The German's obsession with his players' reaction times in training is fuelled by his desire to deploy high-tempo pressing tactics during matches, dubbed heavy metal or rock and roll football. He was one of the first coaches to hire video analysts and sports psychologists, regarded as a major innovation at the time.

Rangnick also coached Schalke and RB Leipzig, taking the latter from the fifth tier of German football to the Bundesliga and Champions League.

Reacting to Rangnick's appointment, Klopp said it was not good news for United's rivals.

"Ralf is obviously a really experienced manager," he said. "Unfortunately a good coach is coming to England.

"United will be organised on the pitch, we should realise that – that's obviously not good news for other teams."

A self-confessed Anglophile, Rangnick studied English and physical education at the University of Sussex in the 1970s. He also played non-league football for Southwick during that spell in England and once worked as an intern at Arsenal.

After his six-month interim regime, Rangnick has agreed to take on a consultancy role at Old Trafford for two further years.

By the time he steps away, United hope Rangnick's lessons will have raised the bar at a club that have fallen a long way since their glory days under club legend Sir Alex Ferguson.



Thai players in training on Monday (Nov 29). Photo: Bangkok Post

Thais ready for Suzuki Cup

FOOTBALL

IN HIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT as Thailand coach, Mano Polking has called up 30 players for the AFF Suzuki Cup which starts on Sunday (Dec 5) in Singapore.

A total of 24 players showed up to training on Monday (Nov 29) while the rest will join later. All had COVID-19 tests at the Health Ministry before entering the camp.

Despite a short preparation period, Polking is confident that the War Elephants will win the Asean title. "This team is good enough to bring the trophy back to Thailand," said the German-Brazilian coach.

He said he wished to have more time to prepare the team for the tournament but remains confident.

"This has happened and we have to accept it. We can't change anything now. We

have to get on with what we have," said the former Bangkok United coach.

Five-time champions Thailand begin their campaign against Timor Leste on Sunday. The other teams in Group A are Singapore, Myanmar and the Philippines.

Defending champions Vietnam are in Group B with Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia and Laos. The top two teams in each group reach the semi-finals.

Japan-based stars Chanathip Songkrasin and Theerathon Bunmathan will not be available for the first match due to their club duties. "They are our main players but I believe other players are hungry to play and capable of replacing the two," said Polking.

The biennial championship was to be held in 2020 but was postponed to this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bangkok Post

Lobo demolishes Rodlek

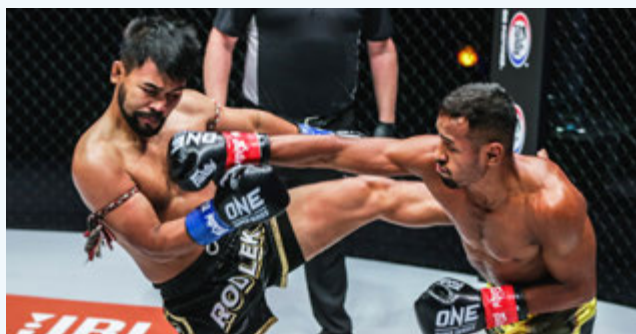
MMA

PHUKET'S REPUTATION for fighting talent was bolstered last Friday (Nov 26) as Brazilian fighter Felipe "Demolition Man" Lobo secured an impressive win over feared Muay Thai world champion Rodlek on ONE Championship.

The fight took place in Singapore as part of the ONE: NEXTGEN III event that comprised bouts in MMA, Muay Thai and Kickboxing. Despite both Lobo, 28, and Rodlek, 31, being Muay Thai fighters, their bout was fought under Kickboxing rules across three rounds.

Lobo, who trains at Revolution Gym in Phuket, told *The Phuket News* he went into the fight feeling strong after a good training camp in which he worked on his boxing, footwork and conditioning.

Despite COVID restrictions affecting his ability to train at the gym at times, Lobo's discipline had him up at dawn everyday doing hill runs and hitting the



Felipe Lobo (right) lands a strike on Rodlek during their bout. Photo: ONE Championship

bag as he prepared to be Rodlek's 178th opponent, motivated by all those that believe in him, namely his family back in Brazil.

His dedication paid off as he produced an outstanding performance, winning each round with incredible timing, distance management and accuracy. He kept the Thai at bay with perfectly timed push-kicks and landed countless body shots.

"In the third round I felt Rodlek was tiring and getting frustrated so I picked up the pace and let my hands go," Lobo told *The Phuket News*.

"He is very tough and has a lot of power so I had to maintain the distance. At one point I landed a heavy

punch, which hurt my wrist, yet he didn't flinch," the Brazilian added.

After two impressive wins from two fights for the promotion, Lobo has his sights set on becoming either Muay Thai or Kickboxing champion in the ONE bantamweight division.

Starting out in boxing aged 14, Lobo switched to Muay Thai at 16 when he started to train at his cousin's gym in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He spent much of his life living in the favelas before moving to Thailand in 2018 – his first trip abroad.

Based in Bangkok for his first year, he fought 18 times before moving to Phuket.

Poria w

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Sport

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Rangnick the new man in at United > p15

CHAN CONQUERS THE CANYON

GOLF

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Taiwan's Chan Shih-chang prevailed after a gripping finish to win the US\$1million (B33mn) Blue Canyon Phuket Championship last Sunday (Nov 28) and become the first winner on the Asian Tour following a 20-month hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He shot a final round four-under-par 68 to finish on 18 under par and beat Thailand's Sodom Kaewkanjana and Joohyung Kim from Korea by one shot.

Sodom fired a 67 while teenager Kim returned 66 – on the iconic Canyon Course at Blue Canyon Country Club.

"It's impossible, it's amazing!" said Chan, whose last win on the Asian Tour came in the 2016 Asia-Pacific Dia-



Chan Shih-chang, winner of the Blue Canyon Phuket Championship. Photo: Paul Lakatos/Asian Tour

mond Cup in Japan.

"I am so happy to be back after the problems everyone has had with COVID. My front nine was not very good but an eagle on nine turned things around."

The 35-year-old was paired in the final group with Korean Sihwan Kim and Sodom and despite eagling the ninth he

was still three behind Sihwan Kim at the turn.

But then Chan showed why he is already a winner on Tour by birdieing four holes in a row from the 13th.

He was tied with Sodom on the par-four 18th hole, but while Chan got up and down from the front of the green to make par after holing out

from four feet, the Thai player missed the green to the left with his approach and failed to make his 12-footer for par.

He added: "I always enjoy coming to Thailand. I feel very relaxed playing here. Actually, I feel less pressure playing here than playing back home. It's my second win since my baby boy arrived eight months ago.

I guess it's baby luck!"

Chan picked up the winner's cheque of US\$180,000 after he claimed his third Asian Tour victory. Both his previous wins came in 2016 at the King's Cup in Thailand and the Asia-Pacific Diamond Cup. He is also a six-time winner on the Asian Development Tour – the last of those coming in 2018.

Sodom was looking for his fifth win in two months – he has won four times on the All Thailand Golf Tour, including the Thailand Open – and has now not shot over par in 20 consecutive rounds.

"I tried my best, I came so close," said Sodom, who birdied three on the trot from seven and then birdied 13, 15 and 16 before his problems on 18, where he hit a wayward tee shot left.

Ratchanon Chantanuwat, Thailand's 14-year-old golf sensation, once again thrived

playing in his first Asian Tour event when shot a brilliant 65 to finish in a tie for 15th on 12 under.

Ratchanon secured the low amateur award – for the seventh time in a row in a pro event – after a brilliant round made up of eight birdies and one bogey. He also became the third youngest player to make the cut on the Asian Tour last Friday.

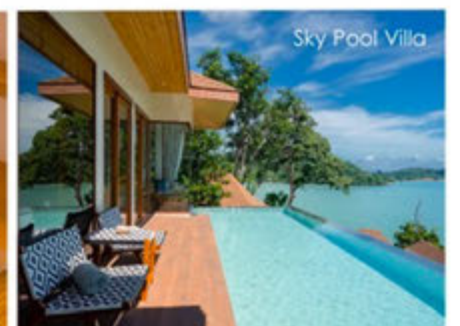
"I am really happy to win best amateur in my first Asian Tour event," said the youngster, who now heads into this week's Laguna Phuket Championship, which started yesterday (Dec 2), brimming with confidence.

Both Phuket events, called the Asian Tour Phuket Series, boast prizemoney of US\$1million and will be followed by two events being planned in Singapore in January that will bring to a conclusion the 2020-21 season.

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