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GETTING SERIOUS

ISLAND ISOLATION ONLY WAY TO SAVE SANDBOX, PROTECT ISLAND FROM MAINLAND INFECTIONS, SAYS GOVERNOR



Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew at a meeting at Provincial Hall on Monday (Aug 2) joined by Tourism Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn. Photo: MoTS

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Only people conducting urgent or essential business in Phuket are allowed onto the island for two weeks as officials struggle to contain the rise in local infections while keeping the Phuket Sandbox scheme open for foreign tourists to continue to arrive.

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew issued the order last week to refuse all domestic arrivals from the mainland by land, air or sea except those conducting specially allowed business. The order came into effect on Tuesday (Aug 3) and will remain in effect until at least Aug 16.

Under the order, the only persons

and vehicles to be allowed onto the island during the period include medical ambulance emergency patients and EMT personnel, deliveries of medicines, materials, medical supplies; consumer goods, agricultural products, livestock, animal feed; cooking gas fuel; parcels and publications; people who need to travel through international channels via Phuket International Airport (must have a ticket of the travel date only); and any persons with special written permission from a relevant official to visit Phuket to conduct urgent or necessary business, such as court appointments.

However, even then the checkpoint onto Phuket will remain closed to all traffic except for emergencies from

11pm to 4am each night, and all people coming onto the island must be deemed “vaccinated” and must present results of an RT-PCR test or antigen test performed by a medical facility within 72 hours of arriving proving that they are not infected.

To be deemed “vaccinated” the arrival must have received: 1) two doses of the Sinovac or Sinopharm vaccine; or 2) one injection of the Sinovac vaccine and one injection of the AstraZeneca vaccine; or 3) at least one injection of the AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The most recent injection must have been at least 14 days before arriving. Alternatively, instead of being vaccinated, arrivals must have been discharged from

medical care for recovering from COVID-19 no more than 90 days before arriving.

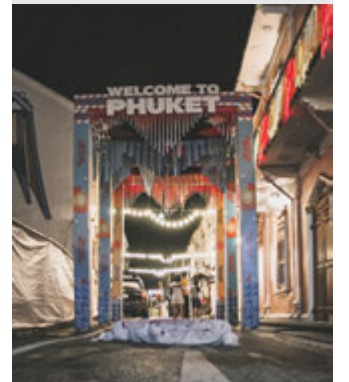
The order to shut off Phuket from arrivals from the mainland was issued on July 29, the same day that local health officials reported 50 new infections and one new death attributed to COVID-19, all on that one day. Phuket has suffered a spate of infections over the past two weeks, with health officials on Monday (Aug 2) reporting 254 confirmed new infections over the seven days from July 27 through Aug 2.

Meanwhile, Phuket provincial officials last Thursday night (July 29) issued a special notice to confirm that the Phuket Sandbox scheme will remain open.

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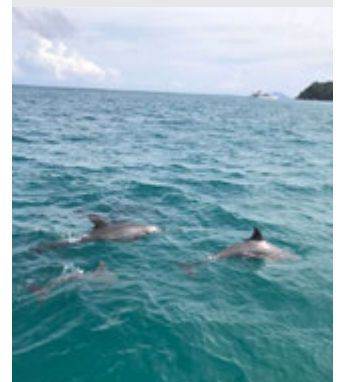
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COVID protest photos spur police probe



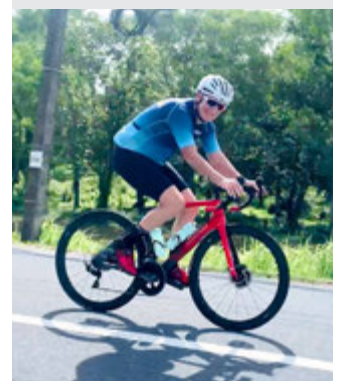
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Dolphins back on the island tour itinerary



SPORT PAGE 16

Tour de Phuket cyclist helping those in need



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News



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Infections threat from mainland

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Governor Narong defended the move to deny all but essential travel to Phuket, saying it is the only way to save the Phuket Sandbox scheme, and save Phuket's hopes of economic recovery.

Speaking at a special meeting called last Friday (July 30), Governor Narong said that the raft of new restrictions imposed on the island was the only way to contain the rising number of local infections on the island.

The order to isolate the whole island from mainland arrivals followed a raft of more closures and a ban on the movement of migrant workers into and out of Phuket that came into effect last Saturday (Aug 1). Those restrictions followed earlier restrictions issued on Tuesday last week.

Among the closures were Central Phuket shopping mall, which closed for one week, reopening on Monday (Aug 2), after an "infected case" was confirmed to have been at the mall.

It was never reported whether the "infected case" was a staffer or a customer, but Central Phuket posted on its Facebook page that after testing more than 3,700 staffers who work at the mall, only four were confirmed as infected. It was not made clear whether any or all of the four were the "infected case" or cases that sparked the shutdown of the mall.

Also ordered closed for one week was the Phuket City Fresh Market, set to reopen today (Aug 6) and Bangkok Hospital has now restricted visitors to one person



A soldier checks documents of a delivery driver at the Phuket Check Point before the ban came into effect on Tuesday (Aug 3). Photo: PR Phuket

per patient at a time.

Governor Narong last Friday pointed out that the spike infections, which even by last Thursday had breached more than 200 over the previous seven days, were from local transmissions, not imported by Phuket Sandbox arrivals.

Among some 14,000 arrivals via the Phuket Sandbox scheme, only 30, or 0.4%, have tested positive for COVID-19, Governor Narong said.

"Among those, many of them were grouped together in their own clusters," he added.

"Therefore, all the measures taken are being done in order to save Phuket, save the Phuket Sandbox and save Thailand. If we do not speed up our efforts to control the spread of infections could have a far-reaching

impact," Governor Narong noted.

"Because there are no infections being brought to Phuket from overseas in any way, in terms of domestic travel, if travel were still allowed to Phuket, it would be more difficult to control the spread of infections.

"Therefore, such announcements and orders must be issued to control travel in the country to have only those who really need it. This is how to save Phuket, save Sandbox and save Thailand," he repeated.

SANDBOX BOOKINGS

Governor Narong pointed out that, as of last Thursday, a total of 12,599 people had arrived through the Phuket Sandbox project from July 1-29, with a total of 298,858 room nights in bookings made from July

1 through September.

Of those, bookings for 192,403 room nights had been made for July, about 63% of the total room-nights booked through the Phuket Sandbox scheme so far, he said.

A further 98,735 room nights, or 32% of the total Sandbox accommodation bookings so far, had been booked for August and 7,720 room nights, or 3% of the total so far, had been booked for September, he added.

However, the rate of increase in the number of bookings is already slowing, said Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) deputy governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas. Hotel reservations for August over the last few days before

the island isolation was announced had grown 10%, down from more than 15% per day prior to the latest outbreak, he told the *Bangkok Post*.

Mr Siripakorn said the average length of stay per traveller is 11 nights, while only 200 travellers chose to visit Bangkok after completing a 14-day mandatory stay on the island, meaning the latest provincial order to restrict domestic travel should not affect the majority of guests.

Kongsak Khoopongsakorn, President of the Thai Hotels Association's southern chapter, said some tourists expressed concerns over the virus situation, so hoteliers are reassuring them about prevention measures in place in the province.

There have not been any reports of early checkouts from guests in the Phuket Sandbox, Mr Kongsak said.

Mr Kongsak said more hotels plan to reopen in the final quarter, which will help drive the occupancy rate to 20%.

Meanwhile, Bangkok Airways has suspended its Phuket-Samui direct flights from Aug 3-16. The flights were to allow Sandbox tourists to take advantage of the "7+7 island quarantine" offered through the Sandbox scheme, spending seven days in Phuket then seven days on Samui.

Closer to home, the plan to launch the "Phang Nga - Andaman Sandbox", also promoted as the "Sandbox 7+7 to Phang Nga" campaign, has been postponed to Aug 15, notably just one day before the current order to isolate Phuket is set to expire.

Thalang village placed under lockdown amid infections cluster

BAAN NANAI IN MOO 7, Tambon Thepkasattri, Thalang District, was ordered "to close until further notice" this week to contain the spread of COVID-19 after eight local residents in the village were found to be infected, resulting in many local high-risk contacts.

"The area is locked [down]. People inside [the area] cannot move out, and outsiders cannot come in," confirmed the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) in a post online last Sunday (Aug 1).

The road through the village has also been closed to traffic, Thepkasattri Mayor Prasong Trirat announced through an official announcement last Friday (July 30).

"Thepkasattri Municipality



Villagers collect food and other essential supplies handed out as their village went into lockdown to prevent the spread of more infections of COVID-19. Photo: PR Phuket

will temporarily close the route through Baan Nanai, which is considered a risk area. The road is to be closed to traffic from the

entrance to Soi Thepkasattri 14 to the exit of Wat Phra Thong from July 31 until further notice," Mayor Prasong explained.

Thalang District Chief Suwit Suriyawong presided over the handing out of "survival bags" to local residents at the entrance to the village on Sunday.

Present to oversee the handing out of the bags containing food and other essential household supplies were Wandee Woonciew, who as Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew's wife is the President of the Phuket chapter of the Thai Red Cross.

Also present were Thepkasattri Mayor Mr Prasong along with Sittichai Chantawat, Kamnan of Tambon Thepkasattri, and other relevant officers.

Mr Sittichai explained that there are about 150 households in the Baan Nanai area.

"Right now, eight people in the areas have been confirmed infected,

and many high-risk people were taken into local quarantine venues," he said.

"From the disease investigation, most of them were infected from a cluster in Chong Talay and from those who came from other provinces," Mr Sittichai said.

"We have discussed with Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew and other officials about what measures to introduce to control the number of infected cases, and the meeting members altogether agreed to close the area," he said.

"We have closed the route through the area, sent medical staff to conduct proactive screening and taken high-risk people to quarantine venues. The people remaining in the area must strictly follow the disease control measures," he added.

The Phuket News

Restaurant alcohol ban is back

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Phuket officials have banned the sale and consumption of alcohol in all restaurants again, and reinstituted the ban on all “social activities” in an order issued late Monday night (Aug 2).

The bans came into effect by an order issued by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew on Monday, and are to remain in effect until at least Aug 16.

The order was posted online by the “Phuket Info Center”, operated by the Phuket office of the Ministry of Interior, at 10:13pm Monday night – just 1 hour and 47 minutes before the order came into effect.

The new order repeats many of the same restrictions already in place – announced through a succession of new official orders issued roughly every 72 hours over the past two weeks.

The order, as posted by Phuket Info Center, notes the following:

All pubs, bars, karaoke and other entertainment venues everywhere in Phuket are ordered “temporarily” closed,



Tourism Minister Phiphat stands in front of a restaurant in Patong on Monday (Aug 2), the same day the order banning alcohol in restaurants was issued. Photo: PR Patong

though in reality they have been continually ordered to remain closed now for months.

Other venues ordered to remain closed are venues for cockfighting, fish fighting, bird racing, chicken racing, boxing stadiums and gambling venues, including training venues, and venues for snooker, billiards or pool tables as well as computer game and online game shops,

Boxing and martial arts schools of all types (Woosoo, Karate, Taekwondo, Muay

Thai, Boxing, Judo, Aikido, etc.) are to remain closed.

Swimming pools open to the general public for both government and private entrepreneurs are to remain closed.

All educational institutions and all tutoring institutes except non-formal private schools with no more than five participants in a class are to remain closed.

“Activities in which groups of more than 50 people are gathered shall not be organ-

ized unless it is an activity performed by a competent official,” the order noted.

“Do not gather in groups to do activities, socialize, drink alcohol in public areas, beaches, parks,” it added.

Department stores, shopping centres are allowed to operate normally, except for games centres, game machines, game shops and amusement centres are to suspend service.

“Food or beverage outlets can allow patrons to con-

sume food or beverages in the shop as usual by refraining from selling and refrain from drinking alcohol or alcoholic beverages in the shop,” the order noted.

Fresh markets, flea markets and walking street markets must enforce measures to prevent and control disease and limit the number of customers by enforcing social distancing of four square metres per person.

Convenience stores are allowed to operate “as usual”, but only from 4am to 11pm.

Stadiums or venues for outdoor exercise, parks, courtyards, open-air public events and indoor sports must close at 9pm. Sports involving contact are prohibited and there must be no spectators or gatherings.

Places for indoor exercise such as courts, gyms, fitness centers, yoga, aerobics, exercise classes, badminton must close at 9pm.

Regarding “Social Activities”, all people are “to refrain from organizing parties, celebrations, festive events”.

Traditional ceremonies that cannot be postponed, such as funerals, ordinations, marriage, religious or merit-making ceremonies, may

be held with permission for relevant officials and must comply with all COVID-19 prevention measures.

All government offices and private businesses are to arrange staff to work off-site where possible.

Filming of movies and TV shows must not involve more than 50 people and there must be no viewers participating in the programme. Exemption from wearing a mask or cloth mask in some cases or during certain periods of filming must be carried out in accordance with the guidelines for filming and television programs as approved by the CCSA.

The order singled out migrant workers for special attention by officials under the section “Strict inspection measures for places or activities that are at risk of epidemic clusters.”

“Competent officials” were ordered to strictly inspect places or activities that are at risk of spreading the disease, “such as factories and migrant workers’ accommodations or other places”, to ensure the locations meet the conditions laid out by the Ministry of Public Health to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

PRU sets up as second field hospital

THREE HUNDRED BEDS have been set up in a meeting hall at Phuket Rajabhat University (PRU) in Rassada which is to be designated as the second field hospital for “light green” cases on the island.

“The additional 300 beds have been set up at the University hall because all beds at the first field hospital at Prince of Songkla University (PSU) are already fully occupied,” Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong explained after the inspection on Saturday (July 31).

“Rassada Municipality is responsible for arranging the paper beds, bedding, and fans donated by private companies. There are also partitions and mosquito wire screens. The field hospital is expected to be ready and open for patients on Aug 3,” he said.

“I have to thank all officers, staff, and volunteers for together helping to set up this field hospital,” V/G Pichet added.

The last update on bed occupancy at PSU came last Monday (July 26) by Dr Chalermpong Sukontapol,



Photo: PR Dept

Director of Vachira Phuket Hospital. He explained that of the total 170, 75 were occupied at that stage.

“However, there have since been a number of green-zone patients detected, so we need to prepare the PRU as another field hospital with 70 beds in the first phase and a total of 195 beds in the second phase,” Dr Chalermpong said.

Meanwhile, Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon outlined the situation with bed occupancy rates at hospitals in Phuket in a special live broadcast on Friday (July 30).

“Right now, there are 694

beds in all hospitals on the island. Of that number 249 beds, or 36%, have been occupied, and 445 remained unoccupied,” he said.

“We have 33 intensive-care units (ICUs) for red zone patients and 16 rooms have been occupied. Among the 16 patients, only two patients need to use the hyperbaric oxygen therapy,” Dr Kusak said.

From the board which Dr Kusak used to explain, there are 226 rooms for yellow zone patients of which 115 rooms were occupied. There are 435 rooms for green zone patients of which 130 were occupied.

The Phuket News

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Wind 7 m/s

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Wind 11 m/s

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Wind 11 m/s

THU AUG 12

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Wind 14 m/s

Top cops moved over gambling raid

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Pornsak Nuannoo and two other top-ranking officers have been transferred pending an investigation into their relationships with suspects arrested in a gambling den raid at a resort on Koh Siray, east of Phuket Town, last month.

Region 8 Police Commander Lt Gen Kitrat Panpetch issued an order on July 31 to transfer the two top-ranking officers of the Phuket Provincial Police and one senior officer of the Chalong Police to temporarily work at the Region 8 headquarters at the northern end of the island while the investigation is carried out.

Lt Gen Kitrat identified those transferred by position only, as the Phuket Provincial Police Commander, a position currently served by Maj Pornsak Nuannoo; the Phuket Provincial Police Investigation Division Chief, better known as Col Bandit Khaosutham; and Chalong Police Sub-inspector, known by his fellow officers as Lt Col Pornprasit Wenthong.

The order to transfer the officers was marked to be in effect from last



Senior officers discuss the raid after the arrests on July 17. Photo: Phuket City Police

Sunday (Aug 1) until a further order is issued.

Lt Gen Kitrat on July 19 transferred the five top-ranking officers at Phuket City Police Station pending an investigation as to why the gambling den was allowed to operate.

The officers transferred were Phuket City Police Chief Col Theerawat Liamsuwan, Deputy Chief of Crime Suppression Lt Col Chakkrit Taewattana, Deputy Chief of Investigation Lt Col Sathit Nurit, Crime Suppression Inspector Lt Col Boonchai Charoenhattakit and Investigation Inspector Lt Col Thapthai Leelanon.

The gambling raid on July 17 was conducted at a resort villa on Koh

Siray where police arrested gamblers playing baccarat. Officers also seized betting chips which were marked to represent a total value of about B12 million.

The venue was known as the 'Dragon Tiger' gambling den. One of the 28 gamblers arrested was reported to be a local politician.

The order for the raid came from Pol Maj Gen Jiraphop Phuridet, Deputy Commissioner of the national Central Investigation Bureau (CIB).

NOTHING NEW

It is not the first time a slew of top-ranking police officers in Phuket have been probed over illegal gambling

dens operating in their area.

As recently as last year, Royal Thai Police deputy spokesman Col Krissana Phattanacharoen announced from Bangkok that the national police headquarters had been notified of raids on two gambling dens, one in Phuket Town and another in Srisoonthorn, that netted 87 people for illegal gambling.

Maj Gen Rungrote Thakurapunyasiri, Phuket Provincial Police Chief at the time, had ordered the top five high-ranking officers at both Phuket City Police Station and Thalang Police Station to be immediately transferred to Phuket Provincial Police Station while an investigation into the gambling dens is carried out, Col Krissana said.

"As written in the Police Order no. 1212/2537, if any police action is found to be unlawful or corrupt, the officers must be prosecuted under the law and regulations strictly, without any exception," Col Krissana assured.

"However, we have to wait for the result of the investigation to determine whether the police ignored the gambling venues or not, in order to be fair for everyone," he said.

The results of that investigation have yet to be revealed.

Man arrested for stealing food

A 37-YEAR-OLD MAN HAS been arrested for stealing food and other essential household items from the baskets on motorbikes parked in front of convenience stores as he had no money to buy anything.

The man, named by police only as "Mr Woraphat", was arrested at a house in Saphan Hin, on the outskirts of Phuket Town, on Monday (Aug 2), confirmed Maj Chatchai Chunoo of the Wichit Police.

The arrest came after a victim filed a complaint to police on July 27 about items being stolen, Maj Chatchai said.

Police checked CCTV footage available and saw the thief using a white Honda MSX without license plate to flee the scene. Officers tracked the motorbike to a house in Soi 5 Saphan Hin, in Moo 1, Wichit, where they arrested Mr Woraphat, Maj Chatchai explained.

Mr Woraphat confessed that he had conducted similar thefts some four times previously, saying he did not have any money for living and to support his family.



Photo: Wichit Police

"If I stole fresh items like meats or vegetables for cooking, I would cook them for my family," he said.

"I normally collect abandoned and discarded items and sell them to make a living," he added.

Mr Woraphat was taken to Wichit Police Station and charged with committing theft by using a vehicle to flee, Maj Chatchai confirmed.

Maj Chatchai noted that Mr Woraphat had been previously arrested for involvement with drugs in 2019 and was released last year.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Swiss man, 37, found hanged at home

A 37-YEAR-OLD SWISS MAN was found hanged at his home at a housing estate in Moo 1, Pa Khlok, last Saturday (July 31).

Capt Suchart Luecha of the Thalang Police was called to the house at about 3:30pm.

Officers along with rescue workers arrived to find the body of the man on the ground in the carport area in front of the home. A nylon rope was tied to a beam across the roof of the carport and a small wooden stool was placed below.

The man's wife told police that she was in the house unaware of what her husband was doing. She later walked out of the house and found him hanging by the rope tied to the beam.

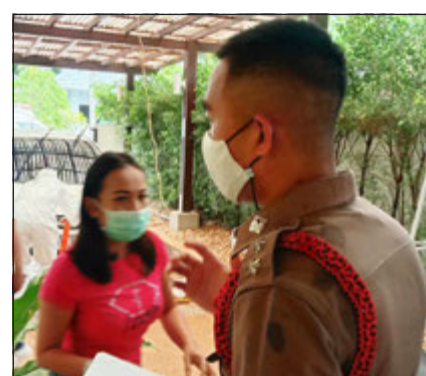
"I brought his body down and shouted out for help, but it was too late," she said.

The man, from Zurich, had suffered bouts of deep emotional distress previously in his home country, the wife said.

"He was staying with his father in Switzerland. He had tried to commit suicide, but his father and police were able to convince him to stop in time," she said.

"I never thought that he would try again," she added.

The man's body was taken to



A police officer question the man's wife at the home in Pa Khlok. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Thalang Police Station for further examination.

Capt Suchart explained that police will investigate the incident and collect evidence from the scene to determine whether there was any foul play involved in the man's death.

The Phuket News is withholding from identifying the man until it has been confirmed that his relatives abroad have been informed of his death.

If you or anyone you know is in need of emotional support and counselling, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their 24-hour hotline 02-713-6791 (English), 02-713-6793 (Thai) or Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai).

Eakkapop Thongtub

Police probe staged photos of bodies on town streets

Eakkapop Thongtub
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Phuket Provincial Police have launched an investigation into staged photos posted online showing white shrouds spattered with blood strewn on the streets of Phuket Town in protest over the government's handling of the current outbreak of COVID-19.

Lt Col Akkaradet Pongprom of the Phuket City Police reported that a formal complaint about the photos was filed by local residents led by Kittisak Siangsalak, 41, last Friday (July 30).

The photos were shared by the local political activist group 'Phuket Free Youth' through their Facebook page the previous night (July 29).

The photos showed white funeral shrouds spattered with blood specifically located throughout well-known tourist areas in the Old Phuket Town district.

"The number of dead cases [from COVID-19] is not just a number, they are people. They may be loved ones or people who have made a contribution



The staged photos protesting the government's handling of the COVID crisis have caused much concern and are now under police investigation. Photo: Phuket Free / Facebook

to the country, but those in positions of authority cannot do anything to resolve this problem," said the post accompanying the photos.

"We want to give our condolences and sympathies to them [the victims of COVID-19]. This is an exhibition, not using real dead bodies. If the government is too slow to solve the problem, there will be more photos like these coming out with real dead bodies #Phuketfree #Kongjacharoen," the post added.

Lt Col Akkaradet accepted the complaint, to which he noted, "The post gained much attention and was widely

shared, so the post can cause misunderstanding and damage the image of Phuket which can be considered entering false information into a computer network. The post is likely to affect the stability of the country and make people panic."

Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Col Aganit Danpitaksat last Friday told the press, "Right now, police are examining whether the photos were taken from the actual location or just edited photos to create fake news."

"I would like to ask for some time to investigate the photos. However, from my initial examination the photos

appeared to be edited by cutting parts of other photos and adding them to other photos. They may have created the photos without thinking [things through]," Col Aganit said.

The Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) branded the post as "fake news" and posted its own reply saying there were no dead bodies left lying on the streets of Phuket Town.

"From the post which explained that there are a lot of dead cases on the roads in Phuket, officers from the Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) have already checked and confirmed that the situation has not happened," PR Phuket said.

"The post has caused severe damage to the image of Phuket Tourism," the state news agency added.

The photos causing concern in Phuket followed Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha via his @prayutofficial Facebook page ordering responsible agencies to take action against individuals spreading fake news about COVID-19, which might cause public confusion during the pandemic.

Woman dies in apparent seven-story condo fall

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING the death of a Thai woman who they believe fell to her death from the seventh-floor of her Phuket condominium in Wichit on July 27.

Lt Wuttichai Chanfai of the Wichit Police, along with Kusoldharm rescue workers, was called to the scene around 5:50am.

On arrival they discovered the body of the woman lying on the pavement in an area adjacent to The Base Downtown condo in Soi Ek Wanit Uthit in Wichit, immediately southwest from the Darasamut Intersection.

From their initial examination, police confirmed the woman's hands and legs were broken and she had suffered head injuries as her nose had bled. Her body was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital for further examination.

Police were told that the 28-year-old woman rented the seventh-floor property and lived alone. After examination of her room, police confirmed there was no evidence of a struggle or any signs of trespass. The door to her balcony was open, with the balcony situated directly above where



The Base Downtown condo in Soi Ek Wanit Uthit, Wichit, where the woman's body was found. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

her body was found.

A relative of the woman told police that the woman lived alone and suffered bouts of depression. She just had an argument with her Chinese boyfriend, the relative added.

Lt Wuttichai explained that police believe the woman fell from her room but further investigations will be conducted including the review of footage from CCTV cameras to determine the exact cause and motivation behind her death.

The incident is remarkably similar to another fatality at the same condo almost three years ago where a 48-year-old Russian lady who was on holiday fell to her death.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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- ✓ Great Furnishings and Artwork Included
- ✓ 710 m²

Reduced to 49 Million THB



Luxury Andara Villa For Sale

- ✓ 4 Bedrooms
- ✓ 6 Bathrooms
- ✓ Millionaires Mile
- ✓ Stunning Views Over Kamala Bay
- ✓ 1,589 m²

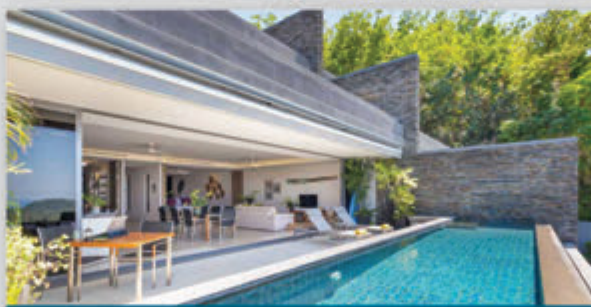
Reduced to 115 Million THB



Incredible Layan Villa with Huge Swimming Pool

- ✓ 7 Bedrooms
- ✓ 8 Bathrooms
- ✓ Immaculately Designed
- ✓ Fantastic Rental Property
- ✓ 1,500 sqm land plot

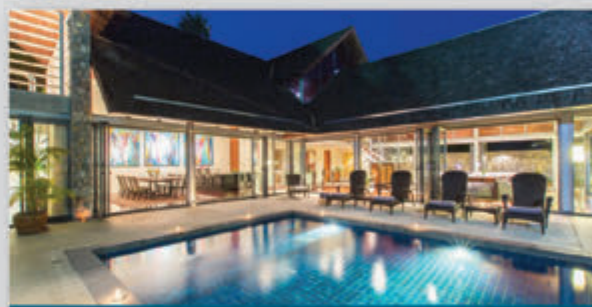
Reduced to 48 Million THB



Amazing Layan Beach Apartment With West Facing Sunset Views

- ✓ 3 Bedrooms
- ✓ 3 Bathrooms
- ✓ Superb Views Looking Down to Layan Beach
- ✓ Modern and Stylish
- ✓ 300 m²

Reduced to 28 Million THB



Millionaire's Mile Stunning Samsara Villa

- ✓ 4 bedrooms
- ✓ 5 Bathrooms
- ✓ Prestigious Luxury Estate
- ✓ Incredible Sunset Views Over Patong Bay
- ✓ 1,387 sqm land plot

Reduced to 135 Million THB

Green list Sandbox locales

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

As Bangkok grapples with rising numbers of COVID infections, leading tourism voice KP Ho, Executive Chairman of Banyan Tree Group, has told European envoys, airlines, senior officials and business leaders, that for the Phuket Sandbox to succeed it is imperative for Phuket to be given “green” destination status.

Speaking at the Phuket Sandbox Summit held at Laguna Phuket, KP Ho called on policy-makers in Europe and around the world to support Phuket as a separate “green” zone.

Phuket has the potential to lead the global tourism recovery, as the historic Phuket Sandbox initiative sets the standard for other destinations to follow, he said. But, to succeed, governments need to recognise it as a safe, self-enclosed destination, rather than combining its travel status with the rest of Thailand.

KP Ho’s position was supported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) at the Phuket Sandbox Summit. Deputy Governor for



KP Ho addresses the Phuket Sandbox Summit held at Laguna Phuket. Photo: Supplied

International Marketing Europe, Africa, Middle East and the Americas, Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, said, “We are trying to propose Phuket to the UK government to be on the green list of destinations, even though Thailand is on the amber list. We are optimistic about Phuket Sandbox. Phuket is safe and we will never compromise anyone’s safety.”

He confirmed there were

almost 300,000 rooms booked until the end of August in SHA Plus hotels, with nearly 13,000 arrivals and 124 flights after 28 days, with many more scheduled. Top markets are the US, UK, Israel, Germany, France, the UAE and Switzerland with an average length of stay of 11 days.

As anxiety grows across Southeast Asia’s key travel destinations struggling with

infection numbers, the Phuket Sandbox model is rapidly becoming the standard bearer of hope for the tourism industry, said a release announcing KP Ho’s statement.

Launched on July 1, the Sandbox enables fully-vaccinated international visitors to fly directly to the destination and stay on the island quarantine-free. Hotels need to ensure at least 70% of their

staff have received vaccines – the same inoculation rate as Phuket’s population, creating herd immunity against COVID-19. While the high level of protection doesn’t prevent people from catching COVID-19, it does significantly reduce the likelihood of serious infection and hospitalization.

“Infections and re-infections are not what really count; it’s hospitalisation rates and ICU rates that count. The Thai government has to emphasise those new numbers and shift the narrative towards ‘how many people are really getting sick?’, not ‘are the numbers going up?’” said Mr Ho.

By reporting this data, he said, it should be possible for Phuket to be set apart from the rest of Thailand and placed on the ‘safe list’ of destinations to visit.

This is not without precedent; the UK government for example, has put the island of Madeira on its green list, while the rest of Portugal remains on the amber list. The same rule applies to Denmark and the Faroe Islands, he added.

“What’s really important is that EU countries – the national governments, spurred

on by travel agents, the media and other people – recognise that it’s necessary to disengage the perception of Phuket from the rest of Thailand. It should be a situation where Thailand could be a red alert zone but Phuket could be a green zone,” said Mr Ho.

“It could be possible to create a series of Sandboxes in other destinations, such as Koh Samui [which recently launched Samui Plus], Bali and Phu Quoc. As long as that Sandbox is well-organised, as it is in Phuket, it should be separated from the rest of the country.”

Phuket Vice Governor Piyapong Choowong, also present at the summit, added, “I would like to confirm we support Phuket Sandbox. We are making sure people on the island and all visitors are safe so we can run the Sandbox smoothly and continue to welcome more tourists to Phuket.”

Presenting the latest data on Phuket sandbox flights and tourist arrivals, C9 Hotelworks Managing Director, Bill Barnett, added, “There is a lot at stake but what is clear is that Phuket Sandbox is alive and well, and it’s working.”

Thai baht region’s worst-hit currency

THE SHARP DECLINE IN TOURISM numbers due to the COVID pandemic has made the Thai baht the worst-hit currency in the region this year, according to Mizuho Bank.

In a note on July 23, the Japanese bank pointed to “uncharacteristic under-performance of the baht, rendering it the ‘worst performer to date in 2021’”, reports state news agency NNT.

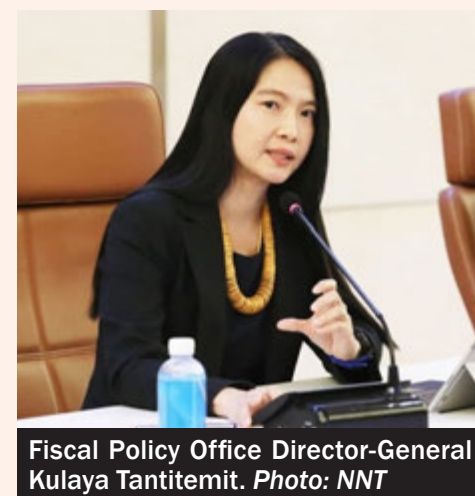
The baht was the top performer in Asia before the pandemic. In 2019, the country was concerned about the strengthening baht, which was buoyed by its large trade surplus.

However, according to Refinitiv Eikon data, the baht has steadily plunged more than 10% against the US dollar year-to-date in 2021, making it the weakest-performing currency this year compared to other major Asia Pacific currencies. Against the greenback, the Japanese yen is nearly 7% lower, the Malaysian ringgit declined by 5%, while the Australian dollar is down 4.43% in the year-to-date, NNT reported.

Mizuho Bank pointed out that the sharp decline in tourist arrivals had multiplied the “Covid devastation” of the economy. Tourist spending accounted for about 11% of Thai GDP in 2019, the report added.

According to data from the Ministry of Tourism & Sports as well as the World Bank, Thailand had only a little over 34,000 tourist arrivals as of May 2021, compared with over 39 million in 2019.

Thailand’s over-reliance on tourism is going to be “very challenging” for the



Fiscal Policy Office Director-General Kulaya Tantitemit. Photo: NNT

country as it seeks to reopen to tourists while still battling the pandemic, Nomura’s Chief ASEAN Economist Euben Paracuelles said last week, the report added.

Further, the Finance Ministry has slashed its economic growth forecast from 2.3% to 1.3% in its third revision this year.

Fiscal Policy Office Director-General Kulaya Tantitemit said the current outbreak is impacting economic activity and the expected number of foreign tourists this year, but improved exports and fiscal measures will lend some support.

She said that although Thailand is preparing to reopen, the ministry now expects only 300,000 foreign tourists this year, down from an earlier forecast of 2mn.

According to Ms Kulaya, the government expects to use B200 billion, of a new B500bn borrowing plan this year, to finance stimulus measures. NNT

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You've been warned: police

Protestors to face charges for violating emergency decree

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Police are threatening legal action against demonstrators during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the "car mob" rally seeking the ouster of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha that was held in Bangkok on Sunday (Aug 1).

The announcement came as protest leader Jatupat "Pai Daodin" Boonpathararaksa was arrested on Monday during a rally in front of the Narcotics Suppression Bureau (NSB) demanding the release of protesters detained during Sunday's anti-government demonstrations.

Mr Jatupat and a group of protesters from the "Talu Fah" group gathered outside the NSB office on Vibhavadi Rangsit Road where they sprayed paint on a wall and fence.

They were met by three companies of crowd control police deployed outside the NSB office before they were detained and whisked away



Protest leader Jatupat "Pai Daodin" Boonpathararaksa is arrested by riot police during a rally in Bangkok on Monday (Aug 2). Photo: Bangkok Post

in a police transport vehicle. Some of those arrested were detained, police confirmed.

Pol Maj Gen Piya Tawichai, deputy commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Bureau, said the recent protests were illegal and those who participated in

them would be prosecuted.

Five protest groups held demonstrations on Sunday, which were announced on social media in advance, Pol Maj Gen Piya said.

They comprised the United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration group, which

held a rally at the Democracy Monument and was led by Parit Chiwarak; a group which was headed by Nattawut Saikuar, a former key member of the red-shirt United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship and held at the Ratchaprasong inter-

section before proceeding to Vibhavadi Rangsit Road.

There was also a car mob rally which was led by red-shirt activist Sombat Boonngam-anong and held on Vibhavadi Rangsit Road. The others were the Thai Mai Thon ("Thais won't tolerate it") which also organised a car mob rally on Ram Intra Road and later moved to join the car mob on Vibhavadi Rangsit Road; and the Nonthaburi Network which gathered at Phra Nang Klao Bridge MRT Station and then joined the car mob led by Mr Sombat.

About 5:30pm, riot police squads tried to contain the car mob group which gathered near the Veterans General Hospital on Vibhavadi Rangsit Road. The protesters threw objects and firecrackers at police who fired rubber bullets, a water canon and tear gas at the protesters.

The car mob rally ended and protesters dispersed later on Sunday night.

'NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION'

Pol Maj Gen Piya said that

Bangkok has been designated as a maximum and strict control zone, with a ban on gatherings of more than five people and other activities that risk spreading the virus.

Violators are liable to penalties under the emergency decree and the Disease Control Act, he said, adding that those who joined the car mob rally and honked horns or obstructed traffic will also face charges.

Meanwhile, Deputy Pheu Thai Party leader Yuthapong Charasathian said the opposition will table a no-confidence motion against the government to parliament on Aug 12, with Gen Prayut and Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul among the targets for censure.

The topics for censure will include vaccine management, lockdown measures, and soaring daily COVID-19 cases, Mr Yuthapong said.

He said the opposition parties will censure Gen Prayut for his role as the director of the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration and also as the defence minister.

Media, lawyers contest gag order

BANGKOK

THE CIVIL COURT HAS accepted a petition by the Human Rights Lawyers Alliance, 12 media companies and reporters seeking the revocation of a regulation restricting free speech and will issue an order on the case at 1:30pm today (Aug 6).

The collective filed a complaint against prime minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, prime minister on Monday (Aug 2), petitioning the Civil Court to void an order issued last Friday (July 30) under the state of emergency decree that they believe threatens accurate media coverage as well as freedom of expression.

They also asked for a temporary court injunction to freeze the use of the controversial order, pending a final judgement, on grounds that the issue was critical to society as it posed a threat and instilled fear among the public.

The order empowers the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) to cut internet access of social media users posting content that may frighten people.

The petition listed three arguments. First, the ban of content "which may frighten people" is ambiguous and may run against criminal law principles.

Second, the regulation empowers the NBTC to check and block access to the internet, which is illegitimate. The emergency situation decree in effect now does not allow blocking communication among people. Only the serious emergency situation decree allows it, but it was not currently in effect.

Third, it runs against Section 35 of the constitution which endorses freedom of the press. If the government wants to block content, it needs to do so by piece - it may not block an entire platform or channel such as a certain IP address. "Blocking access to the internet is a serious violation of rights and liberties. It is also disproportionate and the government has other laws it can use," Thapanee Iadsirchai from The Reporters online news outlet said at Monday's hearing.

If the regulation is enforced, there will be no checks and balances and people could not get information from all

sides, which is dangerous in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, she added.

'FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT'

Attapong Limsuppanak, an IT specialist, told the court the blocking of an IP address would affect other people.

"IP addresses are assigned by internet service providers, which rotate them among users because they are limited resources. Since they are dynamic, the regulation will make certain addresses unusable to other users while the targeted person is assigned another number. The measure will inadvertently affect other users.

"Besides, an IP address is shared by a number of users in the same network so other people who may not have done anything suspicious might be unable to access the internet as well," he explained.

Wilaiwan Chongwilai-kasem, a lecturer at Thammasat University's Faculty of Mass Communication, said communication was a fundamental right ratified by international conventions.

"Blocking access to information in the name of crack-

ing down on fake news will put people at risk during the pandemic because they lack access to all information. To counter fake news, cooperation from society is needed and officials must give truthful information," she said.

Supinya Klangnarong, a former NBTC commissioner, said the NBTC did not have the power to rule on the content created by media or online users and urged the government to seek cooperation rather than forcing people to do what it wanted.



Opponents of the order believe it threatens accurate media coverage as well as freedom of expression. Photo: Bangkok Post

Media companies signing the petition included The Reporters, VoiceTV, The Standard, The Momentum, Thai

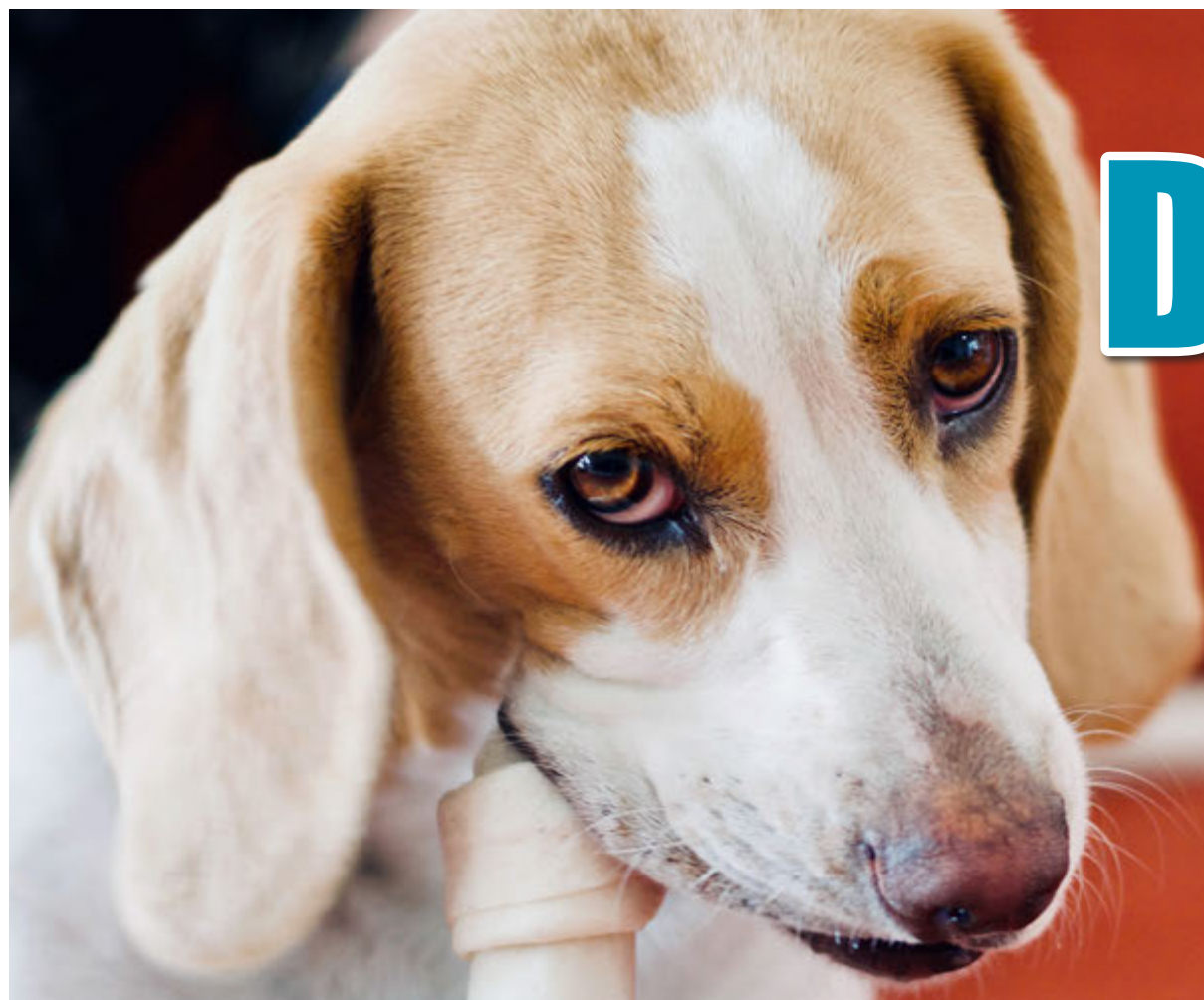
Matter, Prachatai, Dem All, The People, Way Magazine, Echo and Plus Seven.

Bangkok Post

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ALCOHOL MAY BE A HEALTH HAZARD!



Don't give the dog a bone!

Photo: Aditya Joshi / Unsplash



UNLEASHED

Russell D Russell
info@k9pointacademy.com

Giving a dog a bone seems to be the quintessential thing to do. But like most things, it isn't quite that simple. I get asked a lot whether it's safe to give dogs bones, and the answer is always the same: Yes, and No! Which, to be fair, isn't exactly helpful. So let's dig a little deeper...

In short, any bones that have been 'cooked' are generally not considered safe for dogs to eat. So those discarded chicken bones, or pork ribs, are not best placed in your dog's food bowl. Now, I can hear some of your snorting, "My dogs have eaten cooked chicken bones their entire lives, and are perfectly fine..." – and I'd agree. In the same way I know people who smoke like chimneys and are perfectly fine – for now.

The problem is those cooked bones can splinter, and peel which can lead to a host of problems including broken teeth, blockages or, at worst, ripping internal passageways. And whilst the latter of these may be rare, it does happen. So we're playing Russian roulette every time we give them those cooked

chicken wing bones. And on top of all that, cooking the bones removes so much of the nutritional value, it's largely pointless for the dog to eat it anyway. You're far better placed to keep all those cooked bones, boil them up, strain them and use the broth from them.

On the flip side though, feeding your dog raw bones not only can be perfectly fine, but healthy too. Raw bones also have a lot of goodness in them. A raw meaty bone contains fresh cartilage (a good source of glucosamine, chondroitin and vitamin C) as well as lots of protein and minerals vital for bone growth, as well as micro minerals, such as selenium, copper and magnesium. These are all essential to young pups, as they help build strong teeth, joints and bones. On top of this, raw bones provide some much needed roughage in their diet which encourages healthy faecal motions.

Of course making sure you're feeding the right ones to your dogs is important too. A seriously food driven labrador might just swallow a chicken wing whole, whereas a Jack Russell can damage his teeth on a cow leg! That said, dogs have the teeth and jaw structure to strip meat, cartilage and bone with relative ease. For smaller dogs, things like chicken wings, necks would be fine. Medium-sized dogs would han-

dle chicken thighs and carcasses just as easily. Bigger dogs you would probably go for something like lamb ribs, necks or ribs.

Dogs generally should be looking at around 10% of their raw diet coming from bone (that's just bone, not meat). But if you're just feeding your dog a bone as a treat, or an occasional teeth cleaner, then every now and again is fine. On that note, if you're buying the pre-cooked 'fresh' bones in pet shops – stop immediately, they can cause serious problems.

If you generally feed your dog kibble, but occasionally add in the odd bone, it's best to keep them separate. If your dog is conditioned to a standardised kibble diet, their stomach acid pH levels will be slightly higher (less acidic), whereas bone requires a lower (more acidic) pH level. Feeding them separately can help their systems prepare adequately.

With raw bones, it is worth using caution when feeding hollow marrow bones, or large weight bearing bones like a femur. These are incredibly strong bones, reinforced with minerals such as zinc and iron. These bones are incredibly difficult to chomp through, but that won't stop Fido trying – and ultimately cracking a tooth. Sliced marrow bones can be okay as a supervised treat as the dogs will largely

scrape out the marrow, rather than chew the bone.

And whilst dogs eating raw bones is normal, you still want to exercise some caution. People can easily choke on things like bread, a piece of carrot or a chunk of meat, but we still eat them. Dogs do have a wider oesophagus to enable consumption of large chunks of meat and bone, but you still want to be vigilant.

Younger dogs, or ones that have spent most of their life on a kibble diet, or consuming processed foods, will have a less worked oesophagus ready to deal with bones. Brachycephalic breeds (such as pugs, franchise etc) can have missing teeth and will struggle to contend with breaking the bones down. Also greedy dogs (labs, beagles, anyone?!) can gulp food down. If you're concerned, you can always smash the bones with a mallet for a while, to get your dog used to the diet.

If you would like some more information on canine training, or behavioural issues, then please contact us on 091 654 1960, email info@k9pointacademy.com, or check our website www.k9pointacademy.com. CPA is accredited with the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), as an American Kennel Club (AKC) Evaluator and a Professional Member of the IACP.

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Soi Dog launches in Surat

Soi Dog Foundation has launched a new mobile clinic in the southern province of Surat Thani. The clinic is the ninth of its kind in Thailand and has been set up to help manage the province's street dog and cat populations and stem the spread of infectious diseases through sterilisation and vaccination.

Sterilisation and vaccination is – and always has been – at the forefront of Soi Dog's work



Photo: Soi Dog

and is proven to be the most ethical and effective way of controlling street dog and cat populations. Since 2003, the foundation has sterilised and vaccinated over 580,000 dogs and cats across Thailand – more than

any other organisation in the world.

The launch of the mobile clinic follows the completion of a five-month project by Soi Dog on the island of Koh Samui in Surat Thani which saw over 3,000 dogs and 500 cats sterilised and vaccinated. The foundation decided to move to mainland Surat Thani with the same mission after receiving numerous requests for help.

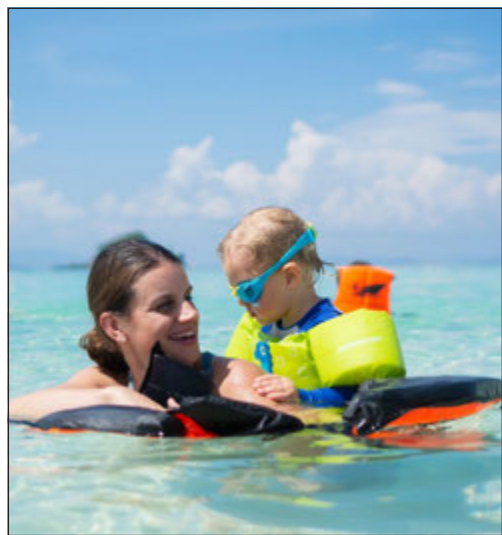
The Phuket News

Dolphins Ahoy

ADVERTORIAL

5 Star Marine

Nothing quite compares to seeing dolphins in their natural habitat; and let's be honest, who doesn't love these inquisitive and playful creatures? Of course, many of us have seen them in various unnatural settings. However, getting the opportunity to witness dolphins in the wild is something which often takes a bucket list spot, and quite rightly so. If you do get the chance to see a pod of dolphins breaching out of the waves with synchronised swimming elegance, it really is a spectacular sight.



5 Star Marine runs a respectful dolphin spotting programme which can be tailored to your requirements. They offer a combination dolphin spotting experience at Mai Ton Island by adding in a trip to Coral Island, the Khai Islands or even Racha Island depending on your requirements.

Coral Island, also known locally as Koh He, is an easy and fun-filled day-trip destination from Phuket. This beautiful island has 2 main beaches (Long Beach and Banana Beach), where you can find restaurants and beach clubs, enjoy snorkelling or relax on the sandy beaches. Banana Beach Club serves a good selection of dishes, plus offers massages, canoes and plenty of Instagram-worthy setups. You can enjoy some decent snorkelling from the shore there also. It is both kid and adult friendly with big loungers, tables in the shade and fun areas to explore for all.

Alternatively, visit the family friendly 3 Khai Islands (Khai Nai, Khai Nao and Khai Nok) which each offer something slightly different for you to experience; Khai Nai offers clear, shallow waters and snorkelling which are suitable for families with young children. Khai Nau is also an easy spot for some snorkelling right off the boat, and has a good variety of coral and marine life to explore. Finally, Khai Nok offers off-the-beach snorkelling and the opportunity to relax with some beach time.

If you fancy going further afield then head to the idyllic Racha Yai to enjoy an



abundance of nature, with some of the best snorkelling reefs in Thailand and quiet, tropical white powdery beaches with crystal-clear turquoise waters. This island provides a balanced combination of relaxing, tranquil locations with amazing coral rich sea life.

You can combine any of these stunning destinations before your dolphin spotting afternoon, where you will cruise to Mai Ton and enjoy trying to spot the friendly pod of dolphins who play around this island. Both children and adults alike will relish in this experience, coming out to the front of the boat, eyes peeled to try to be the first to spot the pod.

As naturally inquisitive creatures, these dolphins often come right up and swim alongside our speedboats to state

their curiosity, giving you a unique close-up experience like no other. They enjoy investigating the wake generated by our boats as we cruise slowly around on our spotting tours, and then frequently play near the boat, leaping and diving around.

Although 5 Star Marine cannot guarantee that the dolphins will come to play, they are experienced at knowing the best times and locations to maximise your chances of seeing these playful animals.

To book any of our TAT SHA Plus certified speedboats for a dolphin spotting tour please contact **5 Star Marine** on 093 720 6221 and quote 'The Phuket News' for free return mini bus transfers in Phuket.



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POP QUIZ

1. Is actor Tom Hanks American or Canadian?
2. What is Phuket's official mascot?
3. Which Russian city was renamed Petrograd during World War I?
4. What does the acronym AIDS stand for?
5. Gymnophobia is the fear of what?

Answers below, centre

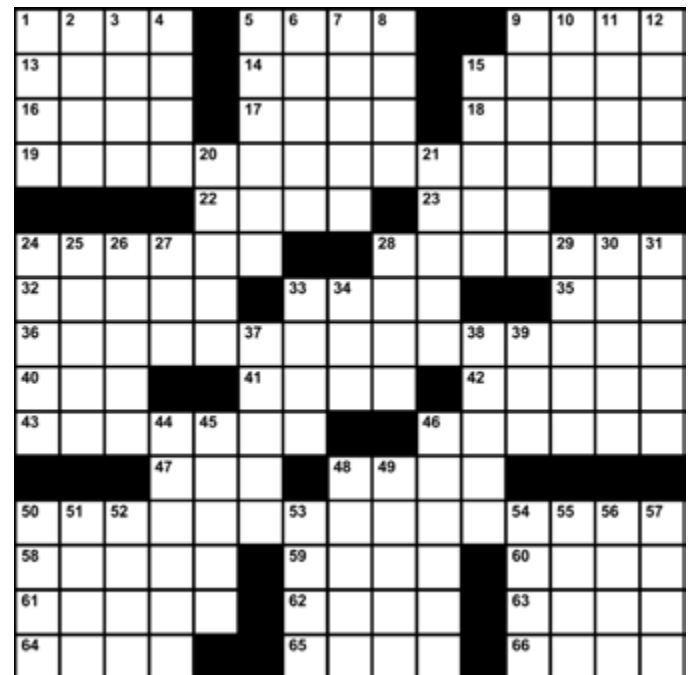
SUDOKU

Easy

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

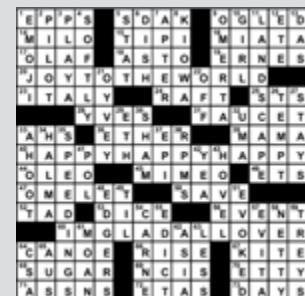
Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
1. Hardy post
 5. Paperlike cloth
 9. Talk effusively
 13. Suffer
 14. Area 51 conveyances?
 15. ___ Domingo
 16. Word waiters write
 17. "Forget it!"
 18. Anesthetized
 19. Express excitement
 22. ___ Bowl
 23. "___ Baby Baby" (Linda Ronstadt hit)
 24. Don't hold back
 28. Inner ear part
 32. Ancient Greek theater
 33. Shiftless
 35. "Dig in!"
 36. Wait on demanding diners, maybe?
 40. Age or cube
 41. Georgetown athlete
 42. Threadbare
 43. Attack
 46. Savory bit
 47. Hindu month
 48. Cat chat
 50. Lights may do this
- Down**
1. Cutting remark
 2. Aviation acronym
 3. By way of, briefly
 4. "___ Angel"
 5. Prepare to strum
 6. In conflict with, with "of"
 7. "Big ___" (Notorious B.I.G. hit)
 8. Fishing, perhaps
 9. Mohandas Karamchand ___
 10. Change back
 11. Hasenpfeffer, e.g.
 12. Game ender, perhaps
 15. Sweat
 20. Fine dinnerware
 21. Eminent
 24. Large-eyed lemur
 25. Bring out
 26. Article of faith
 27. Lowe or Reiner
 28. Arm bone
 29. Popular mints
 30. Caffè ___
 31. ___ alcohol
 33. Religious image (var.)
 34. V-___
 37. Elected
 38. Displeased expression
 39. Propel, in a way
 44. Directed skyward
 45. Upchucks
 46. Lamé joke
 48. Ape
 49. Bowel flusher
 50. In things
 51. Artificial bait
 52. "Pumping ___"
 53. Physics units
 54. Computer info
 55. Not bad
 56. Craving
 57. Make a dinner salad



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

second of activity in the most accurate simulation of the human brain ever created took one of the world's largest supercomputers 40 minutes to calculate.

2

rats will stop playing with each other if the bigger rat doesn't let the smaller one win at least 30% of the time.

4

times more likely is an air rage incident in economy class if the plane also has a first class.

8

percent of guys who own televisions don't watch any sports at all, according to Nielsen data.

17

percent of Brits admit they would be willing to have sex with an android, and 11% are willing to raise a robot baby.

5,840

people in the United States have a last name that ends with their first name, with Donald MacDonald being the most common.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Sunrise at Monkey Hill. Photo by Jeffrey Ephreim Villanueva Villegas

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This week in history

Aug 6, 1991

Tim Berners-Lee releases files describing his idea for the World Wide Web, which later debuts as a publicly available service on the Internet. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2004 for his pioneering work.

Aug 7, 1970

Ivory Coast becomes independent from France.

Aug 8, 1908

Wilbur Wright makes his first flight at Le Mans, France. It is the Wright Brothers' first public flight.

Aug 9, 1173

Construction of the Leaning Tower of Pisa begins; it will take two centuries to complete.

Aug 10, 2003

The highest temperature ever



Tim Berners-Lee, 2005. Photo: John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

recorded in the United Kingdom, 38.5 °C (101.3 °F) in Kent, England. It is the first time the UK records a temperature over (38°C).

Aug 11, 1786

Date traditionally ascribed Captain Francis Light establishes the British colony of Penang in Malaysia.

Aug 12, 1990

Sue, the largest and most complete Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton found to date, is discovered by Sue Hendrickson in South Dakota.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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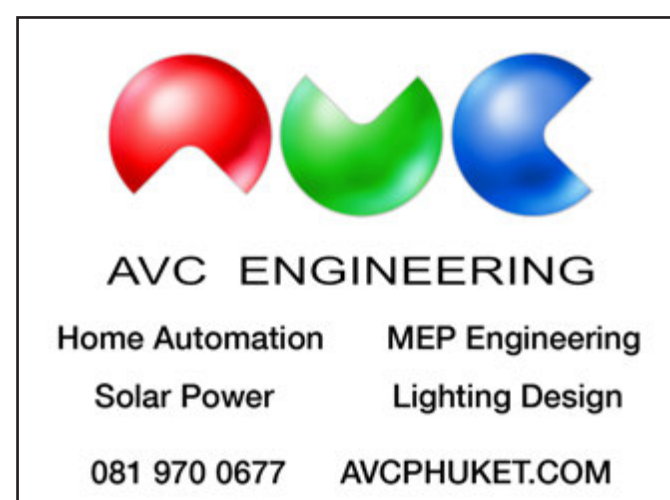
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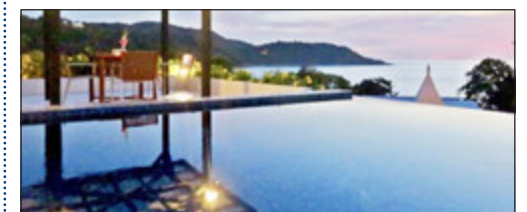
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Jason Beavan

Sayonara for national football coach Nishino

FOOTBALL

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION of Thailand (FAT) has terminated its contract with national coach Akira Nishino, the organisation announced last Thursday (July 29).

The move came during a meeting to review the Japanese coach's performance after the 2022 World Cup qualifying round.

Thailand could only get nine points from eight games in Asia's second qualifying round for the Qatar World Cup so the FAT decided to part ways with the coach, the FAT said.

The technical committee will oversee the selection of players for the 2021 Southeast Asian championship and 2023 Asian Cup qualifying round, it said. The FAT will later announce its process to select a knowledgeable coach.

Meanwhile, the new Thai League 1 season has been postponed again due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will now kick off on September 3.

The decision was agreed upon by officials from the FAT, Thai League and clubs during a virtual meeting on



Akira Nishino has been relieved of his duties as coach. Photo: Bangkok Post

July 23, Thai League acting president Korrawee Pritsanantakul said.

The league was originally scheduled to kick off this month but the opening day was postponed to Aug 13.

The latest postponement came after the government's Centre of COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) announced several new measures to tackle a new surge in coronavirus cases. Curfew is now in place in 28 so-called dark red provinces, as are travel restrictions.

If the COVID-19 protocols remain in effect by season start, teams in the dark red zones must play at venues outside their provinces including Bangkok, Pathum Thani, Chon Buri and Samut Prakan, Korrawee said.

Bangkok Post

Ocon an F1 winner in Budapest chaos

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Team Alpine's Esteban Ocon capitalised on a wet race start and first-lap mayhem to claim a maiden Formula 1 victory at the Hungarian Grand Prix ahead of Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton last Sunday (Aug 1).

Vettel was later disqualified for having insufficient fuel remaining in his car for a post-race scrutineering sample meaning Lewis Hamilton subsequently inherited second place and Carlos Sainz third as all drivers were bumped up a place.

It also meant Hamilton regained the championship lead after Max Verstappen was cleaned up in a seven-car crash at the first corner that forced five drivers into retirement.

The race got underway in damp and slippery conditions, and into the first turn Valtteri Bottas misjudged his braking point and tapped the back of Lando Norris's McLaren.

Norris in turn slammed into Max Verstappen, while Bottas rebounded off the McLaren to wipe out Sergio Perez in the second Red Bull Racing car.

All bar Verstappen retired from the race with terminal damage, and Bottas was slapped with a five-place grid



Esteban Ocon on his way to victory in the Hungarian Grand Prix. Photo: AFP

penalty for the next race.

The race was suspended for half an hour to clean up the debris, during which time the rain stopped and track dried.

After the restart, Esteban Ocon inherited the lead from Sebastian Vettel and the pair engaged in an exclusive battle as the race went on.

Vettel had the faster car and tried to undercut the Frenchman at the pit-stop window, but a slow tyre change meant Ocon was able to rejoin the race from his own stop fractionally ahead, neutralising the battle.

Further back Hamilton was making rapid progress after a slow start to his recovery. Mercedes decided early to run a two-stop strategy, bringing him in aggressively early, on lap 20, for his second set of slick tyres to jump his way past the struggling Verstappen and into the top 10. On lap 67 of 70 he passed

Sainz for 3rd place, and on the final lap he was within a second of Vettel in 2nd.

The chequered flag fell, and Esteban Ocon had held the lead for a maiden grand prix victory.

"What a moment!" he said. "What can I say, it's fantastic. Just a big thank you for the trust that everyone is putting in me."

Hamilton was confirmed to be suffering fatigue and dizziness after the race amid fears he may still be struggling from his previous COVID-19 diagnosis.

"Today was definitely tough," he said. "I gave it everything and I had nothing left in the end."

After Vettel's disqualification, Fernando Alonso finished 4th, AlphaTauri teammates Pierre Gasly and Yuki Tsunoda followed, Nicholas Latifi was in 7th, George Russell 8th with Verstappen and Kimi Raikkonen making up the top 10.

Third Test 'a cup final', says Gatland

RUGBY

BRITISH AND IRISH Lions coach Warren Gatland believes tomorrow's (Aug 7) third and final Test against the Springboks will be "a cup final".

Speaking after the Springboks levelled the series with a 27-9 win in Cape Town last Saturday (July 31), Gatland admitted his team had been outplayed in the second half, when they conceded 21 points without reply.

"We just didn't get anything," said Gatland. "We didn't get any momentum, any real opportunity to play. In fairness to them, they scrummaged pretty well, they drove a lot and got some reward."

Springbok coach Jacques Nienaber said his team could get better and are building towards the standard they set when winning the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

"We're fortunate with the leadership group we've got, players with that amount of experience."

Both 40-minute halves took more than an hour to



It's all to play for it the third and final test. Photo: AFP

complete, and Gatland said "they did a good job of slowing the game down. It was frustrating for us because we couldn't get any rhythm."

Gatland was asked whether he thought Springbok winger Cheslin Kolbe was lucky to be given only a yellow card for taking out Conor Murray in the air.

"I'm not going to comment on the referee," he said. "We'll have our meeting with the referees this week. It didn't look great from where I was."

A shoulder injury to 2019 world player of the year, flanker Pieter-Steph du Toit, forced him to retire on 22 minutes and Nienaber said he would be assessed ahead of the third test.

Last Saturday's match came after a week of controversy during which South African rugby director Rassie Erasmus criticised the first Test match officials in a 62-minute video.

"The last thing we need is a war of words," said Gatland. "Hopefully, World Rugby will make sure that everyone follows the protocols."

The Lions coach said he was surprised how "the narrative changed" when he was accused of complaining about the appointment of South African Marius Jonker as the TV match official.

"I didn't make one comment on the TMO and yet I was accused of questioning his integrity," AFP

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Sudaporn punches to Olympic podium glory

OLYMPICS

Ben Tirebuck

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Thai boxer Sudaporn Seesondee is the country's last hope to win a medal in the sport at Tokyo 2020 after she defeated Great Britain's Caroline Dubois on Tuesday (Aug 3) in the women's 60kg lightweight quarter-finals.

The win means Sudaporn is assured of a podium finish and at least a bronze medal; her semi-final was scheduled for yesterday (Aug 5).

Her win was welcome news after fellow boxers Jutamas Jitpong and Chatchai-decha Butdee both bowed out following defeat on Sunday.

In his farewell Olympics, Chatchai-decha lost to two-time Olympic bronze medallist Lazaro Alvarez of Cuba in the last eight of the men's 57kg.

Jutamas, 23, lost in the women's 51kg quarter-finals against 2019 World Championships silver medallist Buse Naz Cakiroglu of Turkey.

There were tears of disap-



Thai boxer Sudaporn Seesondee is assured of a podium finish and at least a bronze medal at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Photo: AFP

pointment too for Ratchanok Intanon in the women's singles badminton as the Thai hopeful lost 2-1 to Taiwan's Tai Tzu-ying in the quarter-finals last Friday (July 30).

Compatriot Busanan Ongbamrungphan lost to South Korean S.Y. An in a last 16 tie the previous day and World No.2 mixed doubles team Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai lost to Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino of Japan in the last 16 tie on July 28.

Elsewhere, there were shock defeats for Ashleigh Barty and Naomi Osaka in

the women's singles tennis and heartbreak for men's World No.1 Novak Djokovic who had to retire from the tournament due to injury.

On the track, Lamont Marcel Jacobs stormed to a shock victory in the men's 100m final on Sunday, becoming the first Italian in Olympic history to win the event. Having never run below 10 seconds previously, he registered an incredible 9.80 seconds. Jamaica's Elaine Thompson-Herah won the women's gold with a time of 10.61 seconds.

In the pool, American Caeleb Dressel powered to

his fifth gold medal of the Games on Sunday, with the highlight an Olympic-record time of 21.07 seconds in the men's 50m freestyle final.

Flora Duffy delivered a first ever gold medal for Bermuda in the triathlon and Alessandra Perilli delivered a first for San Marino when she won bronze in the shooting, her country becoming the smallest Olympic member to win a medal.

There were positives for the LGBTQ+ movement when British diver Tom Daley won gold in the men's synchronized 10m platform and declared his pride at being a gay man immediately afterwards. Weightlifter Laurel Hubbard then became the first openly transgender woman to compete at an Olympics on Monday, despite crashing out of the +87kg contest early.

Last but not least, the biggest gaffe of the Games so far goes to Ukrainian shooter Serhiy Kulish after he accidentally shot at a rival's target during the men's 50m rifle final on Monday, eliminating himself from medal contention in the process.

Panipak made 'sport and tourism' ambassador

OLYMPICS

PANIPAK WONGPATTANakit, Thailand's taekwondo gold medalist at the Tokyo Olympics, has been made an ambassador for sport and tourism.

The appointment was conferred by Tourism and Sport Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn at a homecoming reception for athletes, trainers and executives of the Taekwondo Association of Thailand at the Novotel Phuket Phokeethra in Phuket Town last Wednesday (July 28).

Panipak won the women's 49-kilogramme taekwondo championship in dramatic fashion against Spanish teenager Adriana Cerezo Iglesias on the first day of competition at the Games (July 24).

With five seconds remaining and trailing 10-9 in the gold medal match, Panipak landed a kick on Iglesias to win 11-10.

Minister Phiphat was full of praise for Panipak and said Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha agreed with her appointment. The prime minister had watched the final on TV and congratulated her in



Panipak (right) at the homecoming reception. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

a telephone call immediately after the gold medal presentation. She was the pride of the Thai people and of the nation, Prayut said.

Her Royal Highness Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana Rajakanya also sent her a bouquet, Phiphat said, that she received when she landed in Phuket last Monday (July 26).

In reply, Panipak said her appointment as sport and tourism ambassador was an honour for her and her family. She promised to do the best she could for the country.

The attendees included the outgoing governor of the Sports Authority of Thailand, Sakhon Wannapong, whose tenure ends on July 31. He is being replaced by Kongsak Yodmanee. *Bangkok Post*

Tour de Phuket accomplished

CYCLING

Continued from page 16

...brutal and finished with an incredibly tired but satisfied JJ," he added proudly.

RUNNING ON EMPTY

For the second longest stage of 220km the monsoon rains took hold, "the sort of rain where you can't see beyond 100 metres because of the intensity and spray," John commented.

When asked what the toughest part of the challenge was, John was quick to reply: "In the final week I contracted food poisoning and suffered badly for three days where I couldn't keep anything inside me. These were my darkest days as I was running on empty."

Support from the public was key too in helping him maintain his focus and drive. Be it the daily barrage of positive messages of encouragement via Facebook or direct support out on the road, it all contributed.

Seeing the donations rise each day was also a key means of motivation to maintain his levels and remind him why exactly he was doing what he was.

"It would help me start the day with a smile, knowing that we were on the way to our goal," John commented proudly.

John allowed himself to enjoy the final day, riding the 112km with a few friends and letting the occasion sink in before demolishing a huge Sunday roast dinner and a much deserved pint once finished!



Photo: John Bennett

"We raised B250,000 at last count and are hoping we may get a few more donations yet," John said.

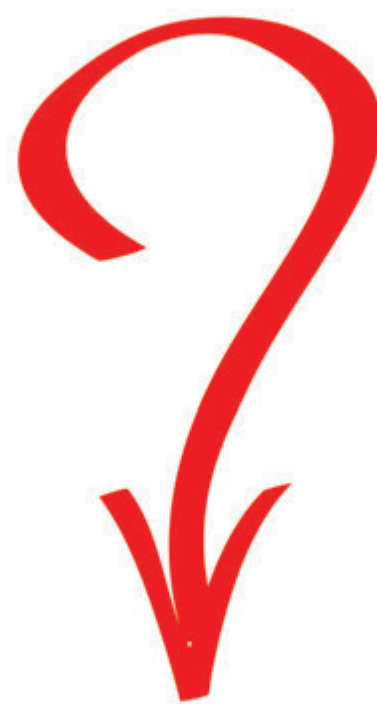
"I couldn't have done this without the amazing support of my wife Ching and my secretary Non. They drove every km in the support car, taking care of me, protecting me from crazy motorbikes. Since finishing, I have been sleeping 9-10 hours a day as my extreme fatigue starts to come out and my 57-year-old body recovers," he added.

Asked whether he would consider taking on such an extreme challenge again in the future John replied steadfastly: "If it is going to help someone then yes, absolutely."

All communities need heroes like John. Someone who selflessly puts others first and is willing to sacrifice so much in order to help those facing challenging times. Phuket is fortunate to call him a resident and *The Phuket News* salutes his phenomenal effort.



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John during one of his many days on the road. Photo: John Bennett

CYCLING

Ben Tirebuck
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

It is during times of adversity that we often see the human spirit shine through and true heroes emerge. British expat John Julius “JJ” Bennett is one such example.

On June 26, John took on the monumental feat of replicating the famed Tour de France around Phuket, cycling a distance of 3,417km over a 21-day period to raise funds for the One Phuket food drive supporting those devastated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

It was always going to

be a huge ask, demanding incredible levels of resolve and determination to overcome the huge daily distances, the physical toil, the punishing weather, hazardous roads and mind-numbing solitude. But John completed the challenge and has thus far managed to raise over B250,000.

After a well-earned rest period, *The Phuket News* caught up with John to get a first hand account of his endeavours.

“When I took on this crazy challenge, I always knew it was going to be tough,” John said on reflection.

“But I never envisaged how many demons I would have to ride through in 21

days and 133 hours. I had to draw on every kilometre of my 43 years cycling experience to get through the daily challenges,” he added.

Things didn’t get off to a great start. The first day, a 188km ride, involved several technical issues causing John’s stress levels to rise meaning he failed to hydrate correctly and then suffered severe cramps in the last stretch as a result. “I literally couldn’t get off my bike when I arrived home,” he winced.

Each day offered similar obstacles, namely the infamous Phuket traffic with reckless drivers aplenty. Losing the support car became an extra problem as did inevitable

mechanical issues with the bike. However, it was Phuket’s extreme weather conditions that proved the most obstinate hurdle.

In a somewhat cruel twist of fate, the longest stage of 249km also coincided with the hottest day, with temperatures topping 39° Celsius at one point.

“At the half-way point that day I pulled into a gas station and sat in an air-conditioned coffee shop, wondering how I could do another 125km!”

‘FOCUS BUBBLE’

This is where the value of self-belief and sports psychology come into play, John said.

“At no point did I think ‘I

can’t finish’, but many times I had to tell myself ‘how to finish’ by keeping in my ‘Focus Bubble’,” he said.

“Imagine you are wearing a weightless space helmet that cuts out all external distractions. You are only left with your own battle in your head to get through each hour and each day. Getting into the Focus Bubble is relatively easy, but getting back into your bubble after something pushes you out is the hardest thing for any athlete to do.

“The one thing that popped me back in the bubble was the reason I was doing this ride: to help poverty in Phuket. I kept seeing children in my head with empty stomachs,

and remembered I was doing this for them, not for me. If it was only for me, I may have given up, but I had a goal and was determined to finish.”

Back to the coffee shop on the hottest day of the challenge with 125km still to go. Managing to get back into his Focus Bubble, John came up with the idea of packing ice to help him beat the heat.

“We proceeded to stuff one bag of ice down the back of my jersey every 20 minutes, to help cool my core down and it did the trick,” John said with a smile.

“We started at 6:30am that day and finished at 6:00pm as dusk was settling. It had been...

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UWC student makes her Olympic debut

OLYMPICS

PHUKET-BASED SWIMMER Aniqah Gafoor made her debut at Olympic level when she took to the pool recently at the Tokyo 2020 Games.

Aniqah, a UWC Thailand student-athlete who holds the Sri Lankan national record for both 50m and 100m fly, represented her home country on the first day of competition at the Games (July 24) in the 100m butterfly event at the Tokyo Aquatic centre.

She was seeded in heat 1, starting in lane 5, with an entry time of 1 minute 4.58 seconds, which

is the current Sri Lankan national record she had previously set. She finished in Tokyo with a time of 1.05.33, ranking in 32nd place.

It was an admirable debut at the highest level for the 17-year-old who was the youngest athlete representing her home country.

“The UWC Thailand Community is extremely proud of her performance and achievement, she has worked extremely hard and overcome many hurdles,” UWC Thailand said on its website.

Miguel Lopez, Aniqah’s coach at the Thanyapura Sports & Health Resort where she resides and trains, said he was proud of her on his Facebook page. Many other posts

of congratulations poured in from well wishers too.

In a recent interview she claimed she had “nothing to lose” by being at the Games and competing with the world’s best. With time very definitely on her side, Aniqah will have gained invaluable experience from her Olympic adventure and look to future competitions with great confidence.

The Thanyapura Sports & Health Resort, which provides FINA-approved training facilities, had several swimmers competing at the Games.

Bakri Abass swam on the same day as Aniqah in the men’s 100m breaststroke and managed to break

the national Sudanese record with a time of 1.04.46.

Tilali Scanlan, representing American Samoa, broke her country’s national record in the 100m breaststroke on July 25 by more than four seconds, stopping the clock in 1.10.01.

Representing Madagascar were Michael Rasolonjatovo and Murielle Rabarijaona who competed in the men’s 100m backstroke and women’s 400m freestyle respectively.

Sangay Tenzin became the first ever Olympic swimmer to represent Bhutan, setting a new national record in the process with a time of 57.57 in the men’s 100m freestyle event.



Aniqah in training at UWC in Phuket. Photo: UWC Thailand

Similarly, Alexander Gadegaard from Nepal set a new national record in the same event with a time of 53.57.

Edgar Richardson representing the Solomon Islands and Jagger Stephens from Guam are also swimmers who competed and train at Thanyapura. Ben Tirebuck