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B.Y.O. JABS

A medical staffer holds up a COVID vaccination needle at Saphan Hin during the mass vaccination campaign. Photo: Vachira Phuket Hospital

PHUKET INDUSTRIES MAKE COLLECTIVE PLEA TO BUY OWN VACCINES AMID SLOW ROLLOUT

The Phuket News
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Leading figures from Phuket's tourism and other industries have made a united plea for the national government to allow private businesses and even local municipalities on the island to buy their own vaccine doses to ensure that Phuket will be allowed to re-open to receive international tourists under

the 'Phuket Sandbox' model on July 1. Under the Sandbox' model, fully vaccinated tourists would be allowed to enter Phuket without observing any period of quarantine.

A critical requirement to the policy is that 70% of the island's population must be vaccinated for COVID-19 before the national government will give its approval.

However, the ongoing spate of infections throughout the country

have placed the July 1 deadline in jeopardy, with leading Phuket figures now saying that the vaccine doses initially promised to Phuket to make the July 1 deadline possible may now be allocated elsewhere to counter the rising number of infections.

Bhumikitti Ruktaengam, President of Phuket Tourist Association, said, "Even though the Phuket Tourism Sandbox model has been approved, this current outbreak is affecting

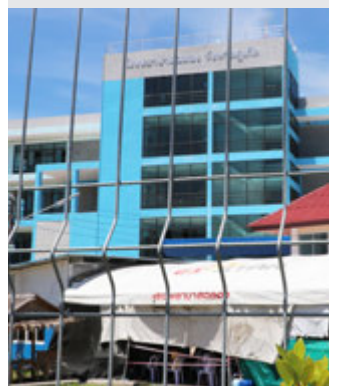
the distribution of vaccine doses to Phuket. The doses of vaccine that were supposed to be sent to Phuket are being provided to other areas to control the outbreak.

"Phuket people understand the necessity, but the Phuket Tourism Sandbox [re-opening of tourism] is also important for Thailand, so today Phuket's private sector asks the national government for approval to purchase vaccines by ourselves to be...

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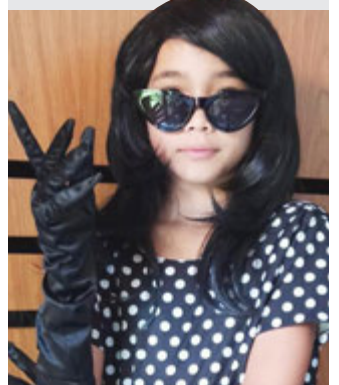
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Phuket rugby clinic helping kids in need



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News



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Economic pain forces vaccine action

Continued from page 1

...able to welcome foreign tourists as we have planned,” he said.

“We have been struggling in this crisis for a year. If the limited number of vaccine doses can really control the outbreak in other provinces in need, we are happy that the government provides the vaccine to help them.

“We just want the government to approve and facilitate us to purchase vaccines by ourselves. The vaccine will be bought by the budget from our own private sector and local administrative organisations, in order to provide to our people and carry on our strategy for the country,” he added.

Kongsak Khoopongsakorn, President of the Thailand Hotels Association Southern chapter, said tour operators were already expressing their interest to resume limited flights to Phuket, and highlighted the need for Thailand to uphold its message to the world the Phuket will re-open on July 1.

“We want to show the world our efforts and the achievement of Phuket as a pilot area for Thailand to welcome foreign tourists without quarantine. Right now, we have been contacted by foreign tour operators in many countries, and they have shown



Leading Phuket business figures Sarayuth Mallam (left) and Bhumikitti Ruktaengam, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, speak together at the mass vaccination of residents at the Saphan Hin sports stadium earlier this month. Photo: PR Phuket

interest in sending their customers to Phuket, especially operators in Germany,” he explained.

“A big German company informed us that they plan to have two chartered flights per week to Phuket, starting Oct 10, while companies in Scandinavian countries have asked us for clarity about the documents needed and the conditions [to be met] to travel to Phuket. We have announced to the world about our plan to re-open, and we must make it happen,” Mr Kongsak said.

Joining the call for Phuket private operators and local government administrations to purchase their own vaccines

to inoculate people in the own areas were Thanet Tantipiriyakij, Acting President of the Phuket Tourism Council, along with Chernporn Karnjanasaya, President of the Federation of Phuket Industries, and Thanusak Phungdet, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce.

Mr Thanet pointed out that Phuket business operators had first asked for permission to buy their own vaccines in January, but pointed out that the Ministry of Public Health “had sent us a negative sign of vaccine distribution”.

Mr Thanusak pointed out that many municipalities across the island had months

ago set aside the budget required to buy their own vaccines, including Phuket City Municipality and Patong Municipality.

“We have contacted the local administrative organisations that had shown their own initiative to buy vaccines for people in their areas, as well as the Thai representatives of foreign vaccine-producing companies to buy their vaccines. We have worked under pressure to deliver the promise we made to our people,” he said.

“We are sure that if the governor gives us a green light and a special path, we will be able to reopen the

island as we have planned,” Mr Thansuak added.

Mr Bhumikitti said that Phuket had already made great strides to vaccinate the island’s residents to make the July 1 plan work.

“We respect and understand what the government is doing for our people’s health safety as a priority. If the vaccines really need to be provided somewhere else to control the outbreak, then the government should have done this [allowed private purchase of vaccines] when we asked for it,” he said.

“Phuket has come too far to stop or step back. The 200,000 doses that we have used to vaccinate our people must not be wasted. We need to move forward with our momentum and to accomplish our goal together.”

BIG PICTURE

The plea in Phuket for private sector operators to buy their own vaccines came as Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Apr 28 promised close collaboration with the private sector to speed up the vaccine rollout and achieve the target of inoculating 50 million people by year’s end.

It also followed the Thai FDA approving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as fit for use in Thailand on Mar 25.

However, for reasons not made public the vaccine has yet to become publicly available.

Meanwhile, the national government continues to promote advances made in the ability of Siam Bioscience to locally produce the AstraZeneca vaccine under licence.

The entire national government mass-vaccination campaign relies on just two vaccines: the AstraZeneca vaccine and the Chinese-made Sinovac vaccine ‘CoronaVac’.

The national government has faced harsh criticism for its slow rollout of the mass-vaccination campaign.

Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who is currently under pressure to resign, only on Monday (May 3) met with representatives from Moderna to discuss their vaccine being submitted to the Thai Food & Drug Administration for approval.

Moderna vaccine representatives were in Phuket earlier this year at the meeting attended by Minor Group Founder and CEO Bill Heinecke, where they told the meeting that, pending Thai FDA approval, enough vaccines to inoculate Phuket to the point of herd immunity could be delivered within “six to eight weeks”. That was in February.

No ‘MorProm’ vaccination registration for Phuket

PEOPLE IN PHUKET WANTING to register to receive a state COVID vaccination must register through the ‘Phuket Must Win’ web portal. Any registrations through the national ‘MorProm’ channel will be cancelled by officials.

The move for Phuket to be excluded from the ‘MorProm’ national registration channel – via the MorProm app or via LINE – was confirmed by Phuket officials through an announcement posted on the Ministry of Interior Phuket office’s official COVID-19 information Facebook page, ‘Phuket Anti-COVID19’, late last Saturday night (May 1).

“Phuket people must register to be vaccinated ONLY at www.ภูเก็ตต้องชนะ.com,” said the announcement.

“The registration can be made by everyone – operators and persons – those who are older than 60 years old are included,” it added.



The announcement confirming that people in Phuket are to register through the www.ภูเก็ตต้องชนะ.com web portal to receive a state vaccination. Phuket registrations through MorProm will be cancelled. Image: PR Phuket

“Those who have already registered do not need to register again, please wait for a SMS informing you

to choose date, time, and place to get injected.

“Those who register through MorProm and receive an appointment date to be vaccinated, the Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) will CANCEL the appointment for vaccination at hospitals. Please register on www.ภูเก็ตต้องชนะ.com again,” the announcement confirmed.

No reason was given for excluding Phuket from the national MorProm vaccination registration, which is open to everyone else in the country.

However, it does follow independent confirmation by the ThaiVisa website that foreigners elsewhere in Thailand who either have been issued a “pink ID card” issued by the Thai government to foreigners or who are registered with the Social Security Office being able to register to be vaccinated through the MorProm registration system.

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Hard COVID warning for foreigners

The Phuket News
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Foreigners in Phuket caught ignoring COVID prevention measures and acting in a manner deemed to be not “socially responsible” will face legal penalties and may even face being kicked out of the country.

That was the message delivered at a meeting of high-ranking Phuket officials and the majority of consuls and foreign government representatives on the island on Apr 27.

Leading the meeting, held at Phuket Provincial Hall, was Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw, joined by all three Phuket Vice Governors, Pichet Panapong, Piyapong Choowong and Vikrom Jakthee.

The meeting was tabled as being held “to discuss ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 for foreign tourists living in Phuket.”

Present to receive the message were Consul-Generals, Honorary Consuls and other representatives from 14 countries: Australia, United Kingdom, Russia, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Kazakh-



Matthew Barclay, Australian Consul-General to Phuket, speaks with Phuket Vice Governor Piyapong Choowong after the meeting. Photo: PR Phuket

stan, Luxembourg, Austria, South Korea, Switzerland, Chile, Mexico and Nepal.

According to a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket), the consuls were informed of the rules and regulations now in effect to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 as well as the economic situation in Phuket in order for the consuls to acknowledge and use the information to share publicly.

“At this meeting, the par-

ticipants were given an opportunity to express their opinions and make recommendations in the prevention and control of the epidemic of COVID-19 as well,” said the report.

“The Phuket Immigration Office presented information for cooperation from the Consul-General and Honorary Consuls. Guidelines for the prevention and control of the epidemic of COVID-19 have been published,” the report added.

“However, if the inves-

tigation of the disease by the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office finds that you (foreigners) who are at high risk, or have tested positive for COVID-19, you (foreigners) must be socially responsible by preparing for treatment in strict accordance with the place set by the Public Health Office, which is this standard. The same standard as Thai citizens living in Phuket Province,” the report noted.

“If you (foreigners) do not comply, there will be le-

gal penalties and affect your consideration for permission to stay in the Kingdom,” the report stated.

The report did not include any statements by the consuls on the message.

After hearing the government’s planned timeline for COVID vaccination, the Honorary Consul of the United Kingdom asked when foreigners would be included in the vaccination programme timeline.

Matthew Barclay, Australian Consul-General to Phuket, requested that the Phuket Provincial Government quickly send information of the Phuket regulations to the Consulate so that the Consulate can manage its outreach information to its tourists and act accordingly.

The Honorary Consul of Norway asked provincial officials to prepare information published on a central website for the convenience and speed of extraction of information to be used in public relations.

And the Dutch honorary consul, Seven Smulders, asked the provincial authorities to update the progress of Phuket’s COVID situation in English-language media, specifically

suggesting Richard Barrow and *The Phuket News*.

The meeting noted that there are currently approximately 11,000 foreigners living in Phuket.

“As a result of this meeting, Phuket Province will use [the information learned] to improve working guidelines to provide care for foreign tourists in the Phuket area to be effective with the ultimate goal of expats to be taken care of and safe from COVID-19,” the report concluded.

Of note, for the preceding week Phuket Immigration had been posting a notice telling foreigners in Phuket to strictly follow COVID prevention measures.

However, no explanation has been provided as to what inspired the Phuket Immigration Office to start heavily emphasising the need for people to follow COVID prevention measures.

The meeting on Apr 27 was the first time the Phuket Immigration Office delivered a warning to foreigners in Phuket that they may have their stay in the country annulled if they are caught not following the COVID prevention measures.

Chalong Hospital closed over COVID scare

CHALONG HOSPITAL has been closed for cleaning and its staff quarantined and tested for COVID-19 following a 74-year-old woman outpatient testing positive for the virus after she visited the hospital for dizziness but was later sent home.

Chalong Hospital Director Suchart Nichawanna announced the “temporary suspension of services” in an announcement last Monday (May 3).

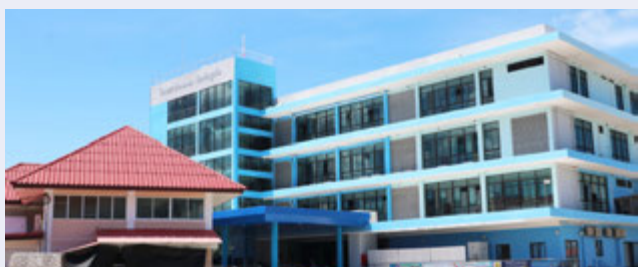
The 74-year-old Thai woman was admitted to the Emergency Accident Department at Chalong Hospital for dizziness at 11:01am Wednesday last week (April 28), Mr Suchart explained in the announcement.

Doctors treated her symptoms, prescribed medication and she was sent home, he added.

Two days later, at 3:02pm last Friday (Apr 30), the woman returned to the outpatient department with complaints of dizziness and diarrhea.

The woman was admitted and assigned a hospital bed at 5:36pm.

By last Saturday (May



Chalong Hospital is to remain closed until May 10. Photo: Tanyaluk Sakoot / file

1), however, the woman had developed a fever, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing, so doctors ordered a lung X-ray, examined her for COVID-19 and moved the woman to an isolated room.

Doctors were informed at 10:33pm last Sunday night (May 2) that test results had confirmed the woman was infected with COVID-19.

“As a result of the incident, many medical personnel at Chalong Hospital were at high risk exposure,” Mr Suchart noted in his announcement.

“Patients admitted to the hospital, doctors, nurses and hospital personnel have been quarantined and tested for COVID-19,” he added.

“Therefore, it is necessary for Chalong Hospital to

temporarily suspend services to all patients. We apologise for the inconvenience. If there are any changes, [the public] will be notified immediately,” Mr Suchart said.

Chalong Hospital Director Mr Suchart announced in a revised update released later Monday afternoon (May 3) that Chalong Hospital is expected to re-open on May 10.

Four patients who were receiving treatment at Chalong Hospital and four relatives who had been in close contact with them have been transferred to Dibuk Hospital, where they will be tested, Dr Suchart said.

Low risk people are asked to self-monitor for signs of infection at home, he added.

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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 11 m/s	Wind 7 m/s	Wind 4 m/s	Wind 4 m/s	Wind 7 m/s	Wind 11 m/s	Wind 11 m/s

Face mask crackdown ramped up

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The move to crack down on people not wearing face masks while in public was ratcheted up last Friday night (Apr 30) with Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew issuing an order to ramp up restrictions already imposed in Phuket to try to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The new order, titled Phuket Province Order 2408/2564 dated April 30, 2021, is marked to be in effect from May 1 to May 12.

The order is an amendment to the main order imposing the current COVID restrictions issued in the order issued on Apr 28.

“Wearing a surgical mask or cloth mask to prevent the spread of disease when outside home or in public places to reduce the risk of infection and prevent the emergence of unsanitary conditions in order to limit the spread of disease outbreaks,” is required.

“When out of dwelling or in public places, people wear a surgical mask or cloth mask and must wear properly as recommended by the Ministry of Public Health,” the new order noted.



Phuket Governor Natong Woonciew (centre) and other leading provincial figures at the COVID committee meeting at Provincial Hall on Monday (May 3). Photo: PR Phuket

“When encountering non-compliant [persons] as above the competent official shall warn and order that person to act correctly. If that person does not follow the officer’s instructions, the officer is to proceed in accordance with the Communicable Disease Act B.E. 2558 and its amendments and comply with Phuket Provincial Order No. 62/2564 dated 7 January 2021,” the order made clear.

The order also mandated that all schools and other educational institutions are to close, including govern-

ment and private schools, vocational colleges, private education centres, universities and tutoring institutions.

“Teaching and teaching locations outside all educational establishments [are to] refrain from teaching and teaching management, and refrain from organising any activities that require grouping of students, except for the arrangement of the exam to be administered,” the order noted.

“In the case of admissions to study in educational institutions for the academic year 2021, the school administrators

shall prescribe the highest precautions and preventive measures in the process of enrolling students. The form should be accepted via electronic media (online). If an interview exam is required, the highest concentration of precautions must be taken and to strictly follow the [regulations implemented by the] Phuket Communicable Disease Committee.

The order also revised the closure of walking street markets, regular markets and night markets, which can operate at the regular time and place. but

not later than 9pm and must strictly follow the preventive measures prescribed by the government

All snooker and billiard table venues are ordered closed.

All other restrictions imposed by the Apr 28 order are to remain in effect.

Due to the “urgency of necessity” and that any delay in imposing the measures “will cause serious damage to the public or affect the public interest”, people may not exercise their right to object to the measures imposed, the order noted, with the authorities empowered to do so under Article 30 of the Administrative Procedure Act, B.E. 2539.

“If anyone violates or fails to comply with this order it may be an offense under Section 51, and shall be liable to a fine not exceeding B20,000 or Section 52, which shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or a fine not exceeding B100,000, or both, under the Communicable Diseases Act B.E. 2558,” the order warned.

Further punishment may be instituted under Section 9 of the Emergency Decree, under which persons shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not exceeding two years or a fine of up to B40,000, or both.

Woman killed crossing Thepkasattri Rd

A WOMAN WAS KILLED when she was struck by a pickup truck while she was crossing Thepkasattri Rd in Srisoonthorn at night on Apr 29.

Thalang Police Deputy Chief Lt Col Sanit Nukhong was called to the scene, on the southbound lanes about 500 metres north of the Heroines Monument, at about 7:50pm.

Police together with rescue workers from Pa Khlok Municipality arrived to find the body of Atika Dolraman, 28, originally from Songkhla, on the road.

About 50 metres away was a black Krabi-registered Toyota Fortuner. Its driver, Weerayuth Khunthong, 28, originally from Bangkok, was in shock waiting for police.

Mr Weerayuth explained that Ms Atika crossed the road in front of his truck while he and his friend Sonsak Uraphananan, 25, were driving to Baan Kuku in Rassada.

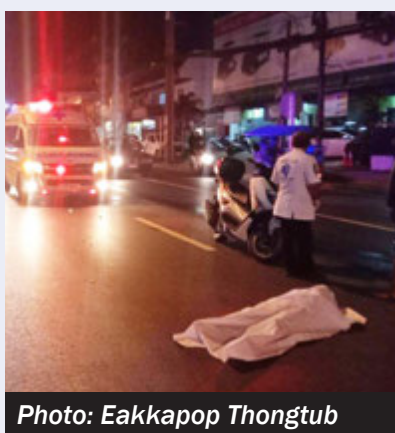


Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Mr Weerayuth braked hard, but was unable to avoid hitting her.

The body of Ms Atika was taken to Thalang Hospital for further examination, Lt Col Sanit noted in his report.

Lt Col Sanit confirmed that Mr Weerayuth tested negative for alcohol, but added that further investigation was needed before police could confirm whether he would face any charges for the accident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Drug raid nets 3.2kg of ya ice

DRUG RAIDS IN PHUKET HAVE resulted in the arrests of three people with a total of 3.2 kilogrammes of crystal meth (ya ice) and 5,105 pills of methamphetamine (ya bah) seized.

The arrest was a joint operation by officers from the Phuket Provincial Police, Thalang Police, Cherrng Talay police and Kathu police, explained a report by the Phuket Provincial Police on Monday (May 3).

However, the report did not explain when the raid was conducted. Nonthawat ‘Man’ Daenthai, 19, was arrested at the restroom of the Shell petrol station on the bypass road and found to be in possession of 3.2kg of ya ice and 4,800 pills of ya bah.

Police then searched a unit at The Royal Place condominium in Moo 1, Kathu, and seized a white Honda PCX motorbike as evidence.

Nonthawat was taken to Kathu Police station and charged with possession of a Category 1 drug with intent to sell.

Other arrests reported included



Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

that of Nuannong ‘Koi’ Palirat, 41, who was found with 49.15g of ya ice and 305 pills of ya bah at a house in Moo 6, Kathu.

Police also seized a Honda Wave motorbike, B4,800 in cash and two ATM cards as items of evidence.

Nuannong was taken to Kathu police station and charged with possession of a Category 1 drug with intent to sell.

A third arrest reported was that of Natthachai ‘Bas’ Chananpong, 26, who was found with 0.11g of ya ice at house in Moo 7, Rassada.

Natthachai was taken to Phuket City Police Station and charged with possession of a Category 1 drug.

Eakkapop Thongtub

New mayors to take office

Election Commission confirms nine mayors, three more to go

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Chalermsak Maneesri has been confirmed as the new Mayor of Patong following formal confirmation of the Mar 28 municipality election results last week.

The Phuket office of the Election Commission of Thailand (PEC) posted the formal notices confirming the election of mayors and councillors at the 12 municipalities in Phuket on Apr 28.

The notices confirmed only the names of the winning candidates, not the final tally of confirmed votes for each position.

In accepting his election victory, Mr Chalerm Sak in a video posted on the Patong Palang Mai Party (Patong New Power Party) Facebook page said "Thank you for all the votes and the trust from my sisters and brothers in Patong. During these four years, I will work my best. I will not disappoint you all. I will be a normal person like I have always been for my

whole life. If you have any problems, you can come and meet me anytime. Thank you so much"

"Now that the ECT has approved [the election results], fixing the beachfront road is the first issue that we will work on."

In the preliminary vote count, Mr Chalerm Sak bested previous Patong Mayor Chalermluck Kebsup by 2,924 votes to 2,811.

Pakrit Keesin, who also contested the seat of Patong Mayor, garnered 2,686 votes.

The PEC initially noted that of the 13,503 eligible voters in Patong, 8,887 votes cast, with 8,421 votes deemed valid.

The PEC on Apr 28 also confirmed the 19 candidates who have been elected to serve as the new Patong Town Council.

However, of the confirmed election results announced, the seats for three Phuket mayors have yet to be confirmed.

The 18 councillors elected for Phuket Town have been confirmed, but not the mayor; the 18 councillors elected for Kathu have been confirmed,



Chalerm Sak Maneesri, now confirmed as the new Mayor of Patong, offers a wai to people along the street during his campaign to office. Photo: Patong Palang Mai Party

but not the mayor; and the 12 councillors elected for Pa Khlok have been confirmed, but not the mayor.

"The three mayors who have not been approved are still being reviewed by the ECT in Bangkok," Passakon Siripakayapon, Director of the Phuket office of the Election Commission (PEC), told *The Phuket News*.

"However, the ECT has 60 days after the election day to review the qualifications of the elected persons and announce

the successful candidates. The 60 days will expire on May 27," he added.

In the meantime, the councillors who have been approved to take office can start work in their new positions, Mr Passakon said.

"They can start work and choose the council head and deputy head. Later, in accordance with the Municipality Act, the provincial governor must call the mayor and council members to have their first full meeting," he said.

The other successful mayors confirmed to take office were:

Chalong: Thanaporn Ongsantiphap

1 Thanaporn Ongsantiphap - 6,203 votes
2 Samran Jindaphol - 5,099 votes
Eligible voters: 19,282
Votes cast: 12,266
- 12 councillors now confirmed

Rawai: Aroon Solos

Aroon Solos - 5,582 votes
Eligible voters: 12,646
Votes cast: 7,327
- 12 councillors now confirmed

Rassada: Nakarin Yorsaengrat

1 Nakarin Yorsaengrat - 12,401 votes
2 Somkit Suphap - 5,325 votes
Eligible voters: 35,217
Votes cast: 20,024
- 12 councillors now confirmed

Wichit: Kreetha Chotiwichpipan

1 Kreetha Chotiwichpipan - 12,827 votes
Eligible voters: 38,793
Votes cast: 18,023

- 12 councillors now confirmed

Srisoonthorn:

Chalermphon Kertsup

1 Chalermphon Kertsup - 8,410 votes
Eligible voters: 19,209
Votes cast: 10,460
- 12 councillors now confirmed

Thepkrasattri:

Prasong Trairat

1 Prasong Trairat - 2,867 votes
2 Wittaya Sinkha - 1,052 votes
Eligible voters: 6,018
Votes cast: 4,192
- 12 councillors now confirmed

Cherng Talay: Suniran Rachatapluk

1 Suniran Rachatapluk - 2,001 votes
2 Aphisit Nganprasertkit - 828 votes
Eligible voters: 4,124
Votes cast: 2,964
- 12 councillors now confirmed

Karon: Jadet Wicharasorn

Jadet Wicharasorn - 2,312 votes
Eligible voters: 5,572
Votes cast: 3,888
- 12 councillors now confirmed

COVID alert for airline passengers

PASSENGERS ON SEVEN specific flights between Phuket and Bangkok operated between Apr 15-26 have been urged to present themselves to a government hospital for a COVID test and observe any quarantine order by officials.

The Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) announced the warning on its official Facebook page at 11:26pm last Friday night (Apr 30).

The post noted that flights by AirAsia, Vietjet and Thai Smile were affected.

The post also included images of seating plans of the flights showing where the affected person was sitting so people know how close they were to a person now believed to be infected with COVID-19, though no explanation of how serious the threat of infection was given.

People sitting in the seats in close proximity to the person now suspected or confirmed as infected with COVID-19 were advised to present themselves at a hospital near their home.



Diagrams showing the seats near the infected person were shared for each flight affected. Image: PR Phuket

The flights of concern were reported as:

AIRASIA:

- Flight FD3027, Don Mueang-Phuket, April 15, travel time 5:50pm - 8:30pm
- Flight FD4110, Suvarnabhumi-Phuket, April 20, travel time 12:06pm - 1:21pm

THAI SMILE:

- Flight W285, Suvarnabhumi-Phuket, April 21, travel time 12:30pm - 1:55pm

VIETJET:

- Flight VZ401, Chiang Rai-Phuket, April 16, travel time 11:05am - 1:10pm
- Flight VZ301, Phuket-Bangkok, April 23, travel

time 1:40pm - 3pm

- Flight VZ316, Suvarnabhumi-Phuket, April 25, travel time 6:30pm - 7:50pm
- Flight VZ308, Suvarnabhumi-Phuket, April 26, travel time 6pm

"If you were seated at the specified [seating] numbers, you are a high-risk person. You are requested to be tested at a nearby hospital and detained in a place designated by the government," the notice advised.

People with queries about the announcement were advised to call the Phuket health office COVID hotlines 094-5938876 and 062-2435116.

The Phuket News

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Risk patient rooms run short

Vice Governor confirms high risk contacts permitted home quarantine

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

People identified as high-risk contacts for exposure to a person now confirmed as infected with COVID-19 can observe their 14-day quarantine at home if COVID-protection measures can be met to protect other people living in the same household.

Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong confirmed the news during an inspection of the 'Local Quarantine' facilities available at the Nai Yang Beach Resort & Spa on Phuket's northwest coast last Friday (Apr 30).

Joining Vice Governor Pichet for the inspection was Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon and a team of medical officers.

Vice Governor Pichet explained that there were two hotels in Thalang District, which covers the northern half of the island, to detain high-risk contacts: the Airport Hotel and the Nai Yang Beach Resort & Spa.



Vice Governor Pichet Panapong confirmed that high-risk contacts in Phuket were being allowed to observe 14-day quarantines at home. Photo: PR Phuket

Modifications made and the procedures observed at both hotels were satisfactory, he noted.

Vice Governor Pichet explained that from April 4-30, a total of 1,530 people had been ordered to observe high-risk detention, half of which were quarantined at hotels, and the rest observed their quarantine at home.

"Currently about 549

people remain in hotels, and 500-600 others remain in their homes," he said.

There are 510 hotel rooms available in Phuket for high-risk contacts to observe their quarantine, Mr Pichet noted.

The Recenta hotel in Phuket Town has 154 rooms for people in Muang Phuket, the Royal Paradise Hotel in Patong has 150 rooms for people in Kathu District, while

the Nai Yang Beach Resort & Spa Hotel has 133 rooms and the Airport Hotel has 73 rooms for people Thalang District, he explained.

"Most of those exposed to high risk from COVID-infected patients are now almost fully quarantined," he said.

"As a result, some of the high-risk people are now confined to their homes," he added.

"If the authorities consider that they can be detained at home, if, for example, they can be confined to a room alone, without affecting the family, or placing the whole family under quarantine," he added.

"Health officials will go to monitor the symptoms [of the high risk contact] at home every day and conduct swab tests to detect infection on the fifth and 13th day of the quarantine," he said.

However, he noted that not all people were able to observe their quarantine at home as they were unable to remain separated from other family members, prompting the need for hotels to be used to serve as Local Quarantine venues.

"We require a large number of rooms, and the province needs to spend a lot of money on hotel room rental as well, even if rented at the government rate," he said.

"Therefore we are allowing this if people can be safely detained at home. But if they cannot be detained at home, they will need to be detained in the hotel in the province.

It is necessary to find more rooms to ensure maximum safety," he added.

The move to allow high risk contacts to observe their quarantine at home follows Dr Somsak Akksilp, Director-General of the Ministry of Public Health's Department of Medical Services, presenting suggestions to national health officials on Apr 24.

"Those who are infected but do not have any symptoms: are to come to receive treatment in hospital or places that the government has arranged for at least 10 days after they are tested positive, and then allow to recuperate at home for 14 days more, Dr Somsak suggested.

"Those who are infected with only light symptoms: are to come to receive treatment in hospitals at least 10 days after they have symptoms. If they receive treatment for 10 full days but still have symptoms, allow them to stay in the hospitals or places that the government has arranged for 24-48 hours, and then allow them to recuperate at home for 14 days more," he added.

Sea gypsies tested amid rumours

HEALTH OFFICIALS conducted a COVID-19 proactive-screening campaign at the sea gypsy village in Rawai last Sunday (May 2) amid concerns that the village could become an epicentre of local infections.

Present for the occasion were Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew, Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos, Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO, or OrBorJor) President Rewat Areerob and Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon.



Photo: PR Phuket

Initial reports claimed that swab samples were collected from 300 of the villagers and subjected to RT-PCR tests,

However, Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos reported on Monday night (May 4) that the actual number of villagers tested was 260.

Of those, 253 tested nega-

tive for the virus, he said.

"The remaining seven cases were inconclusive because the samples were tainted with betel nut," he noted.

Mr Aroon took the news to be conclusive. "So, it can be concluded that the sea gypsy community is safe from COVID-19," he said.

The campaign came amid concerns that the village could become an epicentre of local infections, compounded by sea gypsies frequently interacting with people from outside Rawai who visit to buy fresh seafood. *The Phuket News*

Phuket officials request 'stay at home' nightly from 10pm to 4am

PHUKET GOVERNOR Narong Woonciew has issued a formal request for people staying in Phuket to stay at home or their place of accommodation from 10pm at night through to 4am in the morning in a bid to prevent COVID-19 from spreading across the island.

The notice was issued Monday night (May 3), following the meeting of the Phuket Communicable Disease Committee last Sunday (May 2).

People are asked to stay indoors during the specified hours unless they have "necessary reason".

The notice was marked to "come into effect" on Monday (May 4).

If people did venture outside during the specified hours, they were asked to complete their task and return to their place of residence "as soon as possible" to reduce travel that may be prone to the spread of COVID-19.

"Due to the epidemic situation in Phuket and across the country more people are

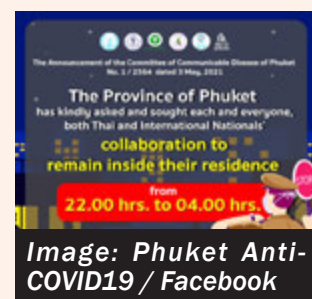


Image: Phuket Anti-COVID19 / Facebook

infected daily and the number of deaths is increasing in which the infected persons were found in clusters. This is due to the organisation of activities that gather many people, the traveling of people from high-risk areas without strictly adhering to public health measures," the request noted.

Communicable disease control officers, staff of local administrations, police and public health officials were permitted to set up checkpoints and conduct surveillance operations for local control of the spread of the virus from Monday (May 4) until further notice, the request added,

The "request" came as Phuket marked 25 new confirmed infections on Monday

(May 3), the highest daily total of new infections since Apr 3, which officials consider to be when the latest outbreak began.

The 25 new confirmed infections brought the total number of officially recognised COVID infections in Phuket since Apr 3 to 463.

Of note, the notice issued by Governor Narong Monday night was clearly worded to "request the cooperation" of people in Phuket, as did the previous "request" by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha last month. PM Prayut at the time stressed there would be no curfew, but said people would be strongly "encouraged" to stay at home between the hours of 11pm and 4am each night.

However, Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) spokesman Taweesilp Visanuyothin that same day (Apr 16) noted that provincial governors have the authority to introduce more stringent measures where deemed appropriate.

The Phuket News

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Border security on high alert amidst COVID fear

Bangkok Post

Security along all borders is at its highest amid fears that coronavirus cases from neighbouring countries could enter Thailand and deepen the already critical COVID-19 outbreak that has the death toll climbing at an alarming rate.

The most serious concern centres on the border with Myanmar in Kanchanaburi, where there is an ongoing influx of illegal job seekers, but the alert also extends to the other land frontiers.

"Authorities are intensifying border checks with Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos," Apisamai Srirangson, a spokeswoman for the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration, said last Monday (May 3).

Along the 370 kilometre border in Kanchanaburi, almost 300 people from Myanmar were caught illegally crossing into Thailand last week. COVID-19 remains unchecked in Myanmar.

The army's Surasi Task Force based in Kanchanaburi



Soldiers stand guard along the 22km Thai-Malaysian border wall in Ban Jaroh Pu-ngo in Betong district of Yala in January. Photo: Royal Thai Army

and Interior Ministry officials in the province report that while many had been fleeing the political crisis in their home country, the ease of getting work at factories enticed many others to gamble on sneaking into Thailand.

Task Force commander Maj Gen Banyong Thongnuam said 40 illegal migrants captured last Sunday had come from as far as Yangon, walking for about a week to reach the Thai border.

Recruiters in Myanmar delivered them to an area near Kanchanaburi, and they were then led across the frontier by guides to meeting points where Thai agents would

deliver them to factory jobs.

One Myanmar migrant said after he and 37 others had been apprehended last Friday that each had to pay the delivery man B15,000 when they reached their destinations.

Kanchanaburi governor Jirakiat Phumsawad held a meeting on Saturday, calling for urgent action to end the influx. He said Thailand was already battered enough by the latest surge of the coronavirus virus.

Myanmar has reported more than 140,000 confirmed cases and more than 3,000 deaths since the pandemic began last year.

On the southern border, Malaysia has reported detect-

ing new coronavirus variants first identified in South Africa and India and regarded as highly contagious. The 4th Army Region leadership has agreed to deploy soldiers, police, district officials and volunteers along the entire border with Malaysia.

Col Ayuphan Kannasutra, the commander of a task force in Songkhla, said patrols would operate around the clock. Authorities were concerned that some Thais could illegally cross back over the border from Malaysia to visit their families as Ramadan comes to an end.

Cambodia's Banteay Meanchey province also reported a record number of COVID-19 cases on Monday, the *Khmer Times* reported, citing the sub-committee for COVID-19 tracing without giving the figures. So far the province, which borders Sa Kaeo, has detected 412 cases.

In Laos, Bokeo province, opposite Chiang Rai, recorded 60 new cases last Sunday, a new record for the province, 57 of them in Tonphuang district, the *Vientiane Times* reported.

Government urged to speed up jab drive

THE GOVERNMENT HAS been urged to carry out its mass vaccination drive against COVID-19 within three months, after a recent study found a single dose of the vaccine can increase immunity against the virus by 96.7%.

Renowned virologist Yong Poovorawan wrote on his Facebook page last Monday (May 3) that a study conducted on Thais who had received one shot of the AstraZeneca vaccine showed a 96.7% improvement in immunity against the virus when compared to unvaccinated individuals, while those who have recovered from COVID-19 between 4-8 weeks prior to testing showed a 92.4% improvement in immunity. The study was carried out on 61 individuals for one month after they received their first shot.

Vaccine recipients aged below 60 reported higher immunity than those aged over 60, the doctor said.

Their immunity would increase further and last for a long time after the second dose, he said, before concluding that the immunity conferred after one shot of AstraZeneca vaccine was satisfactory.



Photo: Bangkok Post

"Therefore the government should administer the first shot of AstraZeneca vaccine to as people many as possible, or 10 million people each month in the first three months of mass vaccination," he said.

Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said after meeting with representatives of Zuellig Pharma Ltd that the ministry is ready to support the registration of the Moderna vaccine.

The Government Pharmaceutical Organisation (GPO) is ready to import Moderna vaccine but the private sector must confirm their orders to the GPO first, as the GPO can't stock up on the vaccine and wait for the private sector to buy it, he said.

Paisarn Dunkum, chief of the Food and Drug Administration, said Zuellig Pharma submitted all documents last week. The vaccine registration will be completed in May, he said. *Bangkok Post*

Protesters demand activists' release

HUNDREDS OF THAI PROTESTERS hurled red paint, tomatoes and eggs at a Bangkok court last Sunday (May 2), demanding the release of all political detainees, including an activist who was hospitalised after a hunger strike.

The student activist Parit Chiwarak – widely known by his nickname "Penguin" – has been held on remand since being charged in February under royal defamation laws. He has been denied bail repeatedly.

He faces more than a dozen charges for his role in protests last year against the government of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha, which also called for reforms to the monarchy.

Last Sunday, hundreds of protesters gathered in front of Bangkok's Criminal Court to demand Penguin's release – and that of other detained activists involved in the pro-democracy movement.

A number of demonstrators walked from Victory Monument to the court on Ratchaphisek Road to show their opposition to the court's decision not to grant bail for the protest leaders.

"Our patience is running out. The war has just begun," an organiser said through a loudspeaker. The rally was organised by the Restart Democracy (Redem), an offshoot of the Ratsadon movement.

"We are here today to show that there is injustice," shouted another protest leader.

Demonstrators chanted "release the political prisoners" and waved a three-finger salute – a symbol of resistance for the pro-democracy movement.



Pro-democracy protesters splash paint on the Criminal Court building in Bangkok during the demonstration last Sunday. Photo: AFP

They sloshed red paint all over the court's entrance, where they had plastered posters of the judge who protesters believed had denied Penguin's bail.

Protesters also hurled eggs and tomatoes into the compound as police stood guard with plastic riot shields and warned they were ready to take action if calls to stop throwing objects were ignored.

By around 6 pm, the group dispersed. Penguin has lost more than 12 kilograms since he began a hunger strike on March 16, and officials transferred him to hospital last Friday amid concerns his health was deteriorating.

Student-led demonstrations in Bangkok last year drew tens of thousands at their peak, but the movement has petered out this year amid increasing restrictions on public gatherings due to rising COVID-19 cases.

At least 70 activists from the pro-democracy movement are currently facing royal defamation charges in Thailand. *AFP*



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Young stars shine during rehearsal for 'The Witches', to be performed in Phuket in May.

A bright star in Phuket



THE PLAY'S THE THING!

Joel Adams

Art Factory. I instantly recognised her since we have been Facebook friends and have followed each other's progress over the past few years, the reason being the similarity of our work goals. She is none other than the lovely Irish Vicki Kiely. I had the privilege of recently conducting a phone interview for this article with her. Here is what I learned.

Vicki is a passionate promoter of the performing arts and a dedicated proponent of animal care and welfare. She volunteers the one free day she has in her busy week as Social Media and

Experience Manager at the Khao Sok Elephant Sanctuary. You may very well have seen her on Facebook, promoting her goal of ensuring a vastly improved life for all the marvelous elephants we have on our island and our adopted country. Keep up the good work, Vicki.

This article being about theatre, let's get back to Vicki's performance career and theatrical pursuits. She studied acting at Gaiety School of Acting, Ireland's leading drama school, in Dublin. She went on to receive her drama teaching diploma at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Besides performing conventional and musical theatre over the years, she has written, sung and recorded many songs. I came across a delightful album of four songs from her on Spotify.

Here in Phuket, where she has lived the last eight years, she founded VK Performers Studio in Boat Avenue, Cherno Talay, about four years ago and is presently its owner and drama/singing teacher.

The goal of her work is to nurture confidence and self-esteem in youth through the love of the performing arts, and from what I've seen of her kids and activities on social media, she is doing a great job of it. We discussed our vision and methods a little and we both agreed that the very most important element in a theatre classroom is an atmosphere of safety, fun and friendliness, that the theatrical classroom should be a safe space where one feels accepted and appreciated. In short, theatre for kids should be fun, even therapeutic when needed. We both have seen shy and reticent young people find a voice and confidence through theatre and emerge like butterflies from a cocoon.

Her studio is located at 49/71-72 Boat Avenue in Cherno Talay. She and her partner Mike Mitchell offer classes in singing, musical theatre, public speaking, acting, instruments, music production and song writing to students from 3 to 18. She also teaches LAMDA classes. LAMDA stands for the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts and is perhaps the oldest English-language acting school in the world, dating back to 1865. Students can receive their training anywhere in the world and be tested by LAMDA examiners, receiving certification for their achievements. In Phuket presently VK, HeadStart International School, BISP, and Theatrx all



conduct LAMDA classes. You can contact VK Performers Studio at: 092 285 9514 or vkperformersstudio@gmail.com.

At the moment she is working with a group of students on a play adapted from Roald Dahl's famous story, 'The Witches', by David Wood. This very fun play will be performed by her cast of 15 young actors ranging from 7 years old to 13 at the Grapevine on May 15 and 16. If you would be interested in seeing this, there are a limited number of seats, so call VK Performers Studio to inquire. I definitely plan on going out and watching it. 50% of any money made will go to the Khao Sok Elephant Sanctuary, Vicki told me.

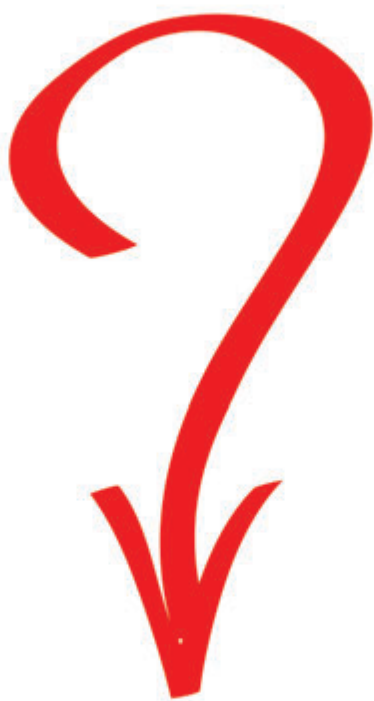
Her latest initiative is a series of online classes that she is now filming called VK Creative Kids for which she is creator, host and songwriter. So look for that as well.

I had a lot of fun in our telephone interview (I think she did too or else she's an even better actor than I thought), and by the end we were discussing the idea of our acting together in a two-hander. Since then, I have been looking for just such a script or idea that we could do together. That's one of the things I love most about the theatre world, how theatre groups, rather than seeing themselves as competition, often cooperate to provide much-needed creative input, and I look forward to working with Vicki and her team in the future to provide our island with exciting theatre and performances for all ages.

Joel Adams is building a vibrant theatre community right here in Phuket. You can contact him at theatrxphuket@gmail.com or by phone on 093 6490066. Facebook: Theatrx Group



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Gerald Hogg's grand adventure

Bruce Stanley

Gerald 'Ged' Hogg has written eight books since he retired to Thailand in 2017. While many older Westerners spend anxious hours wondering what to do with their newly acquired freedoms, Ged spends his time exploring life in Southern Thailand and writing travel books, his autobiography and has completed his first two mystery novels about the adventures of Thai Police Lieutenant Chai Son Sinuan, who battles both violent crime and police corruption.

"Through determination and hard work, I've built a great life for myself by taking advantage of opportunities. But it hasn't always been easy," says Ged.

Ged began his life in Middlesbrough, northeastern England, which he describes as cold, colourless and polluted by the local steel and chemical industries. But then as a young boy, his family moved to Kingston, Jamaica, where his father was posted as a construction manager.

Even though he was very young, he immediately responded to the warm weather and tropical vegetation, the surf and the welcoming seas.

"Eventually we had to return to Middlesbrough when my father's contract was finished. I was determined to leave as soon as I finished school. As I did not plan to take the CSE or GCSE exams like a few of my fellow mates, we were escorted off the school grounds with the parting words of 'you lot will never amount to anything; you'll end up as drunks, unemployed or in prison'. Those words gave me the inspiration to make a productive and fun life near tropical beaches, sunshine and smiling faces," he says.

Ged first moved to London and learned to master the culinary arts of fine dining. He figured that he could always work in the kitchens of fine resorts and cruise



ships while travelling the world. He managed kitchens for a Caribbean cruise line and on European ferries as well as five-star hotels in Australia, the UK and Bermuda. He also directed kitchen operations on supply ships to Antarctica. During a life of travel and work, he's been posted to 10 different countries including Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and the Falkland Islands.

By 2017, he decided to change course and retire from active employment. He planned to move to Thailand with his partner of nearly 50 years. But she told him that she had decided to live alone at their home in Australia. After the shock of the unexpected separation, he was determined to continue with his plan to move to Phuket to recapture his childhood memories of living in tropical comfort with smiling people.

"It didn't happen that way as we never intended to move to Thailand together. Our marriage broke down about a year after I retired which was when I decided to move to make a clean break and move to Thailand," said Ged.

But six weeks after he arrived on the island, he was knocked unconscious off his motorcycle by a speeding vehicle. When he regained consciousness, Ged was in an ambulance searching for a local hospital willing to accept a foreigner with adequate medical coverage. His adventures to Thailand had begun. After healing from his concussion and a broken foot, he began to write the first of four travel guides to Southeast Asia. The first, 'The Retire-in-Thailand Handbook (the First Six Months)', was published in late 2019.

"My first six months in Thailand were frustrating. There are numerous problems to sort through when moving to a new country and new culture including banking, organising visas, acquiring or leasing property, getting a driver's license, finding good medical care etc. So I wrote the handbook which I wish I had before I arrived."

He has since published more travel advice manuals for surrounding countries. All of these can be purchased through the Amazon.com website by searching for Gerald Hogg. The cost per book is less than B200 for a kindle version.

In early 2020, as the COVID virus began to spread in the region, Ged got a positive diagnosis so he decided to stay home and create his two crime suspense novels.

"My positive diagnosis for COVID came in April of last year so I had to self-isolate. It occurred to me to write a book of adventure using COVID as a main theme. In 'Thai Died... Murder in Paradise', I introduce Police Lieutenant Chai Son Sinuan who will be featured in this ongoing series. I have just released the second in the series, 'Thai Died... Bar Girl'."

Ged's ambition for his life has been to travel and live in the most beautiful countries around the world. Now retired in Thailand, he believes his dream has come true.



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245.55 Rai (392,880 Sqm) with Beachfront Land for Sale in Khao Lak (Can be Subdivided)

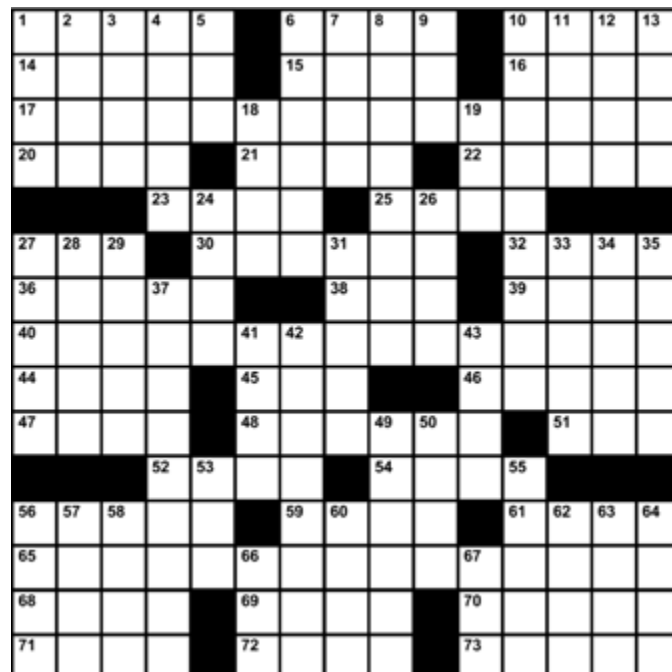
POP QUIZ

1. Which city is the capital of California?
2. Who was the only British Prime Minister to have been assassinated?
3. The word dinosaur, from the Greek "deinos" and "sauros" literally translates as what in English?
4. The first modern hand grenade became available to British troops in 1915. What was it called?
5. Which word in the phonetic alphabet is also a capital city?

Answers below, centre

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
1. Paperlike cloth
 6. Apple variety
 10. Window part
 14. Owning land
 15. Carbon compound
 16. Arch type
 17. Head starts
 20. Military cap
 21. Channel
 22. Anxiety
 23. Defunct ruler
 25. Hit ground
 27. Dust remover
 30. "You betcha!"
 32. Has a mortgage
 36. Frenzied
 38. Bauxite, e.g.
 39. Gingrich
 40. Head starts
 44. Case
 45. Do exist
 46. The "N" of U.N.C.F.
 47. Microprocessor type
 48. Calculator grid
 51. Precognition (abbr.)
 52. Wounded ____
 54. "____ my word!"
- Down**
1. Approach
 2. Feel pity
 3. Strengthen, with "up"
 4. European gull
 5. Obstacle to learning
 6. Actor Depardieu
 7. Soon, to a bard
 8. Mooning
 9. A pint, maybe
 10. Metaphysical poet
 11. All excited
 12. Ryan and Tilly
 13. One-up
 18. Flair
 19. Amscrayed
 24. "The Open Window" writer
 26. Blown away
 27. More crude
 28. Cremona artisan
 29. Masters
 31. Bunk
 33. Shoe type
 34. Cream vessels
 35. Razor sharpener
 37. "My Little _____"
 41. Camp sight
 42. Dowel
 43. Annul
 49. Narc's target
 50. "Spirit" rock band
 53. Colo. neighbor
 55. Dusk to dawn
 56. First fellow?
 57. Child's building brick
 58. Showy trinket
 60. Almond
 62. Sundae topper, perhaps
 63. Course
 64. Stirs
 66. Dash lengths
 67. Group w. troops



SUDOKU

Hard

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	2		6					
3							9	6

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Sacramento; 2) Spencer Perceval; 3) Terrible Lizard; 4) Mills bomb; 5 Lima

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

RAMP	HILT	ABACI
AMAE	AMAH	MTDON
JESSE	JAMES	BROWN
ASKEW	MARLED	
TEA	MARSHAL	
HAKA	VENOM	GOZE
AGE	WORE	SNOTS
RON	HOWARD	HUGHES
RUNON	VAIN	ACE
ITEM	HAYDN	ESSE
SIDECAR	TAD	
BEDECK	LIEGE	
ELTON	JOHN	RITTER
GOODS	LIEU	OURS
OXEYE	ADEN	RIME

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

cremation of a human body requires the same amount of energy as the monthly domestic demands of a single person.

20.1

percent of American workers belonged to a union in 1983. Today, only 11.1% do.

258

fewer hours a year the average European works compared with the average American.

700,000

microplastic fibres pass into wastewater and, eventually, into the environment with each use of a washing machine.

6.24 billion

US dollars is how much Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos made in just five minutes on October 10, 2017, after Amazon share prices spiked. Last year his net worth was US\$194.7 billion.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Parasailing in Phuket. Photo: Patrick Sweeney

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

This week in history

May 7, 1946

Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering (later renamed Sony) is founded with around 20 employees.

May 8, 1886

American pharmacist John Pemberton first sells a carbonated beverage named "Coca-Cola" as a patent medicine.

May 9, 1386

England and Portugal formally ratify their alliance

with the signing of the Treaty of Windsor, making it the oldest diplomatic alliance in the world that is still in force.

May 10, 1688

King Narai of Thailand nominates his daughter Sudawadi to succeed him with the foreigner Constantine Phaulkon, Mom Pi and Phetracha acting as regents. The ensuing revolution leads to the Ayutthaya Kingdom severing all ties with Europe.



Image: E. Le Bihan

May 11, 1949

Siam officially changes its name to Thailand for the second time. The name had

been in use since 1939 but was reverted in 1945.

May 12, 1926

The Italian-built airship Norge becomes the first vessel to fly over the North Pole.

May 13, 1787

Capt Arthur Phillip leaves Portsmouth, England, with 11 ships full of convicts (the "First Fleet") to establish a penal colony in Australia.

Source: Wikipedia

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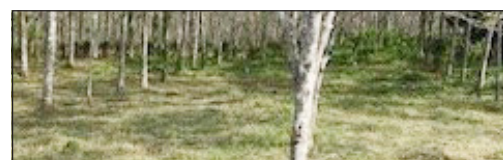
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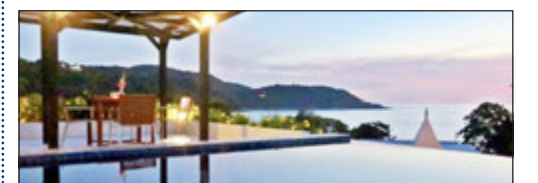
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Rugby helps tackle life skills

Local development program helping disadvantaged children

RUGBY

The Phuket News
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There is so much more to Rugby than crunching tackles, silky skills and elusive footwork. More than dirty boots, smelly kit, bumps and bruises. It is a game for everyone regardless of size, shape, age or gender. An inclusive sport that welcomes players of all skill levels and backgrounds. Rugby is a sport which fosters leadership and develops team work. It is a sport that values respect for your opponent and support for your team mates. After all, it is “the game they play in heaven”.

Embracing the lessons rugby offers, the Asia Center Foundation in collaboration with the Phuket Vagabonds RFC have launched a Youth Rugby Development Program for students of the foundation by way of a series of coaching camps and clinics.

On April 22 and 23, during a two-day camp, a dedicated team of players from the Vagabonds and staff from the Asia Center Foundation introduced the students to the fundamentals of rugby with passing and agility skills and of course the tackle pads, a distinct favourite amongst the students.

But as with the game of rugby itself, the camp was more than just basic skills and hard hits. For the



Youngsters enjoy the recent two-day camp as part of the Youth Rugby Development Program developed by the Asia Center Foundation and the Phuket Vagabonds RFC. Photo: Phuket Vagabonds RFC

coaches it was humbling experience, witnessing the hardships that many of the children face daily and yet uplifted by the enthusiasm and positivity in which they participated in the clinic.

For current Vagabonds player, Suranan ‘Mos’ Jumnonrak, having come through the Foundation program as a youth, it was with great pride that he delivered his story of success to the students having played professional rugby with the Thai Navy and his many

achievements along the way. Khun Mos spoke highly of his time with the Vagabonds and the friendships and opportunities that rugby has presented him.

ROOM FOR EVERYONE

“Whilst funding for such foundations was critical, taking the time to support in any capacity and to simply show care can have immensely positive repercussions on the children’s lives moving forward,” commented Santiago

Lopez, who is responsible for overseeing the program on behalf of the Vagabonds.

Following the certificate ceremony, Director of the Asia Center Foundation, Roelien Muller was delighted with the participation and natural athletic talent on display from her students, as well as the opportunities the partnership can bring.

“Thankfully rugby always has room for everyone,” Ms Muller said. “Both the Asia Center Founda-

tion and the Phuket Vagabonds believe sport can change lives and we look forward to doing just that through our program for disadvantaged children,” she added.

The Phuket Vagabonds and the Asia Center Foundation would also like to extend a special thank you to Greg Johnston and the Delish Café in Rawai (www.delishcafe Phuket.com) for their generous sponsorship to support the pitch fees for the training venue and for their continued support of the program.

The Phuket Vagabonds look forward to hosting more clinics in the coming weeks and continuing their ongoing support of the Asia Center Foundation.

If you would like to support this initiative by assisting with pitch fees, meals for the students or equipment please contact the Vagabonds Academy via their Facebook page.

The Asia Center Foundation provide education opportunities to disadvantaged and at-risk Thai and Burmese migrant children so they will be empowered to change their futures. The Foundation manages different projects addressing the needs of children focusing on education, child protection, life skills development, healthcare and community outreach.

If you would like to learn more about the Asia Center Foundation please visit their website at www.asiacenterfoundation.org.

How many chances will Red Bull get?

FORMULA ONE

LEWIS HAMILTON leads Max Verstappen 2-1 for victories this season, but Red Bull Racing has cause to believe it should be the team leading the title chase.

Mercedes did not start the season with the fastest car – in fact rule changes during the off season cost it a great deal

of speed relative to Red Bull Racing, and heading into the season-opening race in Bahrain the Austrian team undeniably held the upper hand.

But that was never likely to be the ultimate performance picture, and race by race Mercedes has better understood its weaknesses. Its win in round one was lucky, but by Portugal last weekend, with an upgrade package equipped, the W11

clearly took a step forward to at least match the RB16 in pure pace, and Hamilton wielded it to victorious effect.

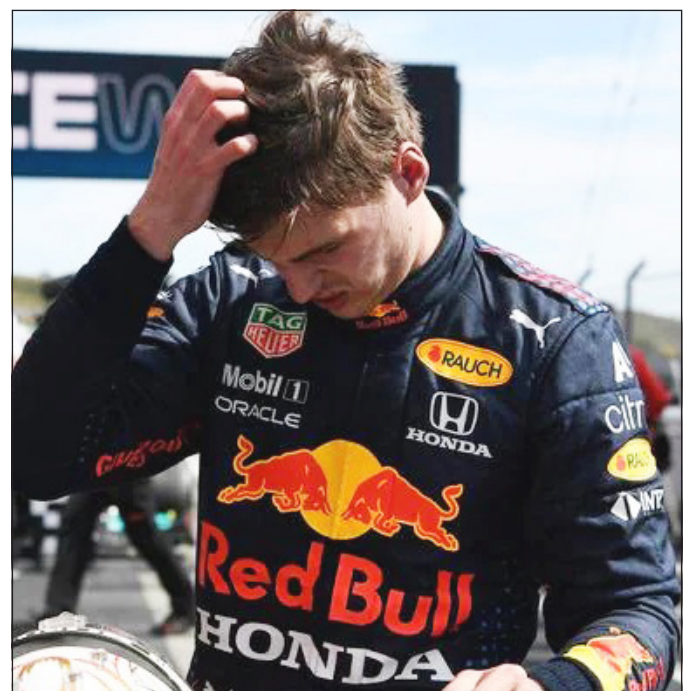
The result is an eight-point lead for the Briton in the drivers stakes and an 18-point advantage for Mercedes on the championship table.

It’s a strong return for the leaders, but on the reverse Red Bull Racing is counting its losses.

Verstappen had a decisive pace advantage over Hamilton in Bahrain, dominating qualifying and leading off the line. But when an aggressive Mercedes strategy forced him to overtake Hamilton for the lead, the Dutchman’s sole overtake was disbarred for having been executed off the track, and he was forced to hand back the position and settle for second.

He transgressed track limits again in Portimão, where in qualifying he blitzed the field in the pole shootout only to have his best time deleted for running wide in the high winds whipping through turn four. He was relegated to third, from where he couldn’t make an impact off the line and finished second.

And then at the end of the race, when Hamilton’s victory was assured, Red Bull Racing brought the Dutchman in for fresh tyres to salvage the bonus point for fastest lap, but again Verstappen ran off the track and had his time annulled, handing the score to Bottas.



Max Verstappen has been left rueing several missed opportunities already this season. Photo: AFP

Had Verstappen overtaken cleanly in Bahrain and taken and converted pole to victory in Portugal, he’d be looking at as much as a 21-point championship lead rather than his current eight-point deficit.

Hamilton has made mistakes too, notably by throwing away a shot at victory in Imola with a clumsy crash and, with as many as 20 rounds still to come, time is on Verstappen’s

side to strike back.

But the risk is that at the end of a closely fought campaign he and Red Bull Racing will look back on these early rounds, when Mercedes was there to be beaten, and regret not being able to capitalise.

Mercedes was never going to stay down for long. Red Bull Racing just has to hope it hasn’t missed its chance.

Michael Lamonato

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Man United fans strike back

Match postponed as Euro Super League backlash continues

FOOTBALL

AFP

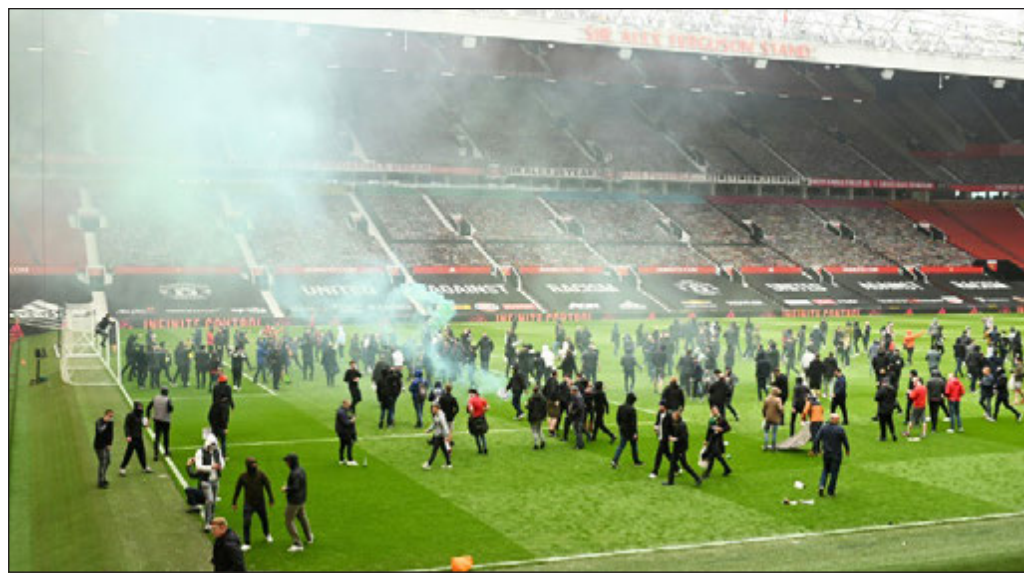
England's Premier League said it was drawing up a new owners' charter designed to avoid future attempts to join a breakaway European Super League (ESL) as police launched an investigation into the protest that caused the postponement of Manchester United's match against Liverpool last Sunday (May 2).

Fans invaded Old Trafford and ran onto the pitch as part of a demonstration against United's owners, the US-based Glazer family.

Greater Manchester Police said six officers were injured after the protests turned "hostile" when demonstrators threw flares, bottles and barriers at police.

The force said one officer sustained a fractured eye socket, another suffered a facial wound and a third was "dragged and kicked".

A 28-year-old man has been arrested in connection with the incidents.



The fans' protest at Old Trafford meant Manchester United's match with Liverpool last Sunday (May 2) had to be postponed. Photo: AFP

Anger towards the Glazers has been reignited by United's part in the failed ESL project, which collapsed within 48 hours last month after a backlash from fans, players, governments and governing bodies.

The ESL sought to guarantee top level European football for 15 founder members every season without the need to qualify on the pitch.

There have been calls for all six English clubs involved

in the formation of the ESL – Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester United, Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur – to face points penalties.

The Premier League said on Monday it was "determined" to "hold those clubs accountable for their decisions and actions".

It also announced plans for a new charter, with all club owners signing up to a rule "committing them to the core principles" of the league,

with breaches punished by "significant" sanctions.

"The events of the last two weeks have challenged the foundations and resolve of English football," the Premier League added.

"These measures are designed to stop the threat of breakaway leagues in the future."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday: "I don't think it's a good idea to have disruptive behaviour,

demonstrations of that kind.

"But on the other hand, I do understand people's strength of feeling.

"And I think that it's a good thing that we have been able to do things that make it pretty clear that the European Super League is not going to be appreciated by the people of this country, or by this government."

'OWN SANCTIONS'

The Glazers have been deeply unpopular since a leveraged takeover of the club in 2005 saddled United with huge debt repayments.

Hundreds of fans managed to force their way into Old Trafford, chanting "we want Glazers out".

Large numbers of supporters had also gathered outside the team hotel, blocking their route to the stadium.

As police moved in to disperse the crowd, objects were thrown at officers and horses.

A United statement issued Monday said that reports protestors had been able to access the stadium and pitch

via a gate opened by club staff were "completely incorrect".

United said protestors had broken through security barriers before eventually opening an external door that let others through to the concourse area and the pitch, with another breach occurring when the door of a disability access lift was smashed.

The statement said the "majority of our fans have and will condemn criminal damage, along with any violence towards club staff, police or other fans".

But while United said they did not want peaceful demonstrators punished, they insisted they would work with police to identify those involved in criminal activity and would impose their "own sanctions" on any season ticket-holder or member identified.

Nevertheless, United stressed they "remain committed to dialogue and engagement with our fans through the Fans Forum and other appropriate channels".

The Premier League said a new date for the match would be announced "in due course".

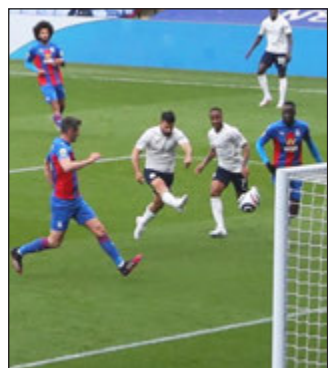
Manchester City's title celebrations on ice

FOOTBALL

MANCHESTER CITY'S Premier League title celebrations were put on hold after last Sunday's (May 2) Manchester United and Liverpool clash was postponed due to fan protests at Old Trafford.

City had comfortably beaten Crystal Palace 2-0 a day earlier thanks to goals from Sergio Aguero and Ferran Torres and, had United lost, it would have meant City were crowned champions.

However, the events at



Sergio Aguero scores against Crystal Palace. Photo: AFP

Old Trafford meant City's wait was prolonged.

City hold a 13-point lead over their cross-city neigh-

bours and need only two points to be officially crowned as champions, something they can achieve if they manage to defeat Chelsea at home tomorrow (May 8).

"We can start to put the champagne in the fridge – not to open yet, but to think about it," said manager Pep Guardiola after the Palace game.

Whether his team are popping corks after the Chelsea match or not, it is just a matter of time before they claim their fifth league title in the last decade. Ben Tirebuck

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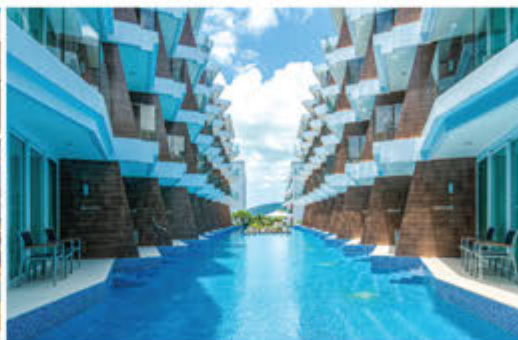


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