

NEWS TO THE NEW TO

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Friday, July 9 – Thursday, July 15, 2021

Since 2011 / Volume XI / No. 28

20 Baht



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ourists finally returning to Phuket had been underway just days since the Phuket Sandbox reopening on July 1 when airport taxi prices were already causing concern, with Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) Chief Banyat Kantha responding with a public statement about how much taxis from the airport should cost.

On Monday (July 5), Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew ordered relevant officials to investigate claims that airport taxis were already overappropriate action.

Chief Mr Banyat, in a post online in Thai language only, last Sunday confirmed that the taxi fare of B900 from Phuket International Airport to a hotel in Patong was an old rate.

His response came after a post online about the taxi fare started going viral, even among the Thai community.

Mr Banyat specifically responded to a Facebook post by Nattakorn Ruengroj, a registered tour guide who operates his own tour company in Phuket, posing serious questions about the fares being charged by taxi drivers in Phuket.

Mr Nattakorn shared posts online charging foreign tourists and to take by foreigners trying to figure out what fares are being charged, and That order came after PLTO what fares are considered appropriate.

Mr Nattakorn's post was also tagged in Thai with "#sameoldproblem and #classicproblem.

"If you can [charge] do less, please do. To all operators in the tourism industry. The first group of tourists is our leading actors and actresses in our Phuket tourism advertisement that they have to pay for us. If the taxi fare is overpriced, who will help us? #donotruinourreputationbysameoldproblem," he wrote.

Mr Nattakorn told The Phuket News last Sunday (July 4) that he was shocked after seeing the post by the foreigner about the taxi fares.

"I do not want to use the word 'take advantage', but the fare is overpriced for this situation. When the pandemic first came, they could

reduce the fare to B400 for [fares from the] airport to Patong. Why don't they think of the tough time?" he said.

"Some of the tourists were invited to come to promote Phuket tourism. If they are not satisfied and post about their negative experience, what will we do? Will tourists want to come if they are taken advantage of like this?" he asked.

"Tourists come to Thailand because of our great hospitality, delicious foods and beautiful nature which is different to their home countries." Mr Nattakorn said.

"I want to remind operators to think of Phuket as a priority. Do not take advantage of tourists in this situation. You know well what you are doing," he concluded...

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Sailing into clearer waters at Kata Rocks



SPORT PAGE 16

Bad blood at the **ACG** as cricket tempers flare



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Phuket's only IB programme from Nursery to Grade 12.

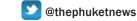


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DSI Chief probes forest felling > p4

Prayut: 'Phuket should be

The Phuket News editor@classactmedia.co.th

huket people "should be proud of their mission for the country", Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said on July 1 at a meeting held for him to be brought up to speed on the COVID prevention measures in effect to ensure the Phuket Sandbox model is a success.

Speaking at the Royal Phuket City Hotel in Phuket Town, PM Prayut noted the importance Phuket Sandbox has in reopening Thailand to receiving international visitors.

He also said "he felt more reassured" after listening to clarifications from all sectors involved, including businesses and members of the public.

"If this is successful, it can be expanded to other tourist areas of the country according to the steps," he said.

PM Prayut noted that the number of travel bookings to Thailand is already on the rise.

"The number of tourists coming to Phuket is now increasing. Some flights are from airlines that have never traveled to Phuket before, but at the same time some are from countries where there have been recent outbreaks," he said.

However, he also recognised, "If there is another COVID-19 outbreak, measures



will need to be taken to control the disease again."

"This opening of the country must be done carefully and we must accept the risks together. The government is always concerned, but has never left anyone behind," PM Prayut said.

"Phuket Sandbox is not only a matter for Phuket residents. It's about the people of the whole country, so that the country can move forward in accordance with the mission of re-opening the country in 120 days," he added.

"The people of Phuket should be proud of their mission for the nation, for your country. Also, by asking for cooperation in complying with the prescribed measures, this may cause some inconvenience, but I would like to leave hope to the people of Phuket. If Phuket Sandbox is successful, it will be practiced in other areas. What do you need help with?" he said.

PM Prayut concluded his speech by calling for a round of applause "to support the doctors, nurses and public health personnel who are working hard".

"And please give encouragement to all Phuket people,"

During his visit to Phuket, PM Prayut this morning inspected the checking processes

and procedures at Phuket International Airport and at the Phuket Check Point at Tha Chatchai.

He also visited Sirinath National Park, where he presided over a turtle release, and he marked the Phuket launch of the 'Hug Thais Hug Phuket' tourism campaign at the Central Phuket shopping mall.

The Prime Minister noted that the 'Hug Thais Hug Phuket' event was to pass on encouragement and "embrace the Thai people with love".

"When all Thai people need encouragement to get through this challenge together," he said.

"Today we are working

together to create history in Thailand, to lead the nation through this crisis," he added.

PM Prayut welcomed the smiles he saw. "Today I'm happy, seeing smiles on both sides of the road, there are people waving their hands... Everyone is happier even during difficult times," he said.

He called the Phuket Sandbox project a "great challenge".

"It will prepare to open in other island areas, which is a great challenge, and is considered an urgent necessity to revive the economy, especially in Phuket, which has more than 90% of its economy dependent on the tourism sector, which is one of the reasons for choosing Phuket as a pilot province," he said.

The Thai government has come under intense criticism for its rollout of the Phuket Sandbox scheme, with many rules and requirements changing up until as recently as late Tuesday, when the conditions of entry were finally published in the Royal Gazette. The conditions were publicly announced only on Monday.

Also heavily criticised has been the late issuing of Certificates of Entry needed by tourists wanting to enter Thailand through the Phuket Sandbox scheme.

However, tourists arriving at Phuket International Airport this morning on the first flight to touch down under the scheme said the bureaucratic procedures were not a serious issue for them.

One tourist, who identified himself as Reno, said, "If you take care of the Thai embassy plan, it's not complicated. I did it in four days."

Reno arrived in Phuket on the Etihad Airlines flight that touched down in Phuket at about 11am. He began his journey in Paris and arrived in Phuket via Abu Dhabi.

Reno explained he had come to stay in Phuket for two weeks, and after that planned to travel elsewhere in the country.

"I have a house in Hua Hin. After [Phuket], I will visit my house and after that I will travel in your beautiful country," told The Phuket News Thai-language sister newspaper Khao Phuket.

"After that, maybe I go shopping in Bangkok and maybe later I will visit Chiang Mai," he added.

English tourist Kiefer said his flight was "very good".

However, he noted, "The documents were hard to prepare. It's a lot of work, but it's okay."

Kiefer explained that he was a regular visitor to Phuket on holiday over many years. This time he planned to stay two months.

Airport 'limousine' taxi fares take centre stage as tourists return

Continued from page 1

The post Mr Nattakorn shared saying, "Quick Question. My before, Mr Banyat said. baht one way from the airport to Patong, to what I would call first side when you come down the hill into town, Holiday Inn Express. I know in the past I have not paid that much to get to Patong, same hotel, and I see some people paying 700 through

"Wondering if we can just get the SHA+ ride at the airport and has anyone done that and knows the prices from the airport independent of the hotel?" the post asked.

Mr Banyat explained that PLTO officers had checked the post and found that the foreigner who made the first post had not

yet come to Thailand but was scheduled to arrive on July 14. The tourist was a screenshot of another post, has stayed at the hotel several times

hotel wants to charge me 900 "The B900 fare is the old rate by the hotel, but right now it is reduced to B600-700. We have checked the bill of taxi fare and found that the hotel really charged about B600-700," he said.

> Mr Banyat noted in his response, "However, there is no law setting for taxi rate fares, we asked taxi drivers of the two companies at the airport."

> The explanation is intended to mean that there are no laws regulating the fares charged by taxi drivers operating out of Phuket airport under a concession with Airports of Thailand. The fares charged are set by negotiation, both between the taxi drivers and AoT in setting a general schedule of fares deemed



acceptable to the two parties, and by negotiation between the drivers and their passengers.

"A driver of the Phuket Mai Khao Sakhu Co Ltd [identified by the initials 'P.M.K. on the sides of their vehicles] about the fare and were told that before this they charged B800, but from the middle of last year they have given 20% off discount, or charged about B640 for [trips from] the airport to Patong,"

"A driver of the Phuket Limousine and Business Services Cooperative [PBC] told us that the company will have a meeting on July 5 about on any of the other comments by giving discounts for tourists under foreigners posted with the initial the Phuket Sandbox scheme," he post about being charged B900. added in his post last night.

The Phuket News interviewed Mr Banyat on Monday, but he would only reiterate what was explained in his post, which went live online at 9:46pm last Sunday night through the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department.

"Nowadays, the taxis with green license plates which operate out of the airport areas can be called for service by the 'Hello Phuket' app. A total 675 taxi drivers have registered and joined the app. The fare is set according to the taxi meter rate as announced by the Ministry of Transport," he said.

The Phuket News notes that the 'Hello Phuket' app refers to only one transport company in Phuket.

Mr Banyat also did not comment

The comments confirmed that foreigners were still being charged a variety of different fares, even for journeys of the same distance.

"Didn't seem to be any other taxis at the airport so book something," one foreigner wrote.

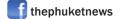
"I booked through a travel agency and they charged me 900 Baht,"

"I just paid 1,000 one way," another foreigner confirmed, while "1,200 baht" is all one person posted.

Another foreigner confirmed, "THB 800 to patong Palmyra resort".

One foreigner reported, "Mine 1350 baht to Kata Noi beach one way from the airport" while another confirmed, "In normal situation 600 baht to Kata".







Sandbox tourists finally arrive

The Phuket News editor@classactmedia.co.th

The first tourists to arrive in Thailand under the Phuket Sandbox scheme were 25 passengers arriving on Etihad Airways Flight EY430 from Abu Dhabi, which touched down at Phuket International Airport just before 11am on July 1.

The passengers were welcomed to Phuket then escorted through the procedures at the airport to ensure they are fully vaccinated and comply with all the requirements for being permitted to enter Thailand through the Sandbox policy.

The passengers had their body temperatures checked and then had their documents checked to confirm that they had been vaccinated, had the US\$100,000 health insurance coverage and had booked to stay at least 14 nights at SHA+ approved venues, among other requirements.

Once cleared by officials checking their Sandbox credentials, the tourists were then escorted to clear Immigration and Customs procedures before being taken to have swab test samples taken to be tested for COVID-19.



The first tourists to arrive under the Phuket Sandbox scheme touched down at Phuket International Airport on July 1. Photo: PR Dept

After more than a year of cleaning without customers, the international arrivals hall started to come back to life. Shops selling goods and souvenirs were open once again

The other three international flights to land in Phuket on July 1 were from Qatar with 136 passengers landing at 12:43pm, from Israel with 137 passengers at 1:52pm and from Singapore with 51 passengers at 4:14pm.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, together with Cabinet ministers and senior health officials, arrived in Phuket at 9:45am to meet officials and health volunteers there but he did not meet the tourists.

"I'm very glad to meet you today. It's a day we've been waiting for. As today is the starting day, everybody should support it. Everything depends on everyone. Many thanks for all officials for their hard work and sacrifice. Thank you all, doctors, nurses and health volunteers. You get what you do," Gen Prayut told the officials waiting.

Gen Prayut then inspected the screening station at the airport before going to Royal Phuket City Hotel in Phuket Town to chair a follow-up meeting on the Phuket Sandbox scheme (see facing page).

The Sandbox direct flights continued with the first direct flight from Europe since the launch of the Phuket Sandbox initiative touching down on the island last Saturday (July 3).

THAI Airways flight number TG 953 from Copenhagen landed at 6:28am to be greeted by a water tunnel and warm committee of Thai Airways International (THAI) and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), together with representatives from the media.

The welcome committee included Non Klinta, Chief Commercial Officer Thai Airways International, Siripakorn Chiawsamut, Deputy Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand for Europe, Africa, Middle East and America markets, Kanyarat Suthipatanakit, Deputy Director of Phuket Airport Business Support Division and representatives of Phuket Airport Customs House.

Mr Non said the arrival of foreign travellers from Europe who have received the full dose of COVID-19 vaccination was a very important moment and a positive step in response to the government's policy to stimulate and drive the economy under the Phuket Sandbox model.

He added that THAI has five scheduled flights from Europe per week arriving in Phuket throughout the July to September period – flights Affairs also on Tuesday refrom Copenhagen, Frankfurt and Paris are scheduled to fly once a week every Friday and flights from London and

applause from the executive Zurich will operate once a week every Saturday.

> Additionally, the national airline will look to add further international flights to the schedule in the winter period of this year, Mr Non stated.

Following the Copenhagen flight, flight TG923 from Frankfurt arrived at 6:52am and flight TG933 from Paris arrived at 8:33am last Saturday. Last Sunday, flight TG917 from London touched down at about 6:10am, closely followed by flight TG973 from Zurich at 7:45am.

THAI confirmed that the total number of passengers travelling across all five flights amounted to about 300 people.

According to Phuket officials on Tuesday (July 6), a total of 1,896 people had entered Phuket under the Sandbox scheme from July 1-5, with not one case of COVID infection found.

A total of 116,842 room nights had been booked for the three months July through September, the report added.

The Ministry of Foriegn ported that 13,000 people had applied for Certificates of Entry since July 1, with 4,068 approved so far.

First family to arrive under Sandbox scheme 'privileged' to be in Phuket

THE FIRST FAMILY TO ARRIVE IN Phuket under the Sandbox scheme said they felt "very privileged and lucky to be here," in an interview conducted by the Phuket Info Center on July 3.

The Sellers family, who live in Abu Dhabi, arrived on the island at 10:20am on flight EY430 from Abu Dhabi on Thursday (July 1). Of the 44 passengers onboard, 23 disembarked in Phuket while the rest went on to Suvarnabhumi airport in Bangkok.

Darren Lee Sellers was joined by his wife Supattra and their young son and daughter and are staying at the Angsana Laguna Phuket resort in Cherng Talay. It was not stated how long they will be stay ing in Phuket.

When asked how they felt being the first family to arrive under the Phuket Sandbox program, Darren replied: "We feel very privileged to be the first family to arrive and feel lucky to be here.

"We are very happy to be back in Phuket again after two years of being unable to travel and we are really looking forward to the various facilities that Phuket has to offer."

Darren added that the family decided to choose Phuket primarily due to the Sandbox scheme that was implemented to welcome back foreign tourists to the island.

"There are processes that you have to go through to get here but once you understand what is required and you can prepare well it is very easy and straight forward," he said.



Darren and Supattra Sellers and their family. Photo: Phuket Info Center screenshot

"Additionally we received help from the resort and the embassy which made the whole process really very easy."

When asked why the family chose to stay at Angsana Laguna Phuket both children were quick to respond with "because of kids stuff and the many activities!"

Darren added that the family researched and Angsana seemed the perfect fit. It offers a range of activities to keep the children entertained through the kids club, there are golf facilities available, something that appealed to golf fan Darren, there is the Laguna, amazing mountain views and the beautiful beaches.

"Also the local food is amazing," added Supattra.

"We received a very warm welcome and the Thai hospitality has been phenomenal," Darren said.

"We feel very happy and lucky to be able to be here," he concluded.

The Phuket News



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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST













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DSI chief probes Kathu forest clearing

The Phuket News editor@classactmedia.co.th

pation (DSI) Director-General Pol Lt Col Korawat Panprapakorn was in Phuket in person last week to inspect the site of national forest encroachment in the hills above the Bang Wad reservoir that local officials have been confirmed as involved in allowing.

Lt Col Korawat inspected the site, covering more than 108 rai, on June 29 to see firsthand where the trees have been cut down to make way for plantations and a dirt road carved through the protected forest area, which serves as a watershed for Phuket's main watersupply reservoir at Bang Wad in Kathu.

The DSI was asked to investigate the encroachment as a special case after officers from the Royal Forest Department in January confirmed that local Phuket officials were involved in allowing a private individual to encroach on the protected forest land.

"From our investigation, my fellow officials have reported that they are quite sure that some 'big man' [sic, DSI Chief Lt Col Korawat was in Phuket to inspect the damage done by the encroachment. Photo: PR Phuket

usually meaning an 'influential person'] who is an official is involved in the encroachment. Right now, they are examining relevant officials and their actions," said Suphachai Suksai, chief of the Encroachment Prevention and Suppression Region 4 office under the Royal Forest Department, in January.

The investigation gained momentum after a formal complaint was filed with the Kathu Police and Mr Supachai's team of investigators was joined by Boonlarp Suksai, Director

of the Forest Resources Management Region 12 Office in Krabi, along with Phuket forestry officials, Phuket police officers and officials from the Phuket branch of the Internal Security Operations Command (Isoc).

Isoc, of which there is a provincial branch in every province in the country, serves as the political arm of the Thai military.

"It's a huge invasion area which severely affects the condition of the forest and important natural resources in the area," Lt Col Korawat said.

"Because it is a national forest area that is completely forested, there are many large natural trees and it is the upstream forest of Bang Wad Reservoir, which is an important source used in the production of water supply in Phuket," he added.

"It is a criminal case that may have severe consequences to the peace and good morals of the people's national security which is characterized as a criminal case under Section 21 of the Special Investigation Act B.E. 2547 and its amendments," he noted.

Lt Col Korawat noted that the encroachment is an offense under several nature protection laws, including the Forest Act and the Land Code.

The investigation has been designated special case number 37/2564, he added.

DSI officers joining Lt Col Korawat gathered case files from local officials and police, he noted.

Lt Col Korawat also confirmed that he had assigned no less than DSI Deputy Director-General Pol Lt Col Suphat Thammatanarak to oversee the investigation into the encroachment.

Drunken police officer denies Bangla shooting charges

PORNTHEP CHANNARONG, the corporal with the Phuket Provincial Police who was drunk off-duty when he shot 25-year-old noodle vendor Aroon Thongplab in the stomach on Bangla Rd in Patong in February, has entered a plea of not guilty and will fight the charges against him in court.

Mr Aroon was shot in the stomach by Pornthep just before 6am on Feb 23 while he was walking along Bangla Rd after collecting a noodle bowl from a customer.

In less than 24 hours Pornthep was quickly stripped of his rank and discharged from the Royal Thai Police, and now faces charges of attempted murder, carring a firearm in a public area without necessary reason, and firing a weapon in a public area.

A CCTV video showing Pornthep shooting Mr Aroon and then taunting him, including playfully kicking Mr Aroon on the backside while Mr Aroon lay writhing on the ground in agony pleading for mercy, sparked outrage among the local community.

However, Pornthep has now entered a plea of not guilty to the charges against him, explained Kerdphol Kaewkerd, a Bangkokbased lawyer who is providing free



Medical workers make a house call to provide Mr Aroon a COVID vaccination injection at his modest rented home in Patong on June 28. *Photo: PR Patong*

legal assistance to Mr Aroon and his Mr Kerdphol said. wife, Kulthida Chananan. "As he has den

"During the first time he was being questioned, on May 19, he entered a plea of guilty to all charges," Mr Kerdphol explained to *The Phuket News* on June 29.

"At that time he did not have a lawyer, so the court appointed him a lawyer because the penalty of the charges is high," he added.

"The lawyer may have told him to confess and enter a plea of guilty for whatever reason I do not know," he said.

"Then yesterday [June 28], the court had heard witness testimonies and examined the defendant's confession, and he had a new lawyer," Mr Kerdphol explained.

"He refused all charges and told

the court he would fight the case. He explained that he had never had an argument with Mr Aroon and did not have any intention to kill him," he said.

"He explained that he shot Mr Aroon as he was trying to stop foreigners from arguing. He said he fired the gun into the air three times.

"He said that naturally people would run away when they hear the sound of gunfire, but Mr Aroon walked close to the area, which is not practical. Then he shot him because he thought Aroon was a bad man," Mr Kerdphol said.

"As he has denied the charges against and wants the fight the case, we need to restart the court process. We need to try our best to collect evidence and present it to the court," he added.

"The court will hear witness testimonies and examine evidence again on August 23," he said.

Asked about Mr Aroon's condition, Mr Kedphol noted, "He has already been discharged from hospital, and his wife is taking close care of him."

Mr Aroon was left paralysed by the bullet, which entered through the stomach and became lodged in his spine. After Mr Aroon woke from a coma, doctors at Vachira Phuket Hospital managed to safely remove the bullet, but were unable to help Mr Aroon recover the use of his legs. After months in recovery, Mr Aroon was only recently discharged from Vachira Hospital to return to stay with his family at their rented house in Patong.

"While the criminal case continues, in terms of a civil case, I have asked for B15 million. in compensation for his paralysis, to cover the cost for living in the future, and the cost of losing opportunity and income," Mr Kerdphol said.

"I do not know whether the police can pay that big amount," he added.

"However, it is his right to fight the case. From the CCTV footage, I would like him to repeatedly think of the quote by Mr Chuwit Kamolvisit, 'Su tid nae, Pae tid nan'," Mr Kerdphol noted.

The quote translates to mean, "If you fight the case, you will surely be imprisoned. If you lose the fight, you will be imprisoned for a long time".

Of note, Mr Kerdphol on Monday posted a notice of gratitude to fellow lawyer Phakin Jantira, based in Phuket Town, who has been assisting Mr Kerdphol and Mr Aroon's family.

"Thank you to my handsome brother, Attorney Phakin Phkin Jantira of Phuket Town. who come together to make merit to help those who have been bullied," he wrote.

The Phuket News



Dog shelter volunteers fight for urgent help

The Phuket News editor@classactmedia.co.th

olunteers at the Phuket Stray Dog Shelter have filed an official complaint to Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew after claiming their requests for help from the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office (PPLO) have been constantly ignored.

The formal complaint, received in person by Phuket Vice Governor Vikrom Jakthee last Friday (July 2), claimed that the PPLO had informed the volunteers that any requests or complaints were being handled by the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO).

After hearing nothing from the PPAO for six months, the volunteers approached the organisation again for an update only to be told it was not their responsibility and it would be handled by the PPLO after all.

The volunteers returned to the PPLO for clarification and answers only to be told nothing had been done due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Having lodged an official complaint with the PPLO two months ago, the volunteers still have yet to hear back from them in reply.

"If they [PPLO] claim the lack of action is due to the pandemic then it is clear the dogs have been suffering for a long time," the formal complaint stated.



Phuket Vice Governor Vikrom Jakthee accepts the formal complaint from volunteers at the Phuket Dog Shelter last Friday (July 2). Photo: PR Dept

"The livestock officers must know full well that there are only six staff at the shelter who are responsible for taking care of almost 1,000 dogs and who operate on an insufficient budget," it added.

"You must know that the dogs in the shelter do not have freedom and have to fight for food in order to survive. We volunteers have helped by working in the shelter for the last five years when there were only originally around 300 dogs. Today there are around 1,000 dogs and urgent help is needed.

"We regularly clean all areas for the dogs, shower and clean them and separate any sick dogs from the others. We have also managed to successfully find people who are willing to adopt a dog. As the shelter did not have sufficient budget, we have found ways of generating some funds to help.

"We have never posted any images or information that may damage the image or reputation of the PPLO. We have always respected the organisation and they are fully aware of how much we care for the dogs.

"Ultimately, the PPLO has ignored our complaint. They may think that the dogs are not important. We really hope that the Phuket Governor will not ignore us like the other offices have done and instead do something to help the situation," the letter concluded.

V/Gov Vikrom informed the volunteers who lodged the complaint that he will investigate the case further by questioning the relevant officers and will then inform the group of the outcome in due course.

Festival welcomes Sandbox tourists

THE PHUKET PROVINcial Government and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) will together hold a month-long festival in Patong and Phuket Town under the banner "Colourful Phuket" to welcome tourists to Phuket under the Phuket Sandbox scheme.

The grand opening of the festival was held on Patong Beach last Saturday (July 3), with another major event held in the Phuket Old Town area last Sunday.

At the popular Patong Beach there were local food stalls open from 3pm, as well as fireworks and fire shows from 7:30pm to 8pm.

The Patong event kicked off with a formal opening ceremony opposite the Double-Tree by Hilton Phuket Banthai Resort at 6:30pm led by Patong Mayor Chalermsak Maneesri, joined by Rewat Areerob, President of Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO, or *OrBorJor*) and his team along with Nantasiri Ronnasiri, Director of the TAT Phuket office.

The Patong event was branded "Welcome Back Phuket Vibes' welcomes the Phuket Sandbox" and in addition to the fireworks and fire shows featured live music, photo opportunity stands and displays as well a contemporary art exhibition made from recycled waste.

The atmosphere at the event finally saw some life breathed into Patong Beach after dark, but was held in full compliance of COVID-19



The month-long festival began with fireworks and fire shows (see p13 for photo special). Photo: PR Patong

control measures strictly enforced by staff of the Patong Municipality's Department of Public Health and Environment, noted a municipality release.

Last Sunday (July 4), from 7:30pm to 8pm, there was a light and sound show (promoted as a "projection mapping show") at the "Peranakannitat" Museum Phuket in Phuket Town.

After the grand opening, all throughout this week, from July 3-9, colourful art installations were on display in the Phuket Old Town area and Patong Beach along with local food trucks and mini concerts.

Further art works and markets will be set up through the month of July at different locations across the island, as

July 10-16: Surf and Seasport activities with colourful photogenic displays at Kata Beach. Sunset yoga at Promthep Cape.

July: 17-23: Digital Art installations and Street Music at Patong Beach.

July 24-31: Projection Mapping Art and Street Music in the Phuket Old Town area.

The Phuket News

Phuket health chief moves to dampen Starbucks COVID fears

PHUKET PROVINCIAL Public Health Office (PPHO) Starbucks café, but he also confirmed that 24 people were being treated as "high-risk" contacts and were now under observation at a LQ (local quarantine) venue.

The explanation came after the Phuket Provincial Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon Information Center posted has gone public to confirm that an alert last Saturday (July only one person confirmed as 3) and asked Starbucks cusinfected with COVID-19 has tomers who visited stores at been traced to have visited a Central Phuket shopping mall to be tested for COVID-19 at a hospital near their home.

> Those who visited Starbucks located on floor G of the Floresta building at Central Phuket during the following

The Starbucks cafes at Central Phuket shopping mall have been cleansed and reopened. Photo: Central Phuket

to present themselves for testing: June 25 (12:30pm to 1:50pm); June 27 (9am to midday); June 28 (10am to 7pm); June 29, (10am to 1pm).

Additionally, customers of the Starbucks cafe situated on the first floor of the Festival building at Central Phuket on June 27 between 1pm to 1:45pm were asked to present themselves to a hospital for testing.

"The local resident was found to be infected on July 2 and had already received one injection of vaccine. The person went to the coffee shops on June 25, 27, 28 and 29. The person also had a relative coming from a high-risk area," Dr Kusak said late last Sunday night (July 4).

Dr Kusak gave no details about which vaccine the person had been administered,

times and dates were requested or which high-risk area the relative was arriving from.

"After the PPHO announced the alert, we received a lot of calls from customers of the shop, so the disease ers, are considered high-risk

investigation was conducted very fast and effectively," he said.

"A total of 24 people, comprising shop staff and customand are now in quarantine at an LQ venue," he added.

"The Starbucks stores have been cleansed and are open as normal," he said.

The Phuket News



Patong struggles to recover

Phuket News

As the Phuket Sandbox scheme launches, Patong is left silent

Chutharat Plerin Thai@classactmedia.co.th

s the first day of the Phuket Sandbox passed with much fanfare on July 1, Patong remained in the dark and shrouded in uncertainty with its workers continuing to struggle through lack of income.

Prime Minister Prayut Chano-cha visited Phuket in person on July 1 to welcome foreign tourists and left claiming the island should be "proud of their mission for the country."

"Phuket Sandbox is not only a matter for Phuket residents. It's about the people of the whole country, so that the country can move forward in accordance with the mission of re-opening the country in 120 days," he said.

However, business owners and workers in Patong remain cautious and worried, largely due to the fact that most entertainment venues must continue to remain closed.

Phuket Provincial Public Relations Chief Bussaya Chaipeum told The Phuket News Thai-language sister newspaper Khao Phuket that pubs and bars in all areas of Phuket must remain closed until further provincial orders are issued.



This was not welcome news for the many workers in the nightlife hub of Patong who have struggled with a lack of income as a result of the enforced closures for well over a year.

A woman who wanted to be named only as "Sao" told Khao Phuket that she used to work as a housekeeper in a small guest employer has still helped her by

house in Patong, but she has been unemployed and has not received any income for over a year.

"I have not worked full-time for a year. Now I am doing freelance cleaning work. I accept all offers for work, but there are not many offers at the moment," Sao said.

She explained that her former

letting her stay in staff accommodation and providing food. Sao is sharing her accommodation with a co-worker and giving some of her savings to her.

"If I can help other people, I always do," Sao said. "I cannot stand to see anyone become homeless. When I have problems, they may come and help me. However, today I am satisfied to help others."

Elsewhere, a masseuse who works for a massage shop in front of Patong beach, who wished to remain anonymous, explained that her income that used to total several thousand baht a day has now become zero. She added that she has been forced to spend her savings and sell her jewellery in order to cover her living costs and survive.

"I have not provided a massage to anyone for over three weeks,"

"There simply are no customers. Before the pandemic and the restrictions I had customers from all over the world and would receive around B500 per massage plus tips.

"I have had to sell all of my gold jewellery and accessories in order to cover basic living costs,"

"When the local administrative organisation opens for registration to receive survival bags, I am one of the people who will not miss the chance. If anyone donates food, I am always in the line to get some because it is a key way to survive.

"I really hope that the sandbox will bring tourists to Phuket so that we can start to earn some income again, even if it is only one or two people per day," the lady concluded.

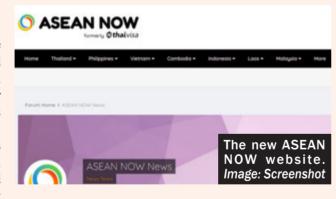
Thaivisa rebrands, expands expat forums beyond Thailand

THAIVISA.COM HAS rebranded to ASEANNOW. com as they expand into nine other ASEAN countries and duplicate their successful Thailand model, the popular forum announced in a press release on July 2.

"This will provide expats and interested international visitors a place to discuss and discover many aspects about each individual country. At of the relevance of forums, yet over the last couple of years Thaivisa.com has seen greater interest and growth in their forum," the release said.

"Unlike social media, such as Facebook, a forum offers a wide range of material easily searchable by its members – from schooling, motors, visas to immigration matters," it added.

"Over the last decade ASEAN countries have experienced growth in expats and visitor numbers, so it was a logical decision to offer this valuable service to these destinations. ASEAN



NOW will cover a number and insight for those needone point it appeared social of important areas, initially ing ideas and support," said media would take away much focusing on local news, covid the release. updates, visa/immigration latest and golf within each country forum section." said an ASEAN NOW spokesperson, the release explained.

ASEAN NOW has partnered with a number of regional news providers by country and has expanded its content team across the ASEAN.

"Whatever your question to any one of the ten ASEAN countries it is our aim to be the platform to provide the answers. ASEAN NOW is a meeting place for experienced expats and travellers to share their knowledge

"ASEAN NOW welcomes new users who have an interest in one or more of the countries across the region to join up now and get involved in the forum. Please do share your insight and learnings from a particular country for others to learn from.

"For the thousands of loyal users of Thaivisa.com, please be reassured that there will be no change to the service you have enjoyed for many years - all that will change is the name," the release concluded.

The Phuket News

Deputy Health Minister hits markets

DEPUTY PUBLIC HEALTH Minister Satit Pitutecha was in Phuket last Sunday (July 4) to officially reopen the once-popular Lard Yai Sunday Walking Street market in Phuket Town.

Mr Satit explained that his visit to Phuket was to "open a safe, confident country without COVID-19" by applying a three-point plan: through "standardization", "building safety" and "building confidence".

He also said he would like to see Phuket reopen and not stumble under the Phuket Sandbox scheme, "to reopen sustainable growth in tourism in tandem with controlling any outbreaks of COVID-19 infections".

While also visiting the Wat Thep Market in Phuket Town, Mr Satit explained that "standardization" meant developing and upgrading the standards of markets through a "flea market, worth buying" campaign, and through street food, in terms of keeping the environment inside the markets clean, making sure foods sold are safe and hygienic, and building confidence among people to shop at markets.

Regarding "building safety", he said, "Markets and



Shoppers are back at the Lard Yai Sunday Walking Street market in Phuket Town. Photo: PR Phuket

street food have to strictly control the entrance and exits and make sure people clear screening points. They also must provide hand-washing facilities with soap and water or alcohol gel, wear a cloth mask or a hygienic mask correctly at all times, and keep a distance between people to reduce congestion, maintain strict personal hygiene and clean common touch points frequently."

Regarding "building confidence", Mr Statit noted, "Overall, 70% of market operators and vendors and street food vendors must be vaccinated and the market must assess itself through Thai Stop COVID+ measures, which have been clearly posted. We ask for cooperation from market operators and street food vendors to strictly follow such measures to build confidence among tourists."

Mr Satit pointed out Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha's comments during his visit to Phuket on July 1, and the importance of the Phuket Sandbox reopening.

"Phuket Province is ready both physically and in terms of strategic tourism in that we must be an example for other provinces in the future. We will move forward together," Mr Satit said.

"If there is a stumbling block, it will be a problem for the province. Therefore, we must work together. COVID-19 is a matter for everyone," he added.

During his visit, Mr Satit did not recognise that the main municipality market in Phuket Town was shut down for a week last month while local health officials investigated a cluster outbreak of the virus.

Dr Danai Teewanda, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Health, who joined Mr Sattit during his visit, said that self-assessment reported through the Thai Stop COVID+ initiative showed that Phuket business operators reported a high level of compliance with COVID-protection measures. The Phuket News



'Memo' leak prompts PM self-isolates after Phuket Sandbox visit New Sinovac concerns PRIME MINISTER PRA-yut Chan-o-cha is working

Bangkok Post

The medical society is calling on the government to give mRNA vaccines as a booster shot to frontline medical workers, after a leaked official document appeared to oppose third shots for health personnel due to fears it might stoke fears that the Sinovac vaccine does not provide effective protection.

The apparent memo was taken from a June 30 meeting between an academic committee on communicable disease control, a sub-committee on immunisation and a working academic panel on vaccine management in which the distribution of the Pfizer vaccine was discussed.

It is expected that about 1.5 million doses of Pfizer will arrive this month followed by 20mn more in the fourth quarter.

According to the leaked document, people aged 12-18; the elderly, people with chronic diseases and pregnant women; and frontline medical workers in outbreak areas have been prioritised for the initial workers was soon trending



The Sinovac vaccine should be sanctioned for use in children aged three and older by the year's end, claims a leading Thai virologist. Photo: AFP

1.5mn doses, which will include Bangkok and the surrounding provinces.

However, one comment recorded in the meeting's notes sparked an outcry, as an attendee opposed the use of Pfizer vaccine as the third dose for medical personnel who have already been vaccinated with Sinovac.

"In the present situation, if the vaccine is given to the third group, it is an admission that Sinovac can't give protection and it will make it harder to find an excuse," according to the document.

#GivePfizertomedical-

on social media.

Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul played down the issue last Monday (July 5), saying it was only one opinion and not government policy.

"It will be considered by the communicable disease control committee and the vaccination committee. We don't know how the debate will go," he said.

SINOVAC FOR CHILDREN

The leaked memo came a few days after leading virologist Yong Poovorawan claimed the Sinovac vaccine should be sanctioned for use in children aged three and older by the year's end to boost efforts to achieve herd immunity against COVID-19.

"If we are to achieve herd immunity, the vaccination must include children. The rollout should start by year's end at the latest," Dr Yong, head of Clinical Virology at Chulalongkorn University, said last Thursday (July 1), adding that Sinovac was the best option as the side effects were less severe.

Despite children mostly developing mild symptoms, they can spread the virus to older people who are at risk of more severe illnesses, he said. Dr Yong said children will receive "safe" COVID-19 vaccines and assured they will be able to return to school soon.

COVID-19 vaccination drives for children are being launched around the world. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was authorised by US Food and Drug Administration for use on children aged 12 and older, while Chinese authorities have also approved the Sinovac vaccine for children as young as three.

in isolation after a visiting delegate who joined the festivities to mark the grand opening of the Phuket Sandbox scheme on July 1 confirmed that he tested positive for COVID-19 after returning to his home province of Surin.

Veerasak Pisanauwong, President of the Surin Chamber of Commerce, posted on his Facebook page last Monday (July 5) that doctors had confirmed that had tested positive for COVID-19.

Mr Veerasak did not report experiencing any signs of infection, but added that he was now under medical observation in hospital as per instructions by Surin health officials.

Government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri announced on Monday that PM Prayut is now working without any visitors "in the case someone is infected with COVID-19."

"The Prime Minister will therefore use this time officers were drafting a list to perform his duties by monitoring and administrating [with people] who will remain in their own areas



Veerasak Phitsanuwong (left) poses for a selfie with PM Prayut in Phuket on July 1. Photo: Veerasak Phitsanuwong / Facebook

to alleviate the concerns of the parties and individuals involved," Mr Anucha said.

The Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) has reported that they have contacted Mr Veerasak to ask for details in order to draft a timeline of his movements in travelling to Phuket and where he went during his visit to the island.

Mr Veerasak reportedly left Phuket on Saturday evening (July 3), two days after meeting the prime minister.

The PPHO said health of high-risk contacts and investigating the infection as is standard procedure.

Bangkok Post

One killed in Samut Prakan factory inferno, 60 injured

A MASSIVE BLAZE AT A FACTORY producing plastic foam and pellets in Samut Prakan's Bang Phli district last Monday (July 5) left one rescue worker dead and at least 60 people injured, authorities have confirmed.

The victim was identified as Kornsith Laophan, 18, who was killed as he and other volunteers were fleeing from a burning chemical storage site. He stumbled and was consumed by the fire, authorities said.

The effort to extinguish the chemical fire at the Ming Dih Chemical Co factory complex sent thick black smoke into the sky above Bang Phli district which was visible from many parts of the capital.

Helicopters, including several owned by the army, were called in to help firefighters spray fire retardant foam over the burning complex with the aim of keeping the advancing flames away from other chemical storage sites in the complex, which could trigger further explosions.

The black fumes generated by the burning chemicals prompted authorities to warn local residents about the dangers of toxic smoke inhalation.

The initial explosion, which could be felt as far as nine kilometres away, damaged 15 cars and 73 houses in the neighbourhoods around the factory.

Piraya Kaewchang, a local resident whose house is located just 400 metres away from the burning factory, said she



A helicopter battles the blaze at the site of the explosion. Photo: Wichan Charoenkiatpakul

was lucky to be awakened by the blast.

"I ran out of my home when I heard the loud explosion. Shortly after that, I saw the ceiling on the second floor of my house collapse," Ms Piraya said.

Homes within a five-kilometre radius of the factory were evacuated amid fears of further explosions, as it was said that about 50 tonnes of chemicals were stored on the premises. An area of particular concern for firefighters was a nearby site which held 20,000 litres of chemicals alone.

About 160 local residents immediately lodged complaints with the police against the factory's owner and called for compensation.

The Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department said the inferno began with an explosion about 3:10am on Monday, but it has not yet determined what caused the blast. Bangkok Post



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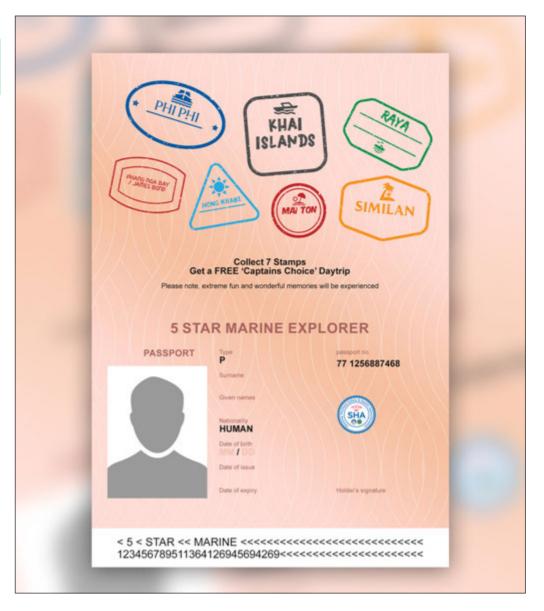
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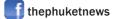






Contact: gm@classactmedia.co.th





essert with Richard Po



A MEAL WITH...

baz_gunner2000@yahoo.com

he annual Kata Rocks Superyacht Rendezvous held last December was a somewhat different version of the huge, international, luxury event which we've come to expect. The fact that it happened at all is a ringing endorsement to the optimism and brio of the man behind the event itself and the luxurious Kata Rocks Resort... Richard Pope.

I had dined with Richard some years ago for this column and the resulting article appeared on February 1, 2019. The world we now inhabit is unercognisable from the halcyon days of glittering hedonism at the Kata Rocks 4th Anniversary Pool Party and Superyacht Rendezvous in 2018 when we last dined together.

I therefore thought it would be fascinating to catch up with Richard again and conduct the first followup article in this series, to get his views on what has happened in the intervening years, and where we go from here.

"Kata Rocks is a quintessential vision of tropical perfection with beautiful, white, luxurious villas standing tall upon a stunning rocky headland overlooking the Andaman Sea. Every facet of Kata Rocks breathes elegance and sophistication," I wrote in my 2019 article.

And despite the ravages of COVID-19, Kata Rocks is still the gleaming white Camelot set on its stunning hillside. However, as we sat down, Richard made an interesting point about the upkeep of such a beautiful resort.



"The rate of degradation and decay of buildings and materials in this part of the world is much greater than elsewhere such as London's Notting Hill where I started out in property development," he said.

"The saline environment and extremes of heat and humidity, monsoonal rains, termites and other invaders mean that we have to wage an ongoing war to keep everything pristine. This has been possible for us, as we operated throughout 2020 and the lockdown, with several residents staying here, including myself. But for many properties around the Andaman, the costs of refurbishing back to operational standards will be huge."

In my 2019 article I also wrote, "a procession of super-models with their retinue of photographers, stylists and paparazzi makes the pilgrimage to Kata Rocks..."

Again, I'm happy to report that Richard has maintained his enviable record of attracting beautiful people to grace his resort's gleaming poolside. This may seem a slightly flippant observation, but I think it's indicative of Richard and his team's enthusiasm, optimism and energy, particularly during a pandemic.

To even stage this event in such trying times, takes enormous optimism, and attracting the crowd of beautiful people who were clearly enjoying themselves, is an endorsement of Kata Rock's brave attitude.

Last December's Rendezvous was constrained by the difficulties of international travel and boat entry into Thai waters, so it was a smaller, local, armada of craft which participated this year.

"I see this year's event as a great opportunity to take fabulous images of Kata Rocks, plus the Andaman yachting environment and the Rendezvous itself, then get them into the media, so that the audience for the 2021 event, who will be very keen to travel again, will come flocking back," Richard stated.

The last Rendezvous event also saw the inaugural Kata Rocks Poker Run on December 12. Starting from the resort, participating speedboats circumnavigated the island, picking up a playing card at each of five designated checkpoints, before returning to Kata Rocks for drinks, burgers and the prize-giving.

It was an enormously enjoyable event and also provides an appropriate metaphor for the situation in which tourism entrepreneurs find themselves.

Certainly, Richard holds a number of aces in his Kata Rocks hand such as a stunning resort design and reputation; a great location and geographical catchment area; a strong and experienced team; the inherent attractions of the Thai culture and people, plus his own creativity and optimism which I've previously highlighted.

The great unknown is the final fifth card - how and when will we recover from the devastation of COVID-19 on the Andaman's in-bound travel scene?

Only time will tell whether that fifth card is about to be dealt with the July 1 launch of the Phuket Sandbox Model, though I can think of no more convivial spot than Kata Rocks to play that waiting game.







- 1. Which messaging app created by Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy, and Reggie Brown has 280 million daily users?
- 2. How many Grand Slam titles has Andy Murray won?
- 3. Which American department store organises the famous annual Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City?
- 4. Ailurophobia is the fear of what?
- 5. Which toy was the first toy to be advertised on television? Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

1. Slender instrument

- 5. Ship's front
- 9. Executors 14. Air France airport
- 15. Defaulter's comeuppance
- 16. International court site, with "The"
- 17. Nap
- 18. Heaven on earth
- 19. Not separately
- 20. Causing widespread panic
- 23. Family moniker 24. Afternoons and evenings, briefly
- 25. Narcotic drug Raton, Fla.
- 31. Clock std.
- 34. Army attack helicopter
- 35. Deep laugh
- 36. Comic Johnson 37. Shake in the face of
- danger 40. Plane arrival times 41. "Alice's Restaurant"
- singer ___ Guthrie 42. Himalavan
- inhabitants
- 43. Cruise or Selleck
- 44. Tidal motions 45. Program producing
- pop-ups 46. Drink from hops
- 47. Midpoint, abbr.

- 48. Awful anonymous
- monster 56. Washington DC's
 - school of ballet
 - 57. Water carrier 58. Gathering
 - 59. Toughen up 60. Distinctive style

 - 62. Republic since 1990
 - 63. Highest volcano in Europe
 - 64. Job application nos.

Down

- 1. A word for the unfortunate
- ___-a-brac 3. Earthen pot
- 4. Ogler
- 5. Infant born early 6. Makeovers.
- essentially
- 7. Start the betting 8. Actor B. D. of "Law & 49. Cuckoopint, etc.
- Order: S.V.U." 9. Greg's mate, in a sitcom
- 10. Caravan's stopover 11. "Ghostbusters"
- character 12. Crosspiece
- 13. Recognize 21. Cornerstone abbr.

1) Snapchat; 2) Three (two at Wimbledon; 3) Macy's Manhattan (first held

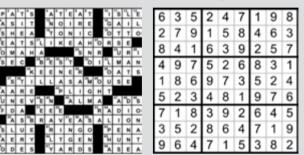
22. Noted Florida

- theme park
- 25. Group of eight 26. Portuguese city
- 27. Construction girder 28. Up in _
- (outraged)
- 29. Gets the ball
- rolling? 30. Toledo's state
- 31. Actress Garbo
- 32. Way up
- 33. Concise in speech
- 35. Parsley or sage 36. Not many
- 38. Tag
- 39. Electric starter?
- 44. Craps roll
- 45. Goddess with a European capital named for her
- 46. Love in Rome
- 47. Political buff's channel
- 48. Prime-time hour
- 50. Fencing sword 51. Sedimentary
- material
- 52. Diamond stats.
- 53. Magenta and
- carmine
- 54. Roasting chamber
- 55. Bakery selections 56. Critical

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



GOT YOUR

NUMBER

person is killed by a drunk driver every 50 minutes in the US.

percent of telecommuters worldwide suffer from insomnia, compared to just 29% of those who report to an office setting, according to a UN study.

percent of all wine produced in the world is meant to be consumed within a year or two from when it's made - an older wine is not always better.

heart transplants take place around the world annually almost 85% of those patients live at least one year with their new heart.

books, valued at US\$5.3 million (about \$10mn today), were stolen by one man, Stephen Blumberg, from universities and museums in 45 different US states from 1970 to 1990.

Source: Uberfacts



ISLAND VIEW DOLFIJNGRACHT Yachts coming and going from Phuket. *Photo by Sherri Drolet* Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to execeditor@classactmedia.co.th

This week in history

July 9, 1810

Napoleon annexes the Kingdom of Holland as part of the First French Empire.

July 10, 2019

The last Volkswagen Beetle rolls off the line in Puebla, Mexico. The last of 5,961 "Special Edition" cars will be exhibited in a museum. Over eight decades, Volkswagen produced more than 21 million "Beetles".

July 11, 1972

The first game of the World Chess Championship 1972 between challenger Bobby Fischer and defending champion Boris Spassky starts.

July 12, 1962

The Rolling Stones perform their first concert, at London's Marquee Club.

July 13, 1923

The Hollywood Sign is dedi-



cated in the Hollywood Hills, Los Angeles. It originally reads "Hollywoodland", but the last four letters are dropped after renovation in 1949.

July 14, 1969

The US Treasury withdraws the \$500, \$1000, \$5000 and \$10,000 bills from circulation. Since then, only \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 bills have been in use.

July 15, 1910

In his book Clinical Psychiatry, Emil Kraepelin gives a name to Alzheimer's disease, naming it after his colleague Alois Alzheimer. Source: Wikipedia



Phuket News

Trades & Services



CORPORATE SERVICES

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HOME IMPROVEMENT







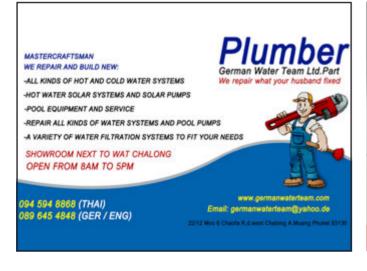
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JUL SUN JUL MON



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Friday Mussels night

1.2 Kg mussels served with French Fries Your choice, Your style: Mariniere, Provencale, Garlic & cream or Thai style We have a kid's playground zone. Price vary from 295 baht to 350 baht depending on choice ordered. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook. com/shakersphuket



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Sunday roast

12PM - 9PM: All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet Beef, Pork & Lamb - Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, Fried mushrooms, Grilled Tomatoes -Yorkshire pudding - Roasted Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes - Gravy, Mushroom sauce, Horse raddish, Mint Sauce. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 350 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 175 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/ shakersphuket



RESTAURANT BAR

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Monday BBQ night

6 PM onwards: All you can eat BBQ buffet cooked to order. Beef, Pork, Chicken, Burgers, Sausages, Prawns & Squids, salad buffet, Baked potatoes, potato salad & various sauces, Bread, Buns & garlic bread. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 395 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/ shakersphuket



RESTAURANT BAR

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Oli: 081/891 4381

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Wednesday Ribs night

6 PM onwards: All you can eat BBQ Pork Ribs served with Salad Buffet, Potato Salad & Choice of Sauces. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 325 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/ shakersphuket

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18 Seater Mitsubishi Bus x 2

18 Seater Mitsubishi Bus (2 buses), Year December 2011. Yellow Registration Plates. THB 950,000 (each). Contact: Robin Lee on Mobile | 061 829 8293

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PHUKET VIBES

Patong Beach came alive last Saturday (July 3) as Patong Municipality hosted its 'Welcome Back Phuket Vibes' festival, marking the start of the month-long 'Colourful Phuket' festival to be held across Phuket over the coming weeks to welcome Sandbox tourists to the island.

















Olympics opening to allow VIPs but no fans

OLYMPICS

FANS ARE LIKELY TO be banned from the Tokyo 2020 opening ceremony over virus fears, but a reduced number of VIPs and Olympic officials will be able to attend, Japan's Asahi Shimbun newspaper reported last Monday (July 5).

International Olympic Committee (IOC) representatives, foreign dignitaries, sponsors and others connected to the Games will be allowed into the National Stadium to watch the July 23 ceremony.

But under plans currently being discussed, fans would be locked out as organisers rethink attendance limits as concerns grow over rising virus cases in Tokyo.

The report, which cited several unnamed government sources, said organisers are working to whittle down the expected 10,000 "Olympic family" members to a level the Japanese public would find acceptable.

"Some people in government are concerned that the public won't accept them being given special treatment," it said.



Tokvo's Olympic stadium. Photo: AFP

"They'd like the number of people attending to be reduced to the hundreds."

Games organisers last month set a limit of 10,000 domestic fans, or half of each venue's capacity. Overseas fans have already been barred.

But a rise in infections has forced a rethink, with Games president Seiko Hashimoto warning last week that a closed-door Olympics remains an option.

The government is this week expected to extend antivirus measures in Tokyo and elsewhere, with a decision on Olympic fans to follow.

Japan's coronavirus outbreak has not been as severe as in some countries, with around 14,800 deaths, but experts say another wave could stretch medical services as the Olympics begin. AFP

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Imperious Verstappen lays down the gauntlet

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato

an anyone stop Max Verstappen from marching to a maiden title? Defending champion Lewis Hamilton has his doubts.

The term grand "chelem" is elusive in the Formula 1 history books, but it's a statistic that underscores dominance like few others.

Pole, victory, every lap led and fastest lap of the race only 25 drivers in F1 history have ever turned in a grand prix weekend clean and comprehensive enough to claim a motorsport grand slam.

Max Verstappen took his first at the Austrian Grand Prix in an utterly imperious performance. From the moment his Red Bull Racing machine rolled out of its garage for the second race in a row at the Red Bull Ring it looked destined to dominate.

Verstappen topped two of three practice sessions, missing the full sweep only because



Honda is now so confident in its power unit that is saves its juiciest power modes for later in the weekend.

He topped every segment in qualifying, extending his advantage over Lewis Hamilton week to week in the pole

And he cleared off at the front so quickly he had time to make an extra pit stop just for safety before belting in a best lap more than 1.5 seconds quicker than anyone else managed all afternoon.

"Pretty insane," he said out of the car. "I'm a bit amazed myself how today went. I didn't expect it to be like this."

It was dominance of a kind F1 has grown accustomed to over recent years. Hamiltonesque, even.

Except Hamilton, a sixtime grand slam getter, was relegated to fourth in another difficult weekend for Mercedes.

The Mercedes car has struggled at both rounds in Austria, its aerodynamic pack-

age and turbocharger ill at ease at the 700-metre altitude. Down by 0.25 seconds per lap, neither Hamilton nor teammate Valtteri Bottas stood a chance.

For Hamilton it's been particularly painful. He started the double-header 12 points down on Verstappen after a close-fought loss in France; today his deficit has almost tripled to 32 points, more than a clear race win.

With nine races down in a 20-plus race schedule, the Briton still has time. But to put the gap into context, he would have to beat Verstappen to victory four races in a row just to get back into the ballpark without some serious bad luck on the Dutchman's

And form is seemingly against him. While the Austrian circuit may have exaggerated the differences between the cars, Red Bull Racing brought significant upgrades to both rounds.

Mercedes has just one last update, due at the next round. In other words, what we see from here on in is all we're getting.

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Seven Thai shuttlers secure Games spots

BADMINTON

SEVEN THAI SHUTTLERS WILL compete in four events at the upcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo, according to the entry lists published by the Badminton World Federation (BWF) last Monday (July 5).

The Thai shuttlers who have qualified for the Games based on their Race to Tokyo rankings are Ratchanok Intanon and Busanan Ongbamrungphan in the women's singles, Kantaphon Wangcharoen in the men's singles, Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai in the mixed doubles, and Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai in the women's doubles.

Each country can have a maximum two players or pairs in one event.

Dechapol and Sapsiree, who are third in the Race to Tokyo rankings, are considered Thailand's best hopes to win the country's first ever Olympic medal in badminton.

In January, they won three tournaments, including the World Tour Finals, to become the first mixed doubles pair to claim three consecutive World Tour Super 1000 crowns.

Fifth-ranked Ratchanok is also seen as a contender.

Her chance of winning a medal in Tokyo has been boosted by the absence of reigning Olympic champion Carolina Marin, who has pulled out of the Games due to an injury.

The top four women's players at Tokyo 2020 are China's Chen Yufei, Taiwan's Tai Tzu-ying, and Japanese duo Nozomi



Mixed doubles duo Sapsiree Taerattanachai (left) and Dechapol Puavaranukroh are seen as Thailand's best bet in badminton at Tokyo 2020. Photo: Bangkok Post

Okuhara and Akane Yamaguchi.

It will be Ratchanok's third Olympic appearance, having reached the quarterfinals at London 2012 and last-16 round

"Next station Olympic Games," the 2013 world champion wrote in a social media post recently.

"[I] first took part [in the Olympics] at 17 years old and now I am 26. It will be my third Olympics. Have to reach destination with a medal!"

Jongkolphan and Rawinda could spring a surprise, while Busanan and Kantaphon are ranked outsiders.

The men's singles competition is led by world No.1 Kento Momota of the host nation. Danish duo Viktor Axelsen and Anders Antonsen, ranked 2 and 3 in the world respectively, are also ones to watch.

The Tokyo Games, postponed from last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are scheduled to place from July 23 to August 8. Bangkok Post



thephuketnews.com



Gareth the good guy shines

Southgate has Three Lions purring, regardless of Euro outcome

FOOTBALL

Ben Tirebuck editor3@classactmedia.co.th

The last time England made a European Championship semi-final was 25 years ago. It ended in heartache after a penalty shootout loss to arch rivals Germany. The man who missed the crucial kick for England was one Gareth Southgate.

Southgate is now manager of the national team. At time of press, England had yet to play Denmark in the Euro 2020 semi-final at Wembley. By the time you are reading this, he and the team may well be planning for a final showdown with either Italy or Spain. Or they may have excited the tournament.

Regardless, the work Southgate has done during his five-year tenure thus far has been impressive to say the least and whether England claim the Euro title or fall at the semi-final or final stage, he emerges very much as a winner.

Southgate is a mature, honest, compassionate and articulate man who has shone in his ambassadorial role as national team manager. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2019 and volunteered to take a 30% cut in his salary when the COVID-19 pandemic set in.

One lingering memory from when he guided the team to the



semi-finals of the World Cup in 2018 was of him consoling a distraught Colombian player who missed the crucial penalty in the shootout loss to England. Southgate knew exactly how it felt and demonstrated empathy, compassion and class in his actions which spoke volumes of him as a human being.

Clearly he is one of the good guys. He exerts a calm yet confident demeanour at all times and has been very purposeful in creating a comfortable, clique-free environment for his players which has allowed them to shine.

He treats his players as adults and fosters a notion of trust that is implicit and that has created the atmosphere of a close-knit club. Players regularly give glowing accounts of their time with the national team, suggesting it is something they want to be part of as opposed to being compelled – a criticism levelled at previous camps that were often regarded as more of a chore.

'HE'S ONE OF US'

Relations with the press, which were often so toxic under previous managers, have also blossomed under Southgate's time in charge. He was at the sharp point of criticism and ridicule by the infamously brutal British media after his penalty miss against the Germans in 1996, something that stuck for a long time and clearly hurt him.

Perhaps reacting to that personal experience, Southgate was astute enough to realise the power of the media and that everyone pulling in the same direction was a better dynamic than division. By welcoming the press to open days where players were accessible in a relaxed environment, Southgate very cleverly created a domain of inclusivity and unity that has benefited all.

Gone are the days of animosity, of suspicion and conflict. One would not be surprised to hear an English hack quoting the character Henry Hill from the classic film Goodfellas when referring to Southgate: "You're gonna like this guy, he's all right. He's a goodfella. He's one of us."

Southgate's tactical acumen during his tenure has largely been superb. He continually demonstrates an awareness and ability to switch formation and tactics depending on the opponents strengths and weaknesses, thus positioning his team in an optimal space to succeed.

Many criticised his team selection as too negative prior to the Euro knockout game against Germany on June 29, yet it transpired to be a masterclass as England stifled their arch rivals in a 2-0 victory. He has an abundance of attacking talent at his disposal that many have demanded get more game time yet has managed to strike the right balance that is generating positive results and progress. "In Gareth we trust" is becoming a mantra increasingly adopted.

Maybe the recent win against the Germans brought a hint of revenge for the heartache Southgate endured 25 years previous although he is not a man to be hung up on regret or sentiment. He is only focused on driving forward, improving everything he has control over.

Regardless of the outcome of Euro 2020, whether "football comes home" or not, the health of the English national team has rarely been better. Much, if not all, of this is down to the modern gentleman of the game, one Gareth Southgate OBE.

Focus returns to the Premier League

FOOTBALL

WITH EURO 2020 TAKing centre stage for the past month, the Premier League has found itself in the unusual position of taking a back seat away from the glare of media and fan scrutiny.

return to the top-tier of English their talisman Grealish. football as the start of the new season, which kicks off on August 13, draws ever closer.

Transfer activity thus far has been muted, somewhat understandable given those involved have been largely preoccupied with the flagship European tournament.

The most noteworthy move so far has been the transfer of Jadon Sancho from Borussia Dortmund to Manchester United for a fee of £73 million (B3.2 billion). The 21-year-old England winger has been used sparingly at Euro 2020 so far but showed enough glimpses in his performance against Ukraine last Saturday (July

3) to suggest Red Devil fans under new tutorship. should be excited.

Chatter around the futures of England's Harry Kane and Jack Grealish reached fever pitch immediately prior to the Euros and we should expect it to resume once the tournament concludes. Manchester City are reputedly interested However, as the Euros in signing both with reports draws to a close this Sunday a £100mn offer had recently (July 11), all focus will quickly been tabled to Aston Villa for

Kane has made his feelings well known to current club Tottenham that he feels he needs to move on in order to secure silverware and City would be an ideal location.

Grealish is a Villa fan who revels in his role as club captain. However, similar to Kane, a move would certainly benefit his career aspirations and personal trophy cabinet.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

There has been much more movement at management level as Tottenham, Crystal Palace, Everton and Wolves all start the campaign

Nuno Espírito Santo takes over the hot seat at Spurs in what is an intruiging appointment. He showed enough early on at Wolves to suggest he possesses a fine tactical mind which could help the north London club progress nicely.

Further south in the capital, Crystal Palace have appointed Patrick Vieira. The former Arsenal player will look to transition from the pragmatic style of former boss Roy Hodgson to a more progressive approach, something that will take time to implement.

With prior spells in charge of New York City FC and Nice in the French league, this is a big step up for the Frenchman and it remains to be seen whether he is afforded the luxuries of time and patience to find his groove and help the Eagles soar.

Controversy is the only word to describe the state of affairs for the blue half of Merseyside where former Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez takes charge of bitter cross city rivals Everton.

Benitez has managed and achieved at the highest level across Europe yet is despised by the large majority of Everton fans after he criticised the club while in charge of Liverpool, labelling them a "small club". Time will tell how things transpire although it certainly promises to be eventful.

Wolves have appointed Portuguese Bruno Lage, a

New Crystal Palace boss Patrick Vieira. Photo: AFP relatively unknown quantity

in the English game. Lage was previously at the helm at Benfica, where he won the domestic league and cup dou-

ble in 2019. He will be hoping he can have the same positive impact former boss and fellow countryman Nuno Espírito Santo had. Ben Tirebuck





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Southgate has already made his mark > p15



CRICKET

Neil Quail

charged atmosphere in the lead up into last Sunday's (July 4) clash between the Patong Penguins and the Thalang Cows at the ACG in Thalang ultimately spilled over into the game and left a bad taste in many players' mouths by the time the match concluded.

Social media was ablaze with omnetitive banter betwixt players from both sides during the preceding week, ensuring this longawaited 11-a-side game would be a battle, and no love would be lost amongst friends, with a precious victory at stake.

Penguins power duo of Seemant Raju and Imtiyaz Mushtaq opened the batting against the Cows' bowling attack of Mayur Deuskar, Sami Pir and Guddu Yaddav.

Initial attrition came from Raju, thundering his way to 23 off just 16 deliveries, before a short ball from Pir during the fifth over caught an edge from Raju's bat into the waiting hands of Samir Khan at first slip.

Former Cows player, Mushtaq, having not played for several months, looked to impress his new team mates by taking fewer risks with the bat, focusing his attention on building an innings.

Manish Sadaranghani joined Mushtaq, but the talented allrounder never looked entirely comfortable, especially when facing the bowling of a confidence-fuelled and in-form Michael Flowers.

A darting in-swinger from Flowers in the 12th over proved too good for Sadaranghani, the ball evading his bat and continuing on to clip the top of leg stump, returning the Penguin batsman for just 14 off 23 deliveries.

Paddy Ledeboer was next at the crease, but his typical explosive start did not materialise on this occasion as he scrambled singles and doubles before eventually finding several big boundaries later in his innings to reach 37 off 28.

Also making a brief return to Phuket cricket following months away in the capital, Mudasir Rehman, exhibiting his value as an all-rounder by taking on roles as fielder, bowler and wicket-keeper throughout the day, put paid to Ledeboer's efforts with a straightforward catch taken in the covers off Pir's controlled bowling.

The 50-run partnership from

Mushtaq and Ledeboer helped Penguins past 100 runs, with another now regular visitor in the form of South African Craig Morgan coming in to partner Mushtaq, albeit briefly before being caught behind by Flowers for 4.

Anthony Van Blerk fared no better when he too exited on just 4 runs, caught by Joe Ninan.

A 20-run partnership between Mushtaq and captain Jason Robinson saw the Penguins finish on 171 for 5 with Mushtaq unbeaten on 55.

'AGGRESSIVE TACTICS'

In the Cows' first innings Robertson raised a sense of trepidation as he looked to intimidate the batting pair of Ninan and Pir by attempting to "Mankad" the non-striker on several occasions, a legal yet contentious form of dismissal at any level of the sport. With both captains also involved in a physical clash while running between the wickets, tensions were flaring up to a distracting level.

Clearly unsettled by the early onset of such aggressive tactics, both batsmen fell in quick succession to Sajal Gaur with the score at 11 for 2.

Responsibility for recovering the flagging run rate fell to Stuart

Hamilton and Sameer Khan, but just as it seemed Hamilton was finding a rhythm, the left-hander played on from a Mushtaq delivery, sending him back to the pavilion with 16 off 25 to his name and Bhanu Pratap was then dismissed in the next over by Robertson.

Following the 15 over drinks break, Flowers (14 off 15) faced off against Robertson with the batsman drawing first blood by crashing a six. Just two balls later, however, Robertson would have the last word in catching Flowers himself off his fourth delivery.

Khan's solid innings (33 off 44) reached an end at the hands of Mushtaq in the 18th over bringing the score to 98 for 6, and subsequently all-rounder Rehman into partner Deuskar at the middle.

A swift 14 off 12 from Rehman helped boost the score to 127 for 7 by the time Gaur posted his second caught and bowled in removing Rehman during the 21st over.

The game's result certainly hung in the balance but tight bowling from Saju Abraham and Curt Livermore put the game out of reach for the Cows. This spell also included a brace of wickets for Abraham in bowling Michael Thomas and then trapping Deuskar (33).

Fading light fortunately coincided with the expiration of allotted overs, and the Penguins comfortably ahead by 16 runs to secure victory.

Unfortunately, the win was a bittersweet affair for the Penguins with distasteful on-field chat amongst players and a physicality not welcome in any competition marring the occasion. Consequently, Phuket cricket's governing authority (PCG) has announced a penalty card system to be introduced immediately in order to help eliminate future unsavoury behaviour.

On a positive note, it was heartening for Phuket cricket to welcome back five players for the game as, with those mentioned earlier, Tyler Whatley also returned to the Penguins side - hopefully a sign of resurgence for the sport following the easing of restrictions.

The game's MVP award went to Mushtaq for his 55 not out and bowling figures of 2 for 25 off his 5 overs. Other outstanding performances include Gaur's 3 for 39 and Abraham's 2 for 11 off 2 overs.

The island's cricketers and the ACG welcome anyone interested in playing, with annual memberships now being taken. For more information, please contact via the 30 ACG Facebook page.





