

CABINET SPLURGES B1.4BN ON MEDICAL HUB > PAGE 2

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In the light of recent global events outside of our control and as requested by our bank, we regrettably cannot continue to accept Russian credit & debit cards.

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A sign at a reception at a Phuket hotel warns that credit cards issued by sanctioned banks will not be accepted. Photo: Supplied

RUSSIAN TOURISTS STRANDED IN PHUKET AS SANCTIONS KICK IN, CARDS FROZEN

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Russian tourists have been left stranded in Phuket and unable to pay for hotels or other tourist services due to sanctions against Russian-based banks which have left the tourists unable to use their credit cards.

Most Russian tourists prefer to pay for goods and services by credit card, including hotels, accommodation, food and other products, but have been left without means to conduct financial transactions, said a report

shared by the Phuket office of the Ministry of Interior on Mar 4.

The sanctions, although led by the US, have received worldwide support in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb 24. The siege of the Ukraine capital Kiev and historic city Kharkiv has seen civilians targeted and killed by Russian military forces. More than a million refugees have fled the country.

Thailand has remained "neutral" on the conflict, but joined 140 other nations in a UN resolution condemning the invasion. However, Thailand has so far refused to name Russia as the

aggressor or make any commitment in joining any sanctions, which global companies are now also enforcing by their own choice.

"Now hotel operators and some restaurants are starting to face problems that tourists do not have money to pay for accommodation and meals because they cannot use credit cards," the report shared on Mar 4 said.

"Some of them wanted to return, but they couldn't because there is no cash," the report added, citing an unnamed source in Phuket's hotel industry.

The issue was confirmed by Chat-

tan Kunjara Na Ayudhya, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Deputy Governor for Marketing for Europe, Americas and the Middle East.

"At present, both Russian tourists and Ukrainians in Phuket, Koh Samui, Pattaya and other tourist destinations have started experiencing problems with financial transactions during their trip in Thailand," Mr Chattan said.

"The tourists cannot pay for the hotel room and other expenses via credit card, including making international money transfers (via SWIFT), after the ban on financial transactions with some major Russian banks," he said...

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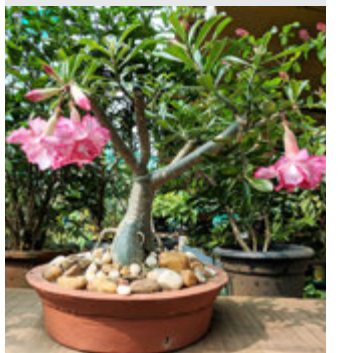
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National debt probe targets 'informal loans'



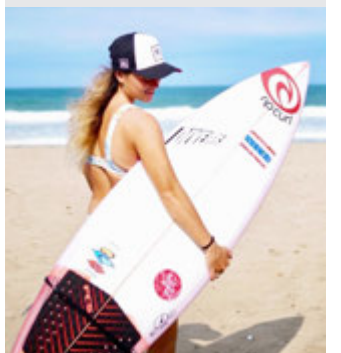
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Good reasons to go potty in your garden



SPORT PAGE 16

Local surfing star aiming for the big leagues



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News



Diver revived
after hour of
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Officials fret over losing rubles

Continued from page 1

"In addition, it also affects applying for a Thailand Pass for travelling to Thailand because tourists cannot transfer money for hotel reservations, airport transfer to the hotel, including the RT-PCR test fees," Mr Chattan said.

Mr Chattan pointed out that the number of Russian tourists coming to Thailand had plunged. Since Mar 1, the number had fallen to 378 people per day, down from an average of 600-700 people a day, he said.

Russians have been the largest tourist source market segment since Nov 1, Mr Chattan noted.

In total, 1.48 million Russian tourists visited Thailand in 2019, accounting for an estimated income of B96.2 billion, he said.

VISA, MASTERCARD SUSPEND SERVICES

Card payment giants Visa and Mastercard last Saturday (Mar 5) announced they are suspending their operations in Russia amidst the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"Cards issued by Russian banks will no longer be supported by the Mastercard network. And, any Mastercard issued outside of the country will not work at Russian merchants or ATMs," Mastercard said in an official statement, noting "the unprecedented nature of the current conflict and the uncertain economic environment".

"We don't take this decision lightly. Mastercard has operated in Russia for more than 25 years," the company added.

"As we take this step, we join with so many others in hoping for and committing to a more positive, productive and peaceful future for us all," Mastercard said.

Visa, for its part, announced that "effective immediately, Visa will work with its clients and partners within Russia to cease all Visa transactions over the coming days."



Russian passport holders are now being granted extensions to stay.
Photo: The Phuket News / file

"Once complete, all transactions initiated with Visa cards issued in Russia will no longer work outside the country and any Visa cards issued by financial institutions outside of Russia will no longer work within the Russian Federation," Visa said.

Bank of Russia has already confirmed that all Visa and Mastercard bank cards issued by Russian banks "will continue to operate normally on Russian territory until their expiration date". The regulator did not stress the fact that normal operation will be possible "on Russian territory" only.

The central bank warned that Russians travelling abroad should carry alternate means of payment such as cash. Yet, there are limits on the amount of cash a traveller can take with them out of Russia.

BDMS OUT

The three main hospitals in Phuket operated by major Thai medical service provider BDMS have suspended accepting medical payment coverage from Russian and Ukrainian insurance companies, the Russian Consulate in Phuket has announced.

The post, in Russian language, came one day after Russian Ambassador to Thailand Evgeny Tomikhin

travelled to Phuket in person to "pay a courtesy call to discuss official matters".

"The Consulate General was officially notified of the suspension by medical institutions of Bangkok Hospital Phuket, Bangkok Hospital Siriroj, Dibuk Hospital in receiving medical insurance from citizens of Russia and Ukraine on account of payment for medical services, starting from February 28 and until further notice," the notice said.

"This decision concerns medical policies of Russian and Ukrainian insurance companies," it added.

"According to the information available to the Consulate General, in the near future this practice may be introduced by other medical institutions, including throughout Thailand," the consulate warned.

"The provision of medical services will be carried out only for cash... Please consider this information when seeking medical help!" the notice concluded.

CANCELLED FLIGHTS

The Russian Consulate in Phuket confirmed it is providing assistance to Russian nationals stranded on the island unable to fly home.

The move comes as two major

airlines that bring Russian tourists to Phuket – S7 Airlines and Aeroflot – have suspended all flights to and from the island.

It also comes as many Russia-based airlines have chosen to cease all flights outside Russian airspace as much of their fleet is leased and may be seized on landing under sanctions being imposed over the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"Together with the Ministry of Transport, the Federal Air Transport Agency [Rosaviation] and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we continue to work on organising the return of tourists on a daily basis. Regular and charter flights return tourists every day," the consulate assured.

However, the Russian consulate noted, "Unfortunately, the coordination of special flights is a long process. Therefore, if you have the opportunity and do not have time to wait, the fastest and best option is to take a ticket through third countries on your own."

VISA EXTENSIONS

The Russian consulate on Monday (Mar 7) announced that it will continue to issue letters to Russian citizens in need of extending their stay for one month at Phuket Immigration.

"Personal appearance at the Consulate General to receive letters is required (with the exception of minors)," it added.

"Please note that Russians who arrived in Phuket on tourist visas or visa-free stamps [visa exemption status] have the right to apply to the Immigration Service for a "COVID" extension for 60 days. To obtain such an extension, it is not required to apply for letters to the Consulate General," the consulate explained.

"Letters from the Consulate General are necessary primarily for those citizens who do not have the opportunity to receive "COVID" stamps, and whose flights to Rus-

sia have been cancelled," it added.

"P.S. The Thai side charges a state fee for extending the stay of foreigners, which is B1900," the notice said.

THAILAND ALLOWS UNIONPAY

Tourism Authority of Thailand Governor Yuthasak Supasorn on Monday said the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) had asked related authorities to explore the impact of the Russia-Ukraine crisis and propose solutions to help tourists stranded in Thailand to the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday (Mar 8).

He said there are roughly 7,000 tourists from the two countries in four tourism areas, comprising Phuket, Koh Samui, Pattaya and Krabi.

To mitigate the short-term impact, tourists can extend their 30-day visa without paying the application fee, which costs B1,900 for both Ukrainians and Russians, he said, contradicting the Russian consulate in Phuket's report.

Tourists unable to return home due to suspended flights or political unrest and cannot afford to stay in Thailand, the government plans to offer them shelter, Mr Yuthasak added.

The possible locations are Phuket and Pattaya, depending on a survey tourism operators were sending out to their guests this week, he noted.

Regarding transactions via Russian banks and credit cards that are blocked, tourism operators are working with UnionPay, a payment platform from China, to offer this channel to Russian visitors, Mr Yuthasak explained.

Tourism associations also suggest the government consider the emergency use of cryptocurrencies to let tourists have an alternative payment system in this situation and for similar crises in the future, he added.

Cabinet approves B1.4bn for Phuket medical centre

THE CABINET HAS approved a budget of B1.411 billion to develop the "international medical center" to be built on state land at the northern end of the island.

"The Cabinet approved the budget allocation in principle to implement a project to upgrade Phuket's health tourism to a world-class health tourism city," Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana, spokesman for the Prime Minister's

Office, revealed on Mar 1.

"The amount of investment is B1,411.70 million to strengthen the readiness of the technology infrastructure system, medical science and medical service system and supporting the provision of modern international medical and public health services," he said.

The budget is also to be used to "develop Phuket City to be a center of high-value medical services through



An artist's impression of what the international medical centre will look like. Image: PR Phuket / file

international tourism", he added.

Vachira Phuket Hospital

is the unit responsible for the project, Mr Thanakorn said.

"The development of a

project to upgrade Phuket's health tourism to a world-class health tourism city will be a model for health tourism. It is part of the upgrading of the tourism industry for the high-income groups and health tourism, which is one of the 12 targeted industries to transform the country's development in the next phase," Mr Thanakorn added.

Details of the funding of the mega-project have yet to be fully explained in

public, other than generic statements like those given by Mr Thanakorn, saying that the project "will raise Phuket's medical tourism to international standards", despite having four international hospitals on the island.

The Treasury Department together with the Public Health Ministry in October 2020 vowed to splurge as much as B4bn to develop the centre.

Drowning in debt, locals resort to loan sharks

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A fact-finding study on the impact of the economic crisis has found at least 21 cases of people in Phuket taking out informal loans to repay loans already outstanding, and being unable to repay the informal loans.

Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong related the news on Feb 28 to Chaichana Dejdech, chairman of a subcommittee of the House of Representatives National Debt Resolution Commission in Phuket on Feb 28. Photo: PR Phuket

The subcommittee is particularly focussed on the impact on business owners and the general public, Mr Chaichana explained.

The subcommittee had arrived in Phuket on the Monday to conduct a three-day inspection visit, he added.



Chaichana Dejdech, chairman of a subcommittee of the House of Representatives National Debt Resolution Commission, in Phuket on Feb 28. Photo: PR Phuket

tion visit, he added.

The specific objective of the visit is to assess the impact of debt conditions on business owners and the general public due to the spread of COVID-19, Mr Chaichana said.

"In addition, another objective is to collect information on government assistance measures, and suggestions for solutions to debt problems from the general public and related agencies," he added.

"This is to clarify and express opinions on the situation of debt problems of entrepreneurs and the general

public, solutions for debt problems, overall performance, obstacles, as well as useful policy recommendations to optimize a sustainable debt resolution," he said.

Relevant agencies have provided assistance, said a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) marking Mr Chaichana's visit.

"There has been assistance of informal debt problems to the general public through the relevant agencies," repeated the report three times.

"There has been media-

tion with informal creditors in the last year, amounting to 21 cases in which each debtor had borrowed money from many informal creditors as well as taken out loans that charged daily interest," the report said.

"In this regard, the provincial police has set up an informal debt suppression center to help people under the orders of the Royal Thai Police," the report added, without identifying exactly which police in Phuket has set up which office or how it may be contacted.

Repeated calls by *The Phuket News* to the Phuket Provincial Police to confirm such a police task force exists went unanswered.

"For other problems, Phuket has assigned relevant agencies to help and solve people's problems continuously in all matters in order to treat people's suffering and improve happiness during COVID-19 pandemic," the PR Phuket report added.

The report did not mark any of Mr Chaichana's findings.

Man rescued after jump from bridge

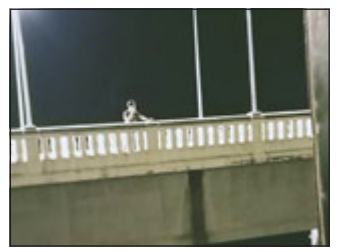
A 46-YEAR-OLD MAN who worked at the main SuperCheap branch in Rassada was rescued from the water in the channel at the north end of the island after he jumped from the Sarasin Bridge in the early hours of last Friday (Mar 4).

Tha Chatchai Police were notified by 191 emergency hotline operators at 4:15am saying they had received a call from a woman reporting that she feared her husband had jumped from the bridge.

Police and rescue workers from the Kusoldharm Foundation and the Mai Khao Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor) rushed to the bridge to find the man floating in the water below. A boat was deployed and the man was safely brought back to shore, where he was administered first aid and taken to Thalang Hospital.

The man's wife explained that her husband had sent a Line message to say goodbye to a close friend at about 3am.

The friend called her husband back, but his call was not answered, prompting the friend to call her to tell her about the message.



The man was seen on the bridge before he jumped. Photo: via Tha Chatchai Police

The reason for the man wanting to jump from the bridge has yet to be confirmed, though at this stage the motive is believed to be personal problems and problems related to work.

Phuket authorities have set up a 24-hour hotline at Tel: 1300 to help people who have been impacted and are struggling emotionally, mentally, financially or otherwise due to fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you or anyone you know is in need of emotional support and counselling, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their 24-hour hotline 02-113-6789 (English & Thai) or the Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai).

Eakkapop Thongtub

Police aim to extradite fugitive for execution of Jimi Sandhu

THE ROYAL THAI POLICE will request a Canadian court to deny bail for a Canadian national wanted for the murder of Indian gangster Jimi Sandhu in Phuket, says the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB).

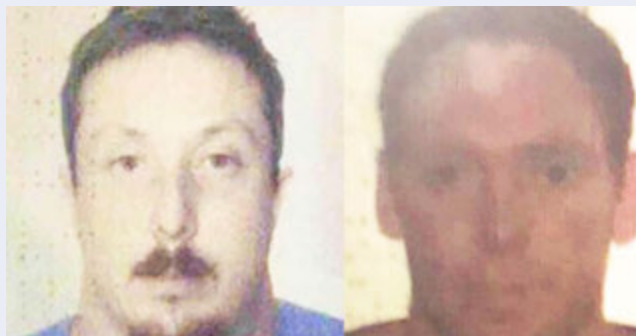
Matthew Dupre, one of two suspects wanted for the shooting of Jimi Singh Sandhu in Rawai on Feb 4, was arrested in Edmonton, Alberta, on Feb 20.

The other suspect, Gene Karl Lahrkamp, also a Canadian national, remains at large.

Dupre is being held in detention by the Alberta Court, pending the court's decision on Thailand's extradition request, reported the *Bangkok Post*.

Earlier, the Office of the Attorney-General (OAG) said an application had been filed for his extradition to Thailand.

CIB commissioner Pol Lt Gen Jirabhop Bhuridej said last Sunday (Mar 6) that he had instructed investigators to file a petition with the Canadian court to



Matthew Dupre (left), now arrested, and Gene Karl Lahrkamp are wanted for the murder of Jimi Singh Sandhu in Phuket on Feb 4. Photos: Supplied

oppose Dupre's request to be released on bail.

Lt Gen Jirabhop said police were determined to have Dupre extradited to stand trial in Thailand.

A source close to the investigation said the case had been transferred to the Crime Suppression Division (CSD) at the Royal Thai Police, the *Bangkok Post* also reported.

The police petition will be filed with the Canadian court today (Mar 11) out of concern that the suspect will ask for temporary release and flee.

If the suspect is released from detention, it will un-

dermine police attempts to have him extradited, the source said, adding that the extradition is expected in April.

"The crime showed links to organised crime syndicates and the suspects had planned their escape well. They fled to Europe before travelling to Canada. War weapons also were used in the attack," said the source.

Pol Col Wirachan Khunchaikaew, a CSD superintendent and chief investigator, said the documents supporting the petition and extradition request are on their way to Canada.

The Phuket News

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CONTACT US

editor@classactmedia.co.th 076 612 550

PURIYA BEAVAN
Editor**CHRIS HUSTED**
Executive Editor
084 307 7408
execeditor@classactmedia.co.th**BEN TIREBUCK**
News / Sport Editor
061 806 8132
editor3@classactmedia.co.th**CHUTHARAT 'UM' PLERIN**
Thai Editor
088 766 1615
thai@classactmedia.co.th**JASON BEAVAN**
General Manager
086 479 7471
gm@classactmedia.co.th**SIRIPORN (NOK) SEANGMAS**
Sales Support
086 479 7470
sales@classactmedia.co.th**NIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITCHA
THANAPONG 'OAK' KHAO-AMPHAIPHAN**
Graphic designersThe Phuket News
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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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FRI MAR 11

High: +33°
Low: +26°
Wind 7 m/s

SAT MAR 12

High: +33°
Low: +25°
Wind 7 m/s

SUN MAR 13

High: +33°
Low: +25°
Wind 4 m/s

MON MAR 14

High: +34°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

TUE MAR 15

High: +33°
Low: +26°
Wind 4 m/s

WED MAR 16

High: +31°
Low: +26°
Wind 7 m/s

THU MAR 17

High: +31°
Low: +26°
Wind 7 m/s

Tourist diver revived, airlifted to Phuket

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A 62-year-old Thai tourist who suffered a heart attack while diving off Koh Lipe, Satun, on Mar 3 was brought back to life after one hour of CPR by medical workers at a nearby health centre, then flown to Phuket by Navy helicopter to receive treatment at Vachira Hospital in Phuket Town.

The Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command dispatched the helicopter with doctors from Vachira Phuket Hospital on board after receiving a message at 12:30pm, reported the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

The 62-year-old man, Phuwanon Iamchan, had suffered a "drowning accident" while diving with relatives at Koh Yang, northwest of Koh Lipe, said the report.

"The patient was unconscious, unresponsive and in cardiac arrest, and was rushed to the Koh Lipe Health Promoting Hospital.

"Nurses and the medical team on Koh Lipe performed CPR for more



Mr Phuwanon transferred to an ambulance at Phuket Rajabhat University after landing in Phuket. Photo: Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command

than one hour until the patient's heart started beating again," the report said.

"The medical team requested helicopter support from the Third Area Command to transport the patient back to the mainland for treatment," the report added.

The Third Area Command, based at Cape Panwa, on Phuket's east coast, dispatched a S-76B transport helicopter from its Special Aviation Division with a medical team from Vachira Phuket Hospital on board.

The helicopter landed at Koh Lipe

at 3pm and returned to Phuket to land at Phuket Rajabhat University in Rassada, north of Phuket Town, at 4:35pm.

At last report Mr Phuwanon was alive and under care at Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town.

Alcoholic suffering withdrawal stabs himself

POLICE HAVE CONFIRMED that a 45-year-old man became so distressed after he stopped drinking alcohol that he took to self-harm by stabbing himself in the stomach.

Capt Suchart Luecha of the Thalang Police was notified at 7:10pm on Mar 1 that a man had stabbed himself at a house in Soi Na Nuea, Pa Khlok, Thalang.

Rescuers of Pa Khlok Subdistrict Administrative Organisation and police went straight to investigate the scene.

There they found Piyawat Hongbut lying on a wooden bed in the house with a knife about 30cm long protruding from his stomach just above his naval.

There was heavy blood loss as the wound was gushing with blood, police said. Officers had to secure the knife to prevent it from moving and causing further damage before the man was urgently rushed to Thalang Hospital.

A neighbour in the village, Boonthong Jompan, said that Mr Piyawat had a serious problem with alcoholism and that his relatives had tried to intervene on several occasions by taking him to hospital to seek help but to no avail and his problems persisted.

Mr Boonthong, 59, said that Mr Piyawat had decided to stop drinking by going cold turkey but

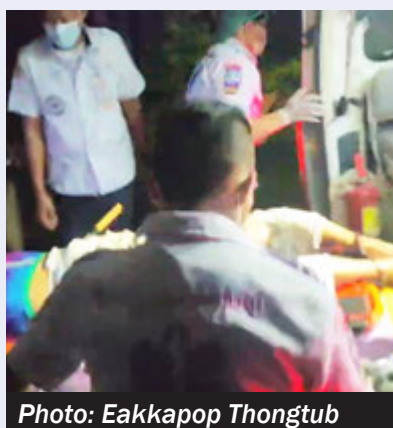


Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

was clearly struggling as for the last three days he was seen continually hugging a rubber tree in a nearby rubber plantation that he owns.

"I think today the withdrawal symptoms of Mr Piyawat's alcoholism got to such a desperate point that he used the knife to harm himself," Mr Boonthong told police.

It was not clear whether Mr Piyawat stabbing himself was an attempt to take his life or a cry for help. At time of press there were no details disclosed as to the condition of Mr Piyawat.

If you or anyone you know is in need of emotional support and counselling, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their 24-hour hotline 02-113-6789 (English & Thai) or the Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai).

Eakkapop Thongtub

Three arrested over Chinese 'COVID medicine'

PHUKET PROVINCIAL POLICE have arrested three people, including two Chinese nationals, for illegally selling Lianhua Qingwen capsules, a traditional Chinese medicine used for the treatment of cold and influenza symptoms.

Chinese national Bai Jifu, 54, and Thai national Pennapha Srathonghan, 36, were arrested at a house on Phra Metta Rd in Patong at 3:30pm on Mar 2.

The pair were found in possession of 55 boxes of Lianhua Qingwen capsules with 24 capsules per box, totalling 1,320 capsules, and 146 boxes with 36 capsules per box, giving another 5,256 capsules seized.

The officers, led by Maj Suvisit Khirirak, also seized an iPhone X and an Oppo A54 as well as 18 packs of Nanjing brand cigarettes and 25 packs of Hongtashan brand cigarettes, from China.

Both were taken to Patong Police Station and charged with jointly selling regulated medicine without a permit, selling regulated medicines that are not registered as drug formulas, selling herbal products without a permit, advertising herbal products or the benefits of herbal products without a license and jointly hiding and selling items that have not been imported via the Customs Department

Also arrested on Mar 2, at 4:10pm, was Chinese national Yang Ligin, 36, at a house at the Phuket Villa Suanluang housing estate in Wichit.



Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

Yang was found in possession of 74 boxes of Lianhua Qingwen capsules, with 24 capsules per box, giving a total of 1,776 capsules seized.

Yang was taken to Wichit Police Station and charged under Section 246 of the Customs Act 2017, which stipulates that it is an offence to assist in hiding goods that were imported into the country without having passed through Customs formalities.

Lianhua Qingwen capsules have been approved by the Thailand Food & Drug Administration for sale within the country, but the capsules must be sold by a registered pharmacy and must be imported only by Inway Group Co Ltd.

The Chinese government has approved the medicine to be used, promoted and exported as a treatment for COVID-19.

However, the Thai FDA has specifically warned that the medicine in Thailand has been approved for the treatment of fever and other symptoms of cold or influenza only, but not specifically for treatment of COVID-19.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Big push for Heroines Festival

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket officials last week held an official press conference for the Heroines Festival, marking that the festival this year will be on Mar 5-20.

The press conference was held at Central Festival Phuket on Mar 3, with Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong, Rawat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO, or OrBorJor), Chantana Sitthiphan Chief of Phuket Cultural Office, and other relevant officials present.

Mr Pichet reminded people that the festival aims to honour the two Phuket Heroines and to increase the potential of cultural tourism in Phuket.

"This festival is the integration of our cultural diversity," he said.

The annual festival will start with a mass ordination of monks to honour the two Heroines at Wat Thepwanaram (Wat Manik), in Baan Manik, Thalang, on Mar 5.

On Saturday Mar 12, there will be a merit-making ceremony at Wat Muang Komanraphat.

From Mar 13 to 15, as is tradition, a light and sound show and historical play will be performed at Phuket Historical Park, for many years called Thalang Victory Field, in Baan Riang, Thalang.



Phuket officials are readying for the annual Heroines Festival. Photo: PR Phuket

Mr Rewat added that the festival also aims to promote tourism in Phuket by bringing history, way of life, local arts and culture to show to tourists.

A historical drama named '237 years – praise to the two Heroines Sri Thalang' will be performed each day on Mar 13-15, and will be free for all to enjoy, he said.

A report by the local office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) noted that the actress Jariya 'Nok' Anfone and more than 300 'honorary actors' of Phuket will be jointly performing at the festival.

In addition to the historical drama

performances, which are the usual highlight of the event, there will also be various folklore and Thai cultural performances, Rong Ngeng as well Manora performances from the Phuket Provincial Cultural Office.

More than 200 stores of local food, OTOP goods will be working at the festival, while COVID-19 health and safety measures will be enforced throughout.

Tourists are welcome to join the event.

ROI RIM LAY RETURNS

Karon officials have announced a new Roi Rim Lay Seafood Festival

which will take place at Kata Beach on Mar 19-20. The event will be the second iteration of Roi Rim Ray in the Kata-Karon area.

Karon Mayor Jadet Wicharasorn on Mar 3 presided over a meeting to discuss preparations for the Roi Rim Lay to be held at Kata Beach. The meeting was held at Karon Municipality with representatives of relevant government agencies and local businesses present to hear the guidelines and get ready for the event.

Mayor Jadet said that the festival is aimed at promoting tourism and strengthening the fundamental

economy affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The chosen location for the festival is right on the beach, close to Karon Municipality building. As is tradition with Roi Rim Lay festivals, various food establishments will offer seafood dishes and Thai dishes to locals and foreign tourists alike.

There has been nothing said about any cultural performances and shows, though they are usually included in the program of Roi Rim Lay.

Roi Rim Lay festivals have been organised in Phuket since early 2021 to cheer up local people, entertain tourists and – last but even more importantly – to help food business operators, farmers and vendors to make some income in the days of challenge.

The most recent festival – Roi Rim Lay @ Valentine's Day – was held in Soi Palai on Feb 12-15. The fair did well as an event for local residents, but did not succeed in attracting foreign tourists because of the location being off the beaten track. Kata Beach in this regard looks more promising.

Of note, Kata has been one of the most heavily affected areas on the island due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact on tourism. Many shopfronts remain shuttered and showing signs of dilapidation following the closure of hundreds of businesses in the area.

UWC Thailand petitions against slaughterhouse

UWC THAILAND INTERNATIONAL School, located in Tambon Thepkasattri, Thalang, in northern Phuket, has filed a formal petition against a slaughterhouse covering several rai from being built within 400 metres of the school.

Foundation Board member Sirivipa Dusiyami Berger and Head of School Lural Ramirez submitted the petition to Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan at the new Phuket Provincial Hall on Mar 1.

The school administrators expressed their concern that construction of the slaughterhouse will have long-term environmental effects on people in the area, explained a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

The slaughterhouse is planned to be built on three to four rai approximately 300-400 metres from the school.

Both the planned slaughterhouse and UWC Thailand are within close proximity to the Khao Phra Thaeo Wildlife Sanctuary, the report added.

Vice Governor Amnuay formally received the written petition and said he would pass it on to the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office, which oversees the issuing of permits for slaughterhouse facilities.

"The petitioner does not have to worry because before the matter is presented to the Provincial Environment Board, the construction must pass an environmental impact report [EIA, Environment Impact



UWC Thailand Founder Board Member Sirivipa Dusiyami Berger and Head of School Lural Ramirez submitted the petition to Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan at the new Phuket Provincial Hall on Mar 1. Photo: PR Phuket

Assessment], Vice Governor Amnuay said.

"The committee must tell the relevant stakeholders to be notified," he added.

"The report [EIA] is to express opinions that all parties agree to allow society to move forward in a sustainable manner," Vice Governor Amnuay explained.

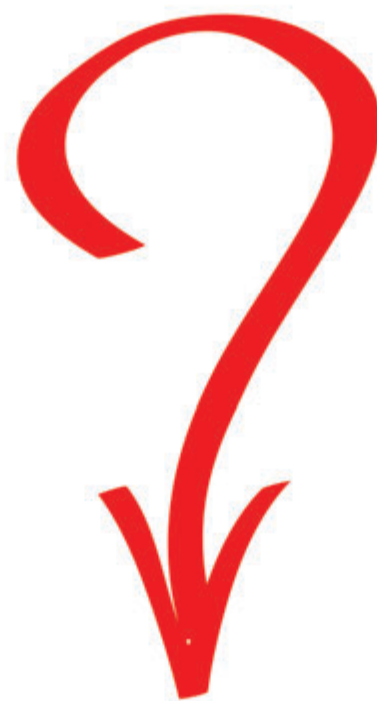
Issues regarding the construction of the slaughterhouse will be raised at a later meeting, he added.

Of note, Thailand does not have specific zoning regulations that mandate separated areas for manufacturing and production facilities from the general community.

Instead, the regulations vary depending on the facility being built. Hence the EIA becomes crucial in determining whether or not each production facility may be built at the planned location. *The Phuket News*



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Thailand kicks the can on data privacy

LEGAL MATTERS

Paul Crosio

Despite threats that the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) would be coming into force in June 2022, Thailand's Personal Data Protection Committee had changed its mind and has given a grace period to small-to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to comply with the Act's requirements.

This comes as a relief for smaller businesses which, since the Act was legislated in 2020, have continuously expressed their concerns about complying with its provisions pleading financial hardship and economic difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As discussed in our infographic, PDPA means significant investments in technology, systems and staff – all of which are out of reach of many SMEs struggling with COVID travel restrictions, and in an economy where the timing of recovery is uncertain.

While the government acknowledges that gearing up towards compliance may be daunting for smaller businesses, it recognises the importance of consumer's

owning their personal data. While granting a grace period for small businesses can be seen as a compromise, the move does little to address the fundamental issue SMEs have about PDPA compliance – the lack of resources, training, awareness and qualified personnel.

Better support for SMEs

is needed to make the most out of the PDPA rollout

Despite widespread publicity around the upcoming Act, many SMEs in Thailand still don't know their obligations under the PDPA and the significant penalties for non-compliance. This isn't unusual as an EU survey conducted by the GDPR.

EU in 2019 found that approximately half of SMEs in Spain, the United Kingdom, France and Ireland were not GDPR compliant a year into its implementation. According to employers' organisations, the initial rollout of the regulation disproportionately disadvantaged SMEs as they faced greater difficulties in

assessing whether they were data controllers or processors, implementing control systems, finding qualified personnel to monitor these systems and having sufficient legal understanding to inform customers of their rights and obligations under the Act.

SMEs in Thailand face similar challenges during the rollout of the PDPA; and many are rightly concerned about possible fines and penalties if they fail to comply with the upcoming legislation, especially since many of them have limited budgets to implement the changes. While there has been extensive coverage about the PDPA, a one-size-fits-all approach to advising businesses, this fails to take into consideration variations in sizes, technical ability and access to legal expertise. This not only unfairly puts smaller businesses at a disadvantage, but also defeats the idea of a consistent approach to protecting personal data.

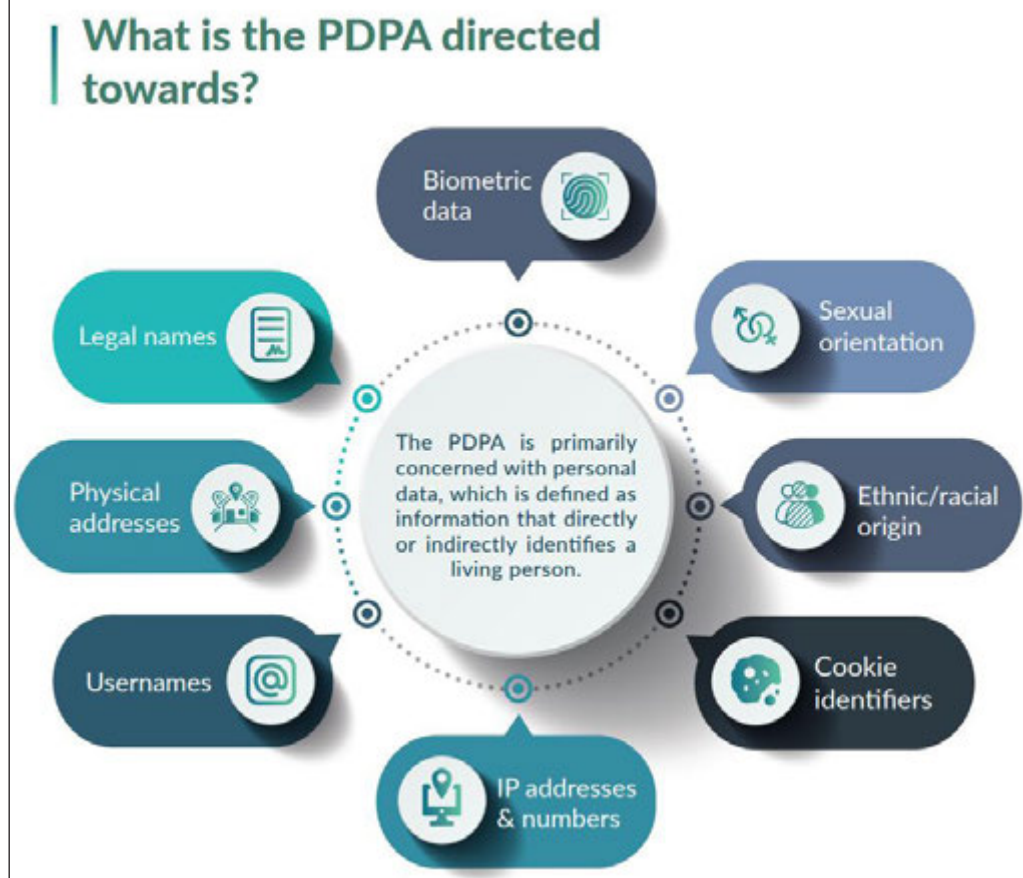
Providing SMEs a grace period undoubtedly provides them with a much-needed respite and time to comply with the upcoming regulations. However, this alone will not be enough to give SMEs the support they need

to comply with the Act. Hopefully, regulators will consider a multistakeholder approach and consider new ways to ensure that enforcement is inclusive to all businesses, regardless of size.

Silk Legal has advised many clients on the most cost-effective and efficient means of complying with the upcoming PDPA. The worst situation is delaying compliance until it becomes urgent and additional money and resources are needed to put together a response. We suggest a considered approach to PDPA compliance starting with an audit of information usage and process and a phased systems and technology overhaul. SMEs have had this last-minute reprieve but should not expect another.

Paul Crosio is a Partner at Silk Legal & founding partner of Silk Advisory. He is a practicing Australian lawyer with over two decades of corporate experience in turn-around management in Thailand and abroad.

For more information, please contact info@silklegal.com.



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Positive sentiment predicted for Songkran

TOURISM OPERATORS expect improving domestic sentiment for the upcoming Songkran holiday despite a sagging economy and virus outbreak that continue to derail growth in the sector.

The festival and school holiday is a peak period for domestic tourism as families plan summer trips to beaches or nearby destinations, while millennials look to take part in the new trend of camping vacations, said Krit Patarapal, managing director of PK Exhibition, the organiser of the Thai Teaw Thai tourism fair.

He said tourism sentiment for Songkran remains positive as long as there is not another lockdown.

The Thai Teaw Thai fair features 650 tourism operators and expects to generate B100 million in transactions from March 3-6, reported the *Bangkok Post*.

Mr Krit said spending might fall as operators offer cheaper prices or bundle packages with the government's stimulus measures.

Nuntaporn Komonsittivate, head of commercial operations at Thai Lion Air, said the Level 4 COVID-19 alert and high daily caseloads might impact travel sentiment, but rising new bookings show



Tourists relax on the beach in Phuket on Feb 12. Photo: Bangkok Post

people are not panicking and have confidence in airlines' preventive measures as well as their own self-protection.

The airline's frequency during the first two months this year averaged 400 flights per week, with an average load factor of 80%.

Advance bookings for March already reached 40%, she said.

Ms Nuntaporn said March would be a buffer month to contain the virus before Songkran, when people will likely flock to hometowns even if water splashing is prohibited.

She said the government should not impose another lockdown, but if such a measure is necessary, the state should listen to the private sector before deciding on a course of action.

HOT DEAL SEEKERS
 Local tourists, which contribute around 60-70% of revenue

at Phuket-based tour operator Love Andaman, have shifted to last-minute deals to grab the cheapest prices.

Thais monitor possible government restrictions before making any Songkran decisions, said founder and chief executive Torphong Wongsathienchai.

Weaker purchasing power, higher operating costs and an intense price war have dampened domestic tourism, while demand is limited when compared with the available supply, he said.

Those with high spending power have shifted to overseas travel after more countries lifted travel restrictions.

Mr Torphong said his customers average 400-500 per day during weekends, or half the average pre-pandemic daily rate.

Popular routes include the Similan and Surin islands, Koh Phi Phi, Koh Khai and Maya Bay, as the bay opened for tourists on Jan 1 after being closed for 3½ years.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has directly affected tourism, with the cancellation of two familiarisation trips from Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan planned for this month, he said.

Bangkok Post

Russian embassy urges Thais not to join the fight

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The embassy of Russia in Bangkok has warned Thai citizens against volunteering to fight alongside Ukrainians.

The embassy posted a statement on its Facebook account on Saturday (Mar 5) that the Russian Defence Ministry strongly advises against such participation in foreign military campaigns.

Last week, Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky published an appeal on the government's Facebook account urging foreign citizens to help the country fight against Russia's invasion.

"The President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy is addressing all citizens of the world, friends of Ukraine, peace and democracy. Anyone who wants to join the defense of Ukraine, Europe and the world can come and fight side by side with the Ukrainians against Russia," the post said.

The appeal resonated with a group of Thais who stated



A group of Thai men show evidence of their military experience on Witthayu Road where the Ukrainian embassy is located. Photo: Arnun Chonmahatrakool

they were more than willing to volunteer.

Dej, 39, a volunteer ranger from Narathiwat, said he has followed the news about the Russia-Ukraine conflict and felt upset over Russia's invasion, which he described as like an adult bullying a small child, prompting him to want to volunteer to fight with Ukraine against Russia.

"I hate to see strong people harassing weak ones. I am ready to quit as a volunteer ranger and fly to Ukraine if I am recruited to join the fight," he said.

He said he was trained in using weapons, though he still has to find money for travel expenses and air tickets.

Tack, 39, from Phetchabun also said he would gladly volunteer, likewise Golf, 31, a former army conscript, who said he arrived at the Ukrainian embassy on Witthayu Road to enquire about recruitment.

He passed on the information to his friends who have now formed a group to stand by Ukraine.

About 20 Thais turned up at the Ukrainian embassy

last Thursday (Feb 4) to seek information about the recruitment process, and they formed a Line group named "volunteer soldiers to Ukraine" to share information.

One problem, however, is that many of those interested lack basic weapons training, while some are former conscripts but have no experience in actual battle, sources said.

According to a notice posted outside the embassy, applicants are required to submit documents, including proof of military training, via email to the embassy's second secretary.

The notice also said volunteers must pay for their own travel expenses and other costs.

The embassy dismissed as baseless information shared on social media that volunteers will be granted Ukrainian citizenship and other rewards after the conflict.

The embassy of Russia says that under international humanitarian law such mercenaries do not qualify as combatants and cannot be granted prisoner-of-war status.

Government aims to control oil prices

BANGKOK

PRIME MINISTER Prayut Chan-o-cha has urged the public to cut back on energy consumption, especially when using private cars, amid soaring oil prices, adding the government would do its best to cushion the impact.

His call on Monday (Mar 7) came as the price of Brent crude oil went over US\$130 (about B4,200) per barrel, surpassing the record of \$128 in 2012.

Prayut said the government has been monitoring the situation, and the soaring prices are a pressing issue the government will address as it finds appropriate measures to cushion the impact.

"We're urging everyone to help save energy as much as possible, especially in the use of private cars," he said. "We've already taken steps to address the rising prices, but what should we do if they continue when we have a limited budget?"

Earlier, the government decided to cut the diesel excise tax by B3 per litre, off the current B5.99, until May 20 to alleviate the impact of



Retail oil prices in Bangkok on Monday (Mar 7). Photo: Wichan Charoenkiatpakul

high energy prices.

Relief measures to help cushion the impact were expected to be proposed at a National Energy Policy Committee meeting on Wednesday (Mar 10).

Government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said the committee, headed by Prayut, will mete out measures and propose them to the cabinet for approval on Mar 15.

"The challenges facing Thailand and other countries – the COVID-19 pandemic, global inflation and the Ukraine-Russia war – are unprecedented and are driving fuel prices and [impacting] the costs of transport and consumer goods," Mr Thanakorn said.

Bangkok Post

Over 2mn elderly not vaxxed as Songkran holiday looms

BANGKOK

THE DEPARTMENT OF DISEASE Control has urged more than 2 million elderly people to get COVID-19 shots before the Songkran festival as infections may soar during the festive period when families reunite across the nation.

Dr Sophon Iamsirithavorn, the department's deputy chief, said on Saturday (Mar 5) the department has voiced strong concern that 2.17mn senior citizens still have not received any COVID-19 vaccines, meaning their health could be jeopardised if they get infected.

"Getting vaccinated can save their lives and certainly minimise any severe symptoms if they catch COVID," he said, citing statistics that show that two doses plus a booster means they are 41 times less likely to die if they contract the disease.

He said 928 elderly people have died from COVID in Thailand over the past two months, most of whom were not vaccinated.

"A large percentage of the elderly demographic in Thailand is now vaccinated with at least one shot, with coverage now extending to 83% of the elderly population, or 10.54mn people," he said.

"But more than 2mn people in that age bracket still haven't had any shots at all. They need to get vaccinated as quickly as possible," Dr Sophon added.

"We don't want to see a tragic loss of life



Nurses vaccinate elderly people against COVID-19 on their row bus in Samut Prakan. Photo: Somchai Poomlard

among older generations of families due to this disease during the Songkran festival."

Statistics provided by the department show that out of every 100,000 senior citizens in Thailand aged 60-69, 521 contract COVID. The number is slightly lower for those above 70 at 444.

That being said, these two groups see the highest rate of death, with 0.62% and 2.86% respectively. This compares to a mortality rate of just 0.01% for a child aged 0-9 years or 0.03% for working people aged 30-39.

Family members are urged to take their elderly relations to get jabbed, Dr Sophon said.

Previously the department said that in a worst-case scenario, the Omicron-led pandemic could see over 100,000 cases a day unless people rigorously adhere to all preventive measures, with deaths capped at 50 a day yet 54 deaths were recorded last Friday (Mar 4) alone.

Bangkok Post



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Chuan chom is a familiar sight both in nurseries and outside Thai homes. Photo: Vengolis



Bougainvillea can grow in a pot. Photo: Karen



The crown of thorns is a popular choice in Thailand for its red, button-sized flowers. Photo: Alok Prasad

Top picks for container gardening



GREEN THOUGHTS

Patrick Campbell

Why bother with potted plants if you have a proper garden? After all, container plants are labour-intensive, need frequent watering, and will eventually get root-bound and need repotting. True, true and true again. But what if you live in a condominium with a cramped balcony, or rent a shophouse with only a concrete

parking space at the front of the property? Why not put plants in pots and create a mini-garden. Hey presto... Lots of Thais do.

Although I do have flower beds, I still enjoy having potted plants around the place. For a start, they are a moveable feast, and, both for their benefit and ours, can be relocated at will. Mine are ranged at intervals on the *sai lang* (sandwash) areas around the pool where they soften the angular outlines and provide constant colour; placed strategically in shadier areas of the house by the carport, they add a verdant touch to all that concrete.

But "verdant" is not always the

right word. For Thais love bright colours and most of their container displays – especially those in direct sunshine – are ablaze with reds, pinks, whites and yellows. Why? Because flowering shrubs generally flourish in sunny conditions. And there is one shrub that they covet above all others: the crown of thorns. For good reason. This plant – a native of Madagascar of all places, where it thrives in arid, rocky habitats – adapts better to life in a pot than any other. Moreover, *euphorbia milii* will endure everything Phuket can throw at it, blooms all year long, and is not fussy about soil conditions.

Most pot plants wilt after a day or two in strong sun. Not this one. Detractors can argue that the crown of thorn's milky sap is toxic, that it produces its leaves only sparingly, and that its woody stems are so spiny as to be positively dangerous. Indeed, planted as a hedge, it will, in time, form a dense burglar-proof barrier. But it is such a colourful, uncomplicated shrub. And there is one miniature version which I especially covet, on account of its tiny, button-sized red flowers, constant flowering and neat, evergreen foliage. Look out for it. It is a treasure.

Another shrub associated primarily with pots and planters is the desert rose (*adenium obesum*). Very slow-growing and consequently expensive to buy, the *chuan chom*, to provide its Thai moniker, is nonetheless a familiar sight both in nurseries and outside Thai homes, with its swollen, succulent grey stems and deep pink and white, trumpet-shaped blooms. There are also brilliant red varieties now, both with and without a white throat. Like the crown of thorns, it flowers year long and, as befits a plant from arid Arabian regions, will resist drought – if less stoically than the euphorbia.

The *adenium*'s origins make it heat tolerant, but, as a member of the oleander family, light watering and feeding through the dry season will promote leaf growth and prolong flowering. Deprived of water for extended periods, it will lose most of its leaves. And rotate the plant every week to ensure a neatly symmetrical shape. If it gets leggy, you can prune it. Both these plants are readily propagated from cuttings. Just allow them to dry out for at least a day so the milky latex has formed a hard seal, before inserting them in sandy loam.

Talking of dry soil, there are other

drought survivors, for example, most succulents and cacti, and so-called air plants such as orchids – all worth a whole article to themselves – and of course, the bougainvillea. Some Phuketians grow *fueng faa* exclusively in containers where, provided it inhabits a large enough pot, it will live up to its showy name of bougainvillea spectabilis. Indeed, in the dry season, spectacular bougainvilleas upstage everything in Phuket's gardens and nurseries. Witness the huge and venerable specimens which have several varieties grafted onto one root-stock, and which sport four or five colours. They may be worth several thousand baht. Moreover, they can be clipped and shaped without getting distressed – thus providing fine examples of the topiarist's craft. As with euphorbias and adeniums, do not overwater: the result will be an excess of foliage at the expense of flowers.

One more sun-loving plant that accepts restricted life in a pot is the *solenostemon*, more usually known as coleus. Apart from the fact that this soft, brittle-stemmed shrub is a sun-lover, it has nothing in common with the aforementioned woody plants. As a member of the nettle family, it has characteristic but brilliantly coloured foliage. The spikes of purplish flowers are relatively insignificant, but the bi-coloured, patterned leaves are spectacular – red, bronze, yellow and emerald green are common hues. Coleus will not tolerate xeric conditions or extreme temperatures. Indeed it will droop if the potting mix gets too hot or too dry. It's just letting you know...

The trick, as always with tropical gardening, is horses for courses. These shrubs and succulents are not only sun lovers, but have the added advantage, essential for all potted plants, of having relatively compact root structures and some tolerance both to indifferent and dry soil. So don't try bamboo in a container.

Dr Patrick Campbell can be contacted at his home Camelot, located at 59/84 Soi Saiyuan 13; Rawai; Phuket 83130. Tel: 66 076613227 (landline), 0655012326 or 0857827551 (mobile). His book "The Tropic Gardener", an indispensable guide to plants and their cultivation in Thailand, is available from Seng Ho bookshop in Phuket Town or Delish in Rawai, or arrange a copy to be delivered by emailing him at drpaccampbell@gmail.com.



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Batman: Back in black

David Griffiths

Gotham's caped crusader Batman has taken on many different personas on screens over the years. From the campy Adam West years in the '60s through to the more serious adaptations brought to the screen by directors Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan. Of course actors George Clooney, Val Kilmer and Ben Affleck have had less successful attempts at wearing the famed black mask, but now star Robert Pattinson (*'Twilight'*) has teamed up with director Matt Reeves (*'War for the Planet of the Apes'*) to bring the darkest adaption of the famed comic book hero to the screen.

Reeves takes the story of Batman right back to where it began in Detective Comics way back in 1939. In *'The Batman'* Reeves portrays the character as a troubled young man determined to not only bring peace to Gotham City but to solve the mystery of his parent's murder.

Batman (Pattinson) questions whether or not he is making a difference to the crime rate in Gotham, he has two allies in his butler Alfred (Andy Serkis – *The Lord of the Rings*) and Police Detective James Gordon (Jeffrey Wright – *The French Dispatch*).

Batman/Bruce Wayne jumps straight onto the case to unmask The Riddler but soon finds himself in the underbelly of Gotham – a place ruled by the likes of gangsters like Oswald Cobblepot (Colin Farrell – *In Bruges*) and Carmine Falcone (John Turturro – *Barton Fink*). Clouding his judgement even more is the arrival of Catwoman/Selina Kyle (Zoe Kravitz – *Mad Max: Fury Road*) who seems to be friend one moment and foe the next.

What Reeves has done with the world of Batman is nothing short of spectacular. It may not be the



Photo: imdb

cinematic masterpiece that Nolan's *The Dark Knight* was but here Reeves makes Gotham look the way fans of the early comic book series have always imagined it. Here Gotham is a dark, Gothic-styled city where it seems to constantly rain. For once a filmmaker seems to have captured the essence of Gotham that so many comic book artists have drawn on the page over the years.

That tone seeps right through. Meanwhile, in-

stead of being other-worldly comical villains, for Reeves the criminals are natural-looking gangsters – and that completely changes this Gotham from anything we have seen on the big screen before.

Of course the question that everybody wants answered though is what Robert Pattinson is like as Bruce Wayne and Batman. People have been unfairly harsh on Pattinson over the years, largely due to his portrayal of Edward Cullen in the *Twilight* franchise. Since then though Pattinson has put in some worthy acting performances in films such as *The Lighthouse* and *Remember Me*. Pattinson brings that A-Grade acting to his role here. His portrayal of the troubled and deeply depressed Bruce Wayne adds to the Gothic style of the film, while he also handles the action sequences with enough skill to make you believe that he plays a pretty decent Batman.

Zoe Kravitz is also a standout as a more believable Catwoman, but the stars who steal the limelight here are Colin Farrell and Paul Dano. Dano portrays the crazed Riddler sensationally well, just look at his portrayal of the killer in *Prisoners*, while Hollywood's forgotten man, Colin Farrell, is unrecognisable in his role of The Penguin.

The Batman is perhaps the closest visual representation of the early comics that we have ever seen on the big screen. Over the past few years we have seen TV's Gotham move away from the superhero vibe and capture a more 'gangster' element to the franchise, and Reeves takes that notion and makes it even more dark, foreboding and cinematic. *The Batman* is pure cinema magic from a visionary director who has just made his mark on a long-running franchise.

The Batman is currently screening in Phuket and is rated G.

4/5 Stars

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POP QUIZ

1. Which river runs through Baghdad?
2. At the minimum, how hot is molten lava?
3. What is Chuck Norris's real first name?
4. Which US President featured on the US\$500 bill (no longer in circulation)?
5. Which is the only sea without any coasts?

Answers below, centre

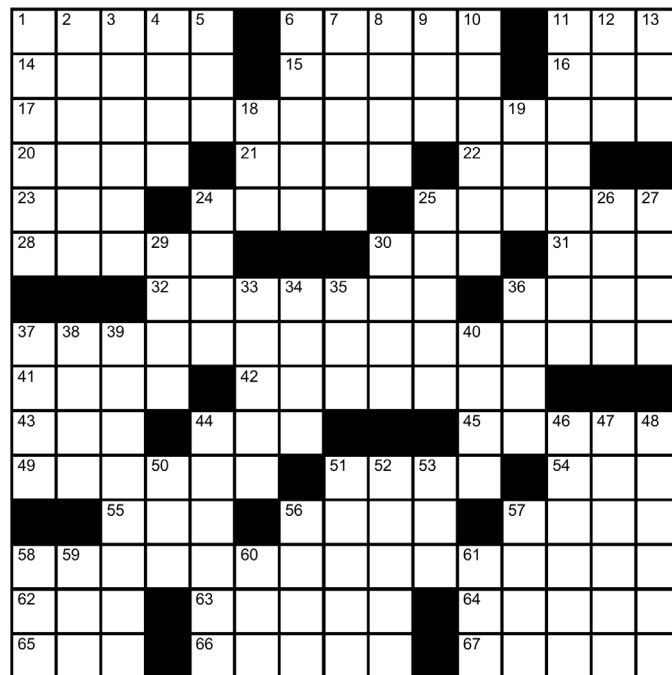
SUDOKU

Medium

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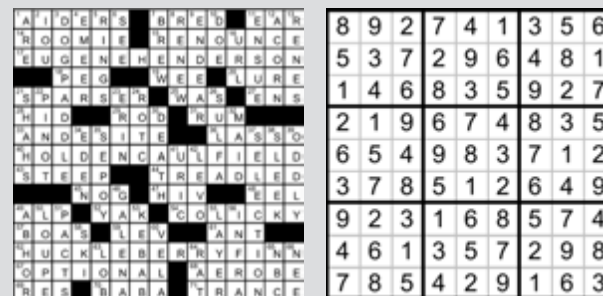
Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
1. Italian beverage
 6. Black
 11. Calphalon product
 14. They were created in 1912
 15. Mountaineer's tool
 16. ___ Rancho (suburb of Albuquerque)
 17. Be in charge
 20. Go for
 21. Egg
 22. Faint
 23. Bass, e.g.
 24. Castle part
 25. Diminutive
 28. Turning chisel accompanier
 30. N.B.A.'s Unseld
 31. Be off base
 32. ___ physics
 36. Carbamide
 37. Fancy frocks
 41. Indian tourist site
 42. Annoying
 43. Debate position
 44. Ribosomal ___
 45. Dummkopf
 49. Six-line poem
 51. Achievement
 54. ___ power
 55. Cal. col.
 56. Ostrichlike birds
- Down**
1. Lite
 2. Interstice
 3. Afternoon service
 4. Cause for a lawsuit
 5. D.C. setting
 6. It doesn't hold water
 7. Carry on
 8. Road shoulder
 9. ___-tzu
 10. Oozes
 11. Chief
 - administrative officers
 12. Cause of inflation?
 13. Discouraging words
 18. Furrow maker
 19. Remain unused
 24. Set aside
 25. California's San ___ Bay
- 26. Elder, e.g.**
27. Pitching stats
 29. Maori war dance
 30. Rings up?
 33. ___ the town
 34. 100 krus
 35. Breed
 36. Drew on
 37. Beanies
 38. Beast
 39. Ocular problem
 40. Discharge
 44. Enter again
 46. Insect stage
 47. Idle
 48. Hamlet et al.
 50. Call on
 51. ___ Thieves
 52. Chart holder
 53. Old English character
 56. Corn dish
 57. Atlas stat
 58. Do-it-yourselfer's purchase
 59. Party time, maybe
 60. Buttermilk morsel?
 61. Common contraction



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

painting only is all that Vincent van Gogh sold during his lifetime; a few months before he died.

3

times more likely to get a potential date's phone number is a man if he has a dog with him.

6

years is how much the average person spends dreaming during his or her lifetime.

7

percent of American adults believed chocolate milk comes from brown cows, according to a 2017 study.

30

US cents per day is all it costs for US internet providers to provide the average person internet access.

38

hours every year is how long the average American spends stuck in traffic.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Maya Bay, 2022. Photo by Chutharat Plerin

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

This week in history

Mar 11, 2011

An earthquake measuring 9.0 in magnitude strikes 130km east of Sendai, Japan, triggering a tsunami killing thousands of people and the second-largest nuclear accident in history, and one of only two events to be classified as a Level 7 on the International Nuclear Event Scale.

Mar 12, 1881

Andrew Watson, born in British Guiana, makes his Scotland debut as the world's first black international football player and captain.

Mar 13, 1325

Recognised date of the founding of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan on a small island in Lake Texcoco by the Mexica. It becomes Mexico City in 1521.

Mar 14, 1961

A USAF B-52 'Stratofortress' bomber crashes near Yuba City, California, whilst carrying nuclear weapons. The crew began to bailout at about 7,000 feet (2,100m). The pilot bailed out at 4,000 feet (1,200m).

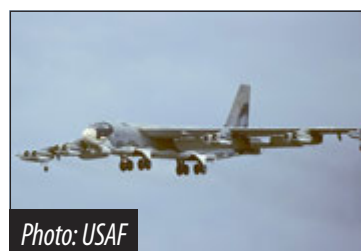


Photo: USAF

Mar 15, 44 BC

Julius Caesar, Dictator of the Roman Republic, is stabbed to death by Marcus Junius Brutus, Gaius Cassius Longinus, Decimus Junius Brutus, and several other Roman senators on the Ides of March.

Mar 16, 1995

Mississippi formally ratifies the Thirteenth Amendment, becoming the last state to approve the abolition of slavery. The Amendment was officially ratified in 1865.

Mar 17, 1824

The Anglo-Dutch Treaty is signed in London, dividing the Malay archipelago. As a result, the Malay Peninsula is dominated by the British, while Sumatra and Java and surrounding areas are dominated by the Dutch.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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Members. 900 THB for non-members. Accommodation: JW Marriott Resort & Spa offers an additional 10% discount on the room rate inclusive of Breakfast for stays booked & consumed between the 27th to 30th January 2022. For reservation, see <https://bit.ly/AustChamThailandPromotion>, or contact JWPhuket-Sales@marriotthotels.com

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Skål Phuket Dinner at Baan Rim Pa

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY LUNCHEON

Another sell out event organised by the Good Shepard Phuket Town and Phuket Has Been good To Us. Walk the Walk and/or Talk the Talk was the theme of this years event held at Firefly Pool and Restaurant at The Pavilions Phuket on March 9, 2022. Getting out of the ballroom and into the great outdoors, there were two options available on the day: walk the walk meeting, a 5km walk through the jungle, or the talk the talk meeting and lunch. Special thanks to long time supporter of the IWD events Matthew Barclay, Australia's Consul-General to Phuket for his support.

WINDOW ON PHUKET

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Phuket student selected for international Judo comp

JUDO

KENNETH THONGSONG, a student at Blue Tree Phuket's Dojo Martial Arts Studio, has been selected to compete in the Asian Cadet & Junior Judo Championship 2022.

Kenneth took part in the Judo Youth Thai Nationals held by the Judo Association of Thailand under royal patronage at Judo Gymnasium, Rajvinit Bangkuan in Bangkok between Feb 16-17.

Participating in the Under-18 age group in the over 73kg, under 81kg weight category, Kenneth managed to qualify and will now take part in the major championship, which will be held between July 18-21.

"We are very proud of Kenneth for this important step as a representative of the Judo Youth Thai Nationals League to participate in such a prestigious international competition," commented Alexis Plantnard Gnorra, Dojo Martial Arts Studio Blue Tree Manager and International Judo, Jujitsu and Iron Man champion.

"He has been training with us for two years and has



Kenneth Thongsong. Photo: Dojo at Blue Tree Phuket

accumulated his experience from various National Judo and Jujitsu Competitions. This will be his first international competition that he will join competing alongside other competitors from many countries," Alexis added.

The Dojo made headlines previously after its students competed in the National Jiu-Jitsu championships in Bangkok in Nov 2020, successfully emerging with an incredible 18 medals.

"We won eight gold medals, nine silver medals and one bronze medal," an extremely proud Alexis said at the time.

Anyone interested in joining the variety of martial arts classes at The Dojo Studio at Blue Tree Phuket can contact via Facebook, Tel: 092 805 8527 or email: Dojo@Bluetree. fun. *The Phuket News*

Close competition expected at fifth PYC Sailor's Regatta

SAILING

Joanna Matlub

The Sailor's Regatta returns to The Phuket Yacht Club (PYC) for its 5th year this weekend, with racing taking place from today to Sunday (Mar 11-13) inclusive.

This Phuket race is a friendly three-day sailing event around Chalong Bay and the surrounding southern islands, and is open to monohull and multihull yachts with an overall length over six meters.

"Although this Sailors Regatta will be a serious racing event, it will definitely still live up to its friendly, comradery and community feel," commented Race Director Warwick Downes.

"We are all here to enjoy the Regatta and make sure it is a fun social occasion for all involved."

Registration numbers this year remain solid with around 18 entries expected. Among these, there are international sailors who have managed to come in from Australia and the UK to take part, despite the fact that COVID has again hindered the ability for ease of international travel.

Organisers are hopeful for some exciting racing this year with increased competition, albeit friendly, due to four entered boats all being the same class Firefly Catamarans built by Mark Pescott, specifically for fast and exciting sailing in Phuket waters. The four are Twin Sharks,



Twin Sharks in action during last year's Regatta. Photo: Scott Murray

Voodoo, Surf Patrol and Blue Nose and the competition is expected to be very close.

Matt McGrath will be the Principal Race Officer for the weekend and the notice of race and sailing instructions are posted on the PYC website.

FULL SCHEDULE:

Friday (Mar 11) - First start scheduled for 10:30am Race Day 1

Saturday (Mar 12) - First start scheduled for 10:30am Race Day 2

Sunday (Mar 13) - First start scheduled for 10:30am Race Day 3 followed by dinner and prizegiving at the PYC at 6:30pm

A follow up event is planned over Songkran with a sail from Koh Phi Phi to Koh Lipe in April (dates to be confirmed). Further details will be published on the PYC Facebook page shortly.

PYC RUN EVENTS:

The Sailor's Regatta is one of three major

yearly races fully run by the PYC. It was originally set up to offer an alternative choice for racing to their members, to support the local sailing community and to help contribute to and support sailing in Phuket. The other two major events run by the PYC each year include the Multihull Solutions Regatta in June, and the Jai Dee Regatta in November. In addition to this, the PYC also supports other regattas across Thailand each year.

SAILOR'S REGATTA 2021 WINNERS:

Multihulls: "Twin Sharks" skippered by John Newnham

Monohulls: "Phoenix" skippered by Niels Degenkolw

Pulse 600's: "Pulse Gray" skippered by Paul Baker

Platu 25's: "The Wolf" skippered by Kristen Durward

Haas drop Mazepin, Russian GP deal terminated

FORMULA ONE

RUSSIAN DRIVER NIKITA MAZEPIN said he was "very disappointed" at being dropped by Formula One team Haas due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and hinted he might take action over "this unilateral step."

The 23-year-old had been looking forward to a second season with the American team but Haas announced on Saturday (Mar 5) they had terminated his contract and that of Russian title sponsor Uralkali.

Uralkali, a group specialising in potash, has Mazepin's father, Dmitry Mazepin, as its non-executive director.

"Haas F1 team has elected to terminate with immediate effect, the title partnership of Uralkali, and the driver contract of Nikita Mazepin," the team said on their website.

"As with the rest of the F1 community, the team is shocked and saddened by the invasion of Ukraine and wishes for a swift and peaceful end to the conflict."

Mazepin said he had been prepared to abide by the governing body FIA's ruling that Russian drivers would have to compete under the FIA flag and in a "neutral capacity."

"I am very disappointed to hear that my F1 contract has been terminated," he wrote on Instagram.

"While I understand the difficulties, the ruling from the FIA plus my ongoing willingness to accept the conditions proposed in order to continue were completely ignored and no process was involved in this



F1 team Haas has dropped Russian driver Nikita Mazepin due to the conflict in Ukraine. Photo: AFP

unilateral step. I will have more to say in the coming days."

Haas dropped the Uralkali branding from their cars during the last day of pre-season testing in Barcelona last Friday and team principal Guenther Steiner had said at the time they were "financially ok".

The Haas decision follows F1's announcement on Mar 3 that they had terminated a contract with the organisers of the Russian Grand Prix.

The Black Sea resort of Sochi has hosted the race since the first running in 2014 but Saint Petersburg was due to replace it as the venue in 2023.

"F1 can confirm it has terminated its contract with the Russian Grand Prix promoter meaning Russia will not have a race in the future," F1 said in a statement.

AFP



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Dynamic Diaz offers Reds fresh dimension

FOOTBALL

Kieran Canning

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp is still laughing off the idea his side could win a historic quadruple of trophies, but he does concede he has the best squad during his tenure at Anfield.

One of the reasons for that bold statement is the recent arrival of Colombian winger Luis Diaz, who has boosted the German's attacking options for the second half of the season.

The Reds ended a 10-year wait to win a domestic cup competition on Feb 27, beating Chelsea on penalties to win the League Cup.

They are heavy favourites to reach the quarter-finals of the Champions League and are into the FA Cup quarter-finals.

A seven-game winning streak in the Premier League has also rekindled the Premier League title race with Manchester City, which seemed lost at the turn of the year.

January could have



Liverpool's Luis Diaz celebrates after scoring against Norwich in a 3-1 win on Feb 19. Photo: AFP

wrecked Liverpool's season, with Egypt's Mohamed Salah and Senegal's Sadio Mane heading off to the Africa Cup of Nations, where Senegal beat Egypt on penalties in the final.

But Diaz arrived from Porto towards the end of the transfer window for a fee that could rise to £50 million (B2.1 billion), refreshing Klopp's attacking options as he mounts a four-pronged challenge.

Much of the success of the

Klopp era has been dependent on attacking triumvirate of Salah, Mane and Brazil forward Roberto Firmino.

But all three are out of contract at the end of next season, at which point they will all be beyond 30.

"It was necessary, we cannot rely on these boys," said Klopp after Diaz starred in last Saturday's 1-0 win over West Ham.

"You need to bring in qual-

ity and fresh energy. That's what we tried and it looks like it worked out.

"The boys have now really proper quality in depth, but we cannot play all competitions and go far in the competitions if we don't have this depth – there is no chance.

"You can do it for a year when you are lucky with injuries, but I think we had years where Bobby, Sadio and Mo played pretty much all the games."

Diaz, 25, has scored just once in eight appearances for Liverpool, but he has been on the winning side in all of them as his direct running with the ball and pressing off it have fitted seamlessly into Liverpool's style.

Even players who have gone on to enjoy huge success at Anfield such as Andy Robertson and Fabinho have initially been given months to settle and meet Klopp's demands.

"When we saw him play for Porto we thought that is exactly what we want him to do as well," said Klopp. "He looks like a Liverpool player."

AFP

Jones hails Ireland quality ahead of Six Nations clash

RUGBY

ENGLAND BOSS EDDIE Jones says Ireland are "the most cohesive side in the world", installing Andy Farrell's men as favourites for tomorrow's (Mar 12) Six Nations showdown at Twickenham.

Jones attempted to heap the pressure onto his opponents, suggesting that their more seamless preparation time helps them in the autumn and Six Nations Test windows.

Ireland are second in the Six Nations table after two wins in three matches, three points behind unbeaten France. England are third, one point behind Farrell's men.

"It's an important week in the tournament," Jones said on Monday (Mar 7). "There are three teams left in the tournament and we're lucky enough to be one of those three.

"Ireland are favourites for the game. They've been in very good form in the autumn, they're a very settled team, and very well coached by Andy Farrell.



Ireland are the 'most cohesive side in the world,' says Eddie Jones. Photo: AFP

"They are literally, and I say this without any hesitation, the most cohesive side in the world.

Lock Iain Henderson has returned to the Ireland squad ahead of the game after he was ruled out of their last match against Italy in Dublin when he tested positive for COVID-19.

Elsewhere, Scotland have called up Adam Hastings for their clash with perennial strugglers Italy in Rome tomorrow.

The Gloucester fly-half was a surprise omission from Gregor Townsend's initial squad but has now been added to the group ahead of the fourth round of fixtures.

Wales host current leaders France in Cardiff this evening (3am Saturday, Phuket time). AFP

Premier League prepares to end Russian TV deal over Ukraine

FOOTBALL

THE PREMIER LEAGUE IS SET TO cancel its television broadcast contracts in Russia following the country's invasion of Ukraine.

Premier League chief executive Richard Masters last week said the current deal with Russia was "under review" due to the invasion.

Reports from Sky Sports on Monday (Mar 7) claimed lawyers have been told to start the process of ending broadcast agreements with Russian partners and an announcement was said to be imminent.

The Russian television rights for the current season are owned by a company called Rambler and broadcast on streaming platform Okko in a deal reportedly worth around £6 million (B260mn) per year to the Premier League.

It came after the Chinese rights holders of the Premier League refused to air its football matches last weekend (Mar 5-8) as the games showed collective solidarity with Ukraine.

Captains of all Premier League club wore armbands in the colours of Ukraine and took part in a moment of reflection and solidarity ahead of kick-off which was featured in international broadcast feeds.

But two Chinese rights holders for the league – streaming platforms iQiyi Sports and Migu – decided not to air the matches.

It comes after the Winter Paralympics opening ceremony in Beijing last Friday, when state broadcaster CCTV avoided translating part of International Paralympic Committee president Andrew Parsons' forceful remarks



A "Football Stands Together" message is displayed in the colours of the Ukrainian flag before the Manchester derby last Sunday (Mar 6). Photo: AFP

– when he mentioned "war" – even though he did not name Russia or Ukraine.

The Premier League terminated a lucrative broadcasting contract with streaming service PPTV in China in 2020, after it reportedly failed to make a £160 million payment due as the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

In 2019, CCTV dropped an Arsenal v Manchester City match from its programme after Gunners midfielder Mesut Ozil expressed support for mainly Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang.

On Tuesday (Mar 8), Bayern Munich's Polish international striker Robert Lewandowski cut ties with sponsor Huawei amid claims the Chinese tech giant has been helping Russia secure their network against cyber attacks following the invasion of Ukraine.

"The world cannot accept what is happening there. I hope the whole world will support Ukraine," said Lewandowski. AFP

Phuket News

English Premier League Predictions

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Sport

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Phuket readies for Sailor's Regatta > p14

WARNE IN A MILLION

Cricket world left floored after sudden death of 'King of Spin'

RIP Shane Warne. Photo: Mark Nolan / AFP via Getty Images



CRICKET

AFP

The cricket world was shocked to the core and left in mourning last Friday (Mar 4) after it was confirmed Shane Warne had died of a heart attack aged 52 while on holiday on Koh Samui.

Australian Warne mixed legendary cricket deeds with lurid headlines away from the pitch in an extraordinary 15-year Test career.

The greatest leg-spinner of them all carved out a flamboyant lifestyle cast outside the mould of a traditional cricketing icon, often putting himself at odds with the game's purists.

While his discipline, passion and sheer talent drove him to the 708 Test wickets in a 145-Test career that made him the scourge of batsmen worldwide, the tubby blonde kid who became a superstar did things his way.

Along with flowers laid by his statue at the Melbourne Cricket Ground last Saturday, there was a can of beer, a packet of cigarettes and a meat pie – a nod to the unconventional sporting lifestyle that won him legions of fans on and off the field.

"Shane was one of our nation's greatest characters," Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said. "His humour, his passion, his irreverence, his approachability

ensured he was loved by all."

Warne is entrenched in Australia's sporting pantheon – in the eyes of many he is second only to cricket's immortal Don Bradman.

He not only resurrected the waning art of leg-spin, but became the first bowler to take 700 Test wickets and delivered the most famous ball in the sport's history.

'BALL OF THE CENTURY'

Warne posted inauspicious figures of 1-150 in his 1992 Test debut but knuckled down under spin guru Terry Jenner. Eighteen months later, Warne riveted the cricketing world with the "ball of the century" against England.

Warne's first leg-break delivery in an Ashes Test turned viciously to bamboozle England's Mike Gatting at Old Trafford in 1993, heralding the arrival of a cricketing superstar.

He was a master of mind games, targeting batsmen ahead of a series and warning he was working on a new mystery ball to bowl out his "bunnies" in the opposition line-up.

He gave a man-of-the-match performance when Australia won the World Cup in 1999, and was known for a sharp and inventive cricketing brain which saw him long touted as Test skipper.

But even Warne himself once described his life as a soap opera, such was the litany

of off-field controversies.

"Warnie", also nicknamed "Hollywood", survived several scandals and pursued an energetic love life which is widely thought to have cost him the Australian captaincy.

In 1998 it emerged that Warne and Australian teammate Mark Waugh had been fined three years earlier for supplying information to an Indian bookmaker, and he was stripped of the Australian team vice-captaincy in 2000.

A series of infidelities culminated in a public break-up from his wife of 10 years, Simone, with whom he had three children. At one point he was engaged to British actress Liz Hurley.

And yet his performance

in Australia's failed Ashes campaign in England in 2005 is regarded by some pundits as the pinnacle of his career, when he overcame his disintegrating marriage and a tabloid frenzy to take 40 wickets.

He continued playing after ending his Test career in Jan 2007 and scripted a title triumph with a rag-tag Rajasthan Royals team in the Indian Premier League's first edition in 2008, highlighting his nous and motivational skills.

Warne was inducted into the International Cricket Council Hall of Fame in 2013, just days after finally calling time on his playing career before transitioning into a respected commentator and pundit known for his forthright views.

Local star Annissa dreaming of the World Surfing League

SURFING

LOCAL ATHLETE ANNISSA Flynn is moving closer to her dream of competing in the Women's World Surfing League (WSL) after securing sponsorship with Rip Curl Thailand to compete in the 2022 qualifying series for the WSL at Kuta beach, Bali (Mar 8-9).

After having to undergo five full days of quarantine in Bali due to local COVID-19 rules, three-time world flow boarding champion Annissa finally got to surf on the unforgiving beach break on Monday (Mar 7).

Due to strict COVID regulations enforced in Phuket limiting

competition, Annissa had been out of the water for much of the last two years.

When competition was finally permitted, however, Annissa managed to shine, winning the women's short and long board categories at the Thailand Surfing Championship 2021 held at Nai Harn Beach in Rawai last October.

Prior to that, Annissa's most prominent success was when she won a silver medal in the women's short board competition at the SEA Games in the Philippines in Dec 2019.

She has been surfing since the age of eight, describing her relationship with the sport during

a previous interview with *The Phuket News* as a very personal one: "Like many things, surfing is very personal and it is hard to describe to someone who doesn't have that personal connection.

"For me the feeling of being out there in the water not thinking about anything is very calming, almost like a form of meditation. And the actual surfing itself is like standing on water, a truly magical feeling."

Annissa is keen to promote and advance the surfing scene in Thailand and to open up opportunities for Thai athletes to compete on the Asean and international scene by pioneering social media

and content creation based around healthy lifestyle, respecting one another and the marine environment and by simply having fun in the ocean.

She certainly seems to be hot on the wave of her idol, seven-time women's WSL world champion Stephanie Gilmore of Australia and *The Phuket News* wishes her all the very best for the future.

You can follow Annissa on Facebook and Instagram at www.instagram.com/annissa/

At time of press, the results of the Women's WSL qualifiers had not been officially released.

Ben Tirebuck



Surfing sensation Annissa Flynn. Photo: Rip Curl Thailand