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ON THE LINE



People queue for food at a handout organised by disciples of the Yuan Phueng Temple and volunteers of the Russian-espatrian supported Thailand Help group beside the Karon Health Centre earlier this month. Photo: Chalot Cheepsattayakorn / Thailand Help

TOURISM ECONOMY EXPERT WARNS PLUNGING INCOMES MAY SOON FALL BELOW POVERTY LINE

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A leading Phuket tourism economy expert has warned that plunging incomes from tourism in the coming months could easily see Phuket's tourism income per capita pushed below the provincial poverty line.

Assistant Professor Dr Chayanon Phucharoen, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, Prince of Songkla University (PSU) Phuket campus, revealed to *The Phuket News* this week that the dire forewarning was based on the inception report by the university.

The report had determined that

the forecasted "tourism revenue per capita" from tourists in the coming six months averaged about B3,711 per month, even with the multiplier effect – the amount the same money generates as income for other people as it passes through the economy.

Meanwhile, the 2019 poverty line of Phuket stands at an income of just B3,068 per month, Dr Chayanon said.

"In our simulation, the main variable was the number of Thai tourists. Our simulations compared the current situation with after the lockdown was lifted the first time [April 2020]," Dr Chayanon said.

"After the first lockdown was lifted there were about 2,000-3,000 people [domestic tourists] coming to Phuket each day, and that increased to

5,000-7,000 per day from September through November.

"We used those numbers to simulate the scenario after this latest lockdown was lifted [following the Samut Sakhon outbreak]. We found that the direct tourism income per registered capita in Phuket even in the best case scenario was about B1,963, which resulted in total tourism income per registered capita of B3,711 [presuming that all of the direct income circulated within the province only]," he said.

"However, if the number of tourists coming within the next six months is lower than the number after the first lockdown was lifted, this will be a difficult situation," Dr Chayanon warned.

In that case, "Even applying the 'tourism multiplier', the income is probably not over B3,000. Officials already knew this information, and they are trying hard to boost tourism," he said.

HEAVY IMPACT

Dr Chayanon pointed out the severe damage the COVID-19 pandemic had inflicted on Phuket's economy.

"Through a simple fact check with statistics from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, before the pandemic Phuket generated about B440 billion for the country each year, but only generated B108.46bn last year," he said.

However, about 91% of the income generated last year was realised from...

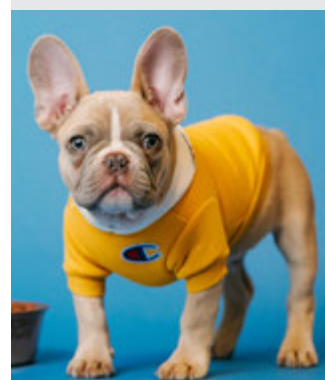
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Killer husband caught hiding in Phang Nga



LIFE PAGE 9

That's mine! Learn when not to interfere



SPORT PAGE 16

'Wonder Boy' Andrade aims for title shot



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News



The Peaks owner promises to 'take care' of buyers > p5

Dire warning over tourism incomes

Continued from page 1

...January to March, before the COVID-19 pandemic took significant hold. The rest of the year generated the remaining 9%, he explained.

"For example, B1.58bn was generated in December [2020], which was less than 3% of the B56bn generated in the same month the year before [2019]," Dr Chayanon noted.

"This is an inevitable fact: that Phuket's economy is a purely tourism-led growth economy, so we have low flexibility for this economic shock," he said plainly.

Dr Chayanon pointed out that the impact on Phuket spread beyond the island's borders. "Everything has a chain effect. This disruption in tourism revenue does not stop in Phuket, it spreads out to other provinces. From our statistics, we found that every B100 spent in Phuket contributes about B189 to the national economy," he said.

The tourism industry specifically has an intensive 'backward linkage', he noted. For example, hotels and restaurants significantly purchase their raw materials from the agriculture industry. From Feb-Jul every year, the revenue of the agriculture industry derived from Phuket tourism is approximately B10bn. "However, this value for this year is estimated as merely B400mn. When there is damage to this part [tourism], it also affects other parts [of the economy]," he said. Besides, tourism industries in our province is a relatively labour intensive industry, a disruption in the tourism industry would create massive unemployment.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS

"As a short-term solution, we all have to cooperate together to attract domestic tourists to the island, in order to keep our businesses and provincial economy going," Dr Chayanon urged.



Dr Chayanon delivering his dire prediction. Photo: PTA

The time for action is now, he said: "because Thai people love to travel to coastal destinations from February to April."

"We have to promote our unique features to attract people to come, especially the beaches, which are almost indigenous as when Phuket firstly appeared on the tourism map 30 years ago. Through natural rehabilitation over a year, we will become one of the impressive destina-

tions among Thai tourists," he added.

"At the same time, we also have to help those people who do not have any income. In the first outbreak, we did a very good job on helping local people, such as providing essential goods.

"I would say that this current situation is worse than the first outbreak because people have already spent nearly all of their savings. The 'Tu Pan Suk' sharing cabinets project

is needed more than the first time, while reducing expenses in each household is also necessary," he said.

DOWN THE ROAD

As a medium-term solution, Dr Chayanon urged the focus to be on the finding of concrete solutions for allowing international tourists to return to the island.

"We cannot stay still, we have to find a way to reopen and welcome foreign tourists. While finding a way to do this, we need to provide good services to domestic tourists in order to keep our businesses operating. Not only to save our province, but the whole country. If those tourism business operators cannot survive this storm, some competitiveness features [e.g authentic sightseeing, neighborhood nightlife] of Phuket tourism might be at risk.

"We have to find solutions. We have to find a way back

to generating cashflow, rather than waiting without hope," he said.

Dr Chayanon also warned that now is the time to look towards long-term solutions to protecting the island's economy from future "economic shock".

"This economic shock, or disruption, reminds and teaches us to look for new economic engines for Phuket, so that our economic structure can be more resilient and more agile to protect against further disruption or external shock," he said.

"This kind of economic crisis is unprecedented in Phuket," Dr Chayanon said.

"A good lesson learned from this pandemic is that we have to think of collective interest rather than self-interest. For example, if I am sick, I have to call off going to the party, as I can become a creator of a new cluster. If I still go to the party, it will affect my friends and the whole provincial economy," he noted.

Phuket push to revive economy

LEADING PHUKET TOURISM FIGURES and the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO, or *OrBorJor*) on Monday (Feb 8) announced a series of campaigns hoped to ramp up domestic tourism to Phuket to support ailing businesses until international tourists return.

The slew of domestic tourism campaigns were announced at a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall, chaired by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew.

The overall campaign proposed at the meeting carries the slogan, 'Discount Island. Eat Deliciously. Sleep Luxuriously, and See Nature,' explained Bhumikitti Ruktaengam, President of the Phuket Tourist Association (PTA).

"We should expand our target areas for Thai tourists to focus on Southern Thailand, and there must be special pricing and services for foods, transportation and accommodation," he said.

"Many hotels are now promoting their rooms with special prices to attract more visitors to Phuket. Most Thai tourists tend to travel in groups, so campaigns on stimulating tourism must be arranged wisely to target those groups of Thai visitors," he added.

"The PTA, working with the PPAO as the central coordinator, will create a platform with the purpose to revive Phuket's economy and tourism industry and there will be a roadshow activity as well," Mr Bhumikitti said.

Chernporn Karnjanasaya, President of the Federation of Phuket Industries, noted that just the cost of travelling to Phuket was a key factor among Thais deciding whether or not to come to Phuket on holiday.

"The price of travelling really matters in



Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew speaks to a representative of a local community co-operative at the meeting on Monday (Feb 8). Photo: PR Phuket

attracting visitors to come to Phuket.

Shops charging tourists higher prices was also an issue, she noted.

"For example, a campaign called 'Phuket One Price' should be set so that all businesses, both large and small, can gain benefit together," Ms Chernporn added.

"The campaign should be developed so that everyone can sell products at reasonable prices," she added.

Thanusak Phuengdej, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, said "The meeting today was to show that everyone agrees to work together to help restore the economy in the coming nine months."

"The most important thing in Phuket is to organise campaigns so that customers are satisfied and the operators can stay in business during this COVID-19 crisis," Mr Thanusak added.

Anuphap Wetwanitsanong, currently serving as the PPAO's Acting Deputy Director, said, "The PPAO would like to be the central organisation to coordinate with the provinces and the TAT [Tourism Authority of Thailand].

"The PPAO can do it. We will come to help with our full support."

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- Pre Qualified Bidders Notified Feb 24 2021
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- Finalists Notified Mar 31 2021
- Phase 3 Presentations May 1-4 2021
- Developer Selected May 12 2021



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COVID jabs crux of Oct 1 push

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Leading Phuket tourism and hospitality figures have revealed their plan to secure COVID-19 vaccinations independently in the hope of re-opening the island to tourism from Oct 1.

The consortium of leading Phuket businesses is already moving to secure COVID vaccinations from private sources, including some 40,000 doses from the Bangkok Hospital group, instead of waiting for the government to roll out its vaccination campaign.

The news came at a 'roundtable' discussion event held at the Hotel Indigo Phuket Patong on Jan 29, joined by many key Phuket tourism figures.

"The private sector in Phuket has emphasised the balance needed between controlling the virus outbreak and the economic development on the island," said Chernporn Karnjanasaya, President of the Federation of Phuket Industries.

"We have to thank the central government for the effectiveness of disease control. We also understand that the inability of the government to not be able to help Phuket as fast as the problems have happened," she said.

"However, Phuket has been one province that has had an important



Bhummikitti Ruktaengam at a meeting at Provincial Hall on Monday, where the Oct 1 plan was repeated officially to the heads of the Phuket Provincial Government, including Governor Narong Woonciew. Photo: PR Phuket

role for national tourism and the national economy for at least 20 years. For the current economic situation, if there is not a good strategy and effective management, the problems will become even worse," she added.

Dr Chayanon Pucharon, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies at the PSU Phuket Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, pointed out, "From research from PSU Phuket campus, people in Phuket are facing an 'acute crisis'."

Noting that many people across

the island were already below the poverty line, Dr Chayanon added, "The income of more people is likely to fall lower than the national poverty line."

Bhummikitti Ruktaengam, President of Phuket Tourist Association, explained, "The whole private sector altogether agrees to set October 1 as the date to start welcoming vaccinated tourists without the need to quarantine. If we miss this opportunity, it will not only make a massive impact on the economy, but

also create more social problems."

Kongsak Khoopongsakorn, President of the Thai Hotels Association Southern chapter, noted that the main tourist source markets for Phuket are European countries, where governments are already providing vaccines to their citizens.

"European tourists mostly spend about one to two weeks for each trip, and they like to travel in the fourth quarter of the year, which starts from October. Therefore, we have a clear and possible plan to welcome them. We will start promoting in April to let tourists make their plan and let our people get ready to welcome them," he said.

VACCINE CLARITY

Mr Bhummikitti explained that re-opening for tourism by Oct 1 depended on five factors, each dependent on clarity from the government on: 1) whether vaccinated foreign tourists needed to observe a quarantine, and if no quarantine were required, which vaccine will be recognised by the government; 2) the distribution of the vaccine for local residents and business operators in Phuket; 3) the approval for local administrative organisations to buy vaccines by themselves for their people; 4) the registration of other vaccine-producing companies, in order to be open to use a greater range of vaccines; and 5)

the approval for private companies to buy vaccines for their staff from private hospitals.

One of the key goals of the campaign, promoted under #phuketfirstoctober, was to make 70% of people, especially staff in the tourism industry on the island, to be vaccinated, Mr Bhummikitti said.

People needed to have two doses of vaccines before Sept 1 in order to have immunity, and definitely in order to welcome vaccinated tourists from Oct 1, he said.

Ms Chernporn noted, "The private sector has negotiated to buy vaccines from private hospitals, and at this stage [the private hospital] are calculating what can be provided. If the central government agrees with our plan, we will be vaccinated with the vaccines from Sinovac before Songkran [April 13]."

"We have discussed this together and concluded that staff in the tourism industry will spend their own money for the cost of the vaccines. For our future, we will invest by ourselves," she added.

Sarayuth Mallam, President of Phuket Tourism Industry Council, explained, "What we are waiting for from the government is approval to save Phuket. We do not ask for money anymore, but we ask for understanding, encouragement and approval to let us follow our plans. The rest, we will do ourselves."

Murder fugitive husband arrested in Phang Nga

POLICE HAVE ARRESTED Suchart Gunpai, 45, the missing husband of Sopa Thanimkarn, 39, whose body was found dumped beside the road south of Patong on Jan 29.

Officers arrested Suchart at a room of The Peace Resort in Tambon Lam Kaen, in Phang Nga, north of Phuket, at about 8:30am last Wednesday (Feb 3), Phuket Provincial Police Chief Maj Gen Pornsak Nuan-noo confirmed that afternoon.

Suchart was found with 113 pills of methamphetamine (*ya bah*) and 18 grams of crystal meth (*ya ice*), he added.

Suchart was wanted on an arrest warrant for the murder of Ms Sopa, along with separate charges for concealing a victim's body and for illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition.

Taken into custody by the Thai Muang Police, Suchart was brought back to Phuket by Phuket Provincial Police.

He confessed that he shot his wife Sopa Thanimkarn because of jealousy, Maj Gen Pornsak told the press.

Suchart told police that he and his friend Aseed Has-skarndi, 37, together placed Sopa's body in his motor-bike-sidecar (*rot saleng*) and dumped it on the roadside



Suchart Gunpai, 45, retraces his steps in killing his wife Sopa and disposing of her body. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

on the night before her body was found, Maj Gen Pornsak added.

At about 11am last Wednesday, Cherng Talay Police, led by Capt Chanasin Pratheep Na Thalang, arrested Aseed, who was staying at a house near the shack in Cherng Talay where Suchart and Ms Sopa were staying.

Aseed confessed to his role in disposing Ms Sopa's body, Maj Gen Pornsak said.

Aseed told police that he helped Suchart to wrap Ms Sopa's body and dump it beside the road, but he said he had no part in her murder, Maj Gen Pornsak continued.

At 2:30pm that day, police had Suchart and Aseed reenact their actions in killing Ms Sopa and dumping her body.

Gen Pornsak confirmed Aseed had been charged for his part in dumping Ms Sopa's body.

When her body was discovered, police found that she had suffered severe trauma to the back of the head, which police originally believed to have been inflicted by a heavy instrument.

However, Karon Police Chief Col Peerapong Chairaron later confirmed that the wound was later identified by forensic police to have been caused by a shotgun.

The firearm, fired at very close range, was most likely inflicted by a home-made gun made to fire shotgun cartridges (Thai Pradit), Lt Col Peerapong said.

"Several shots were fired into the head of the deceased," he said.

Ms Sopa's family held her funeral at Wat Tha Reua on Feb 2, with her cremation being held soon after midday.

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Wind 11 m/s

SUN FEB 14



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Low: +26°

Wind 7 m/s

MON FEB 15



High: +34°

Low: +26°

Wind 7 m/s

TUE FEB 16



High: +34°

Low: +26°

Wind 7 m/s

WED FEB 17



High: +34°

Low: +26°

Wind 11 m/s

THU FEB 18



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Man hits pregnant boss in face

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A man who punched his eight-month-pregnant boss in the face last week after she told him that he had failed probation as a parcel delivery man has publicly apologised for “blowing a fuse”, but also said that he would file a counter-complaint for defamation.

Sutthiporn Thanarit, 30, invited reporters to his home at Phuket Villa 3 in Wichit last Friday (Feb 5) to hear his explanation of the events that led to him punching Natthaporn ‘Fon’ Srithep, 23, manager of the Best Express courier service office in Baan Nabon, Moo 1, Chalong, in the face.

Ms Natthaporn is eight months pregnant, and was left with a black eye from the attack, during which Sutthiporn attempted to kick Ms Natthaporn.

Sutthiporn told reporters that “he did not mean to attack” Ms Natthaporn, although the entire incident was re-

**MAIN:** Sutthiporn with his wife ‘Sunny’ and their young child at their home in Phuket Villa 3. **INSET:** The attack. **Photo:** Eakkapop Thongtub / CCTV

corded on the office security CCTV, clearly showing him to be the aggressor.

He just needed an explanation about his salary being cut, he said.

“I was a parcel delivery man. For the last month, I delivered more than 1,000 parcels. The manager should have given me slightly more than B13,000. However, I received only B11,000. I wanted to know where the B2,000 had gone,” Sutthiporn said today.

“We had been arguing. I

always followed the company rules, but the manager was not happy with me because the manager brought her father and brother to work in the company,” he alleged.

“She wants her father to deliver parcels in the areas that I was responsible for,” he added.

Sutthiporn said he felt guilty for “blowing a fuse” and attacking Ms Natthaporn.

“I have to apologise, but people do not know how she spoke to me,” he said.

Sutthiporn confirmed that he had presented himself at Chalong Police Station at 10am Thursday last week (Feb 4) and admitted to the charges of attacking another person, trespass in the daytime and damaging property belonging to another person.

“I told the police that the manager had reported to the main branch that I often took leave. I always had a medical certificate to show her. Carrying and shouldering parcels left me with a sore back, so I had to receive medical treatment,” Sutthiporn said.

“Staff of the main branch told me that I had passed probation, so why did she tell me that I had failed? I never had any overdue parcels for my areas,” he said.

Sutthiporn asked for fairness from the media. “There are always two sides to a coin. I’d like you to listen. If I had gone to attack the manager, why would I take my child along?”

He added that he was struck with a plastic chair

during the incident, and Ms Natthaporn’s mother had hit him with an umbrella. He also said there were people already in the office waiting for him.

“I want justice for myself. Today, my wife and I will go to Chalong Police Station to file a complaint. The manager also hit me with a plastic chair while her mother hit me with an umbrella,” he said.

Sutthiporn’s wife, who asked to be named only as “Sunny”, repeated that her husband and the manager had been arguing for a long time.

She also played down a text message that she sent to Ms Natthaporn before Sutthiporn went to the office, saying in Thai, “I don’t think you will have a chance to give birth. Be careful, see you”.

“Sunny” said that she did not mean that Ms Natthaporn would lose her unborn child.

“All that was meant was that my husband wanted to clear everything with her before she gave birth. It did not mean that he would hurt her child at all,” she said.

Rewat confirmed PPAO President, ready to take office on Feb 15

THE ELECTION COMMISSION of Thailand (ECT) has dismissed the complaint filed against Rewat Areerob and confirmed him to be the new president of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO, or *OrBorJor*).

The Phuket office of the Election Commission of Thailand (PEC) initially declared Mr Rewat the winner of the election on Dec 21, confirming that he had secured 83,144 votes. Mr Rewat had bested second-placed contender Jirayut Songyot, who secured 50,914 votes, the PEC reported at the time.

However, last month the ECT had yet to confirm the election results for 44 provinces, including Phuket, as they were “still under investigation”. The ECT confirmed the election result for Phuket and other 22 provinces on Feb 2.

Mr Rewat has now confirmed to *The Phuket News* that he will take office on Feb 15.

“Right now, I am preparing project descriptions and details to present to the council members at the council meeting on Feb 15, my first day as PPAO President.

**Rewat Areerob will start his first day as PPAO President on Feb 15.** **Photo:** Eakkapop Thongtub

“For what needs to be done, that is still the same as what I explained during my campaign. The first thing I will do is open centres where people who are unemployed, who have insufficient income to pay living expenses, can register, so we can organise help for them,” he said.

“We will also focus on arranging to have essential goods – eggs, cooking oil, rice and other essentials – sold at low prices to help people.

“Then I will work on other projects, including making Phuket clean, pairing with other cities as a ‘sister city’ to promote tourism, building new landmarks, having public transport using alternative energy and developing Phuket Provincial Hospital to provide new services,” he added. *The Phuket News*

Heart-broken Russian man slashes own throat

A RUSSIAN MAN SLASHED HIS own neck with a fruit knife on the Karon beach road last Sunday night (Feb 7). The man remains in intensive care at Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town, Karon Police Chief Col Peerapong Chai-aroon has confirmed.

The man has been confirmed to be a 20-year-old Russian national, who had been staying at the Nai Harn Beach Condominium in Rawai since Jan 8, Col Peerapong told *The Phuket News* on Tuesday (Feb 9).

He was booked to stay at the condo until Mar 8, he added.

“The man used to live together with his Russian girlfriend,” Col Peerapong said. “They later separated and he threatened to kill himself because she wanted to break up with him. She moved to Pattaya on Feb 3.”

“From questioning witnesses and reviewing CCTV footage from the 7-Eleven store, the man bought a knife from the store and walked out in front of the shop, where he raised the knife to his neck and cut from one side of his neck to the other – twice,” Col Peerapong explained.

Police on patrol driving past saw the man cut his own neck and raced to intervene.

The man was rushed to Patong

**Ambulance staff attend to the Russian man as police who saw the incident look on.** **Photo:** Karon Police

Hospital, and later transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town, where he remains in the intensive-care unit (ICU), Col Peerapong confirmed.

Both cuts across the throat were deep, and one cut had affected the man’s trachea, Col Peerapong explained.

The man did undergo surgery at the hospital, he added.

However, Col Peerapong also explained, “Doctors at the hospital have yet to give a full report on the man’s condition.”

“Doctors did report that the man is being kept sedated because when he was conscious he would go into fits of rage,” he added.

Officers have spoken with the man’s girlfriend by phone to inform her of the incident, Col Peerapong noted.

“She was shocked from hearing of the incident,” he said.

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The Peaks owner fights on

Vows to appeal Supreme Court ruling to demolish all construction

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The owner of The Peaks Residence condo project has promised to “take care” of people who have already paid deposits for units, following the Supreme Administrative Court last month ordering the project to be demolished within 30 days for illegally occupying state land.

Manassanan Nararattanawee, CEO of developer Kata Beach Co Ltd, went public on Feb 2 to explain that some buyers had agreed to have their monies transferred to take units at another project at Surin Beach.

He also said that he would appeal the decision by the Supreme Administrative Court, which last month upheld previous rulings by lower Administrative Courts in confirming that the land document presented for the project was illegally issued.

Mr Manassanan said that construction of what he called a “B2.1 billion project” had been suspended since the Supreme



Manassanan Nararattanawee, CEO of developer Kata Beach Co Ltd, at the press conference on Feb 2. Photo: PR Phuket

Administrative Court ruling to revoke the land document.

Of note, the project was designed to feature 435 units, with starting prices of B5.5 million apiece, giving the completed project a base value of B2.39 billion. Previous estimates of the completed and sold-out project were tabled at around B30bn.

Mr Manassanan did not confirm that any action had been taken to comply with the court order to begin demolishing the construction that has

already been completed.

The Supreme Administrative Court ruling was handed down on Dec 17. The Peaks owners were given 30 days to comply.

Regardless, Mr Manassanan told the press conference, “Our company accepted the decision of the Supreme Administrative Court to revoke the land document, a NorSor 3 Kor [land-use document], and no longer have the right of this land since the order was issued.

“There are a few main issues; that company will be taking care of the customers, agents and the people of Phuket, as well as all other relevant people involved in this project, the order to revoke the land document and for the construction to be demolished, and the land owner will appeal to the Administrative Court to consider this case again,” he said.

“Since the Administrative Court of Nakhon Sri Thammarat [in the first instance,

in Aug 2017] ordered the revocation of the land document for the location of the project until the order has been issued by the Supreme Administrative Court, our company insists on taking care of our clients’ investment as best as possible,” he assured.

“The customer care is divided into three parts: customers who agree to transfer their funds to invest in another construction project of the company at Surin Beach, which is more secure” he explained.

“The land document for the project at Surin Beach has already been completed through the EIA and is currently under construction. It is a similar project and now there are about 180 customers agreeing to transfer. Also, 170 units [at The Peaks] are still being processed as customers have not informed their intention to move,” he added.

“More than 40 customers do not wish to move their investment to another project because they want to buy rooms at The Peaks condo

project only. We have to wait and still have yet to confirm when the case will end,” Mr Manassanan said.

“Customers who have not yet contacted the company are requested to contact the company, and customers who refuse to continue to invest with the project have the right to take legal action with the company, in this regard there are only a few cases,” he said.

“What the company can do now is to take good care of its clients’ investments, the main customer groups are Chinese, Russian, European and a few Thai people,” Mr Manassanan said.

Mr Manassanan also noted, “The company is aware of the order to revoke the land document issued by Karon Municipality and the order for the company to demolish all building construction, all 435 rooms, within 30 days in order to restore the area after the Supreme Administrative Court revoked the right document.

“The company has already appealed to the court,” he said.

King cobra warning after fourth snake, five metres long, caught in Pa Khlok

RESCUE WORKERS ARE urging villagers to beware king cobras in the Moo 2 area of Pa Khlok after four large king cobras each measuring over five metres long have been caught in the area in the past month.

The latest large king cobra was caught late last Friday afternoon (Feb 5), Nattaphong Kongkim of the Kusoldharm Rescue Foundation explained.

Rescue workers were called to the house, located in the middle of a rubber plantation, by Northeast native Ponma Thanasom, who was visibly frightened and pointing to a large rack for hanging rubber sheets to dry, where he said a very large cobra was hiding.

The rescue team soon had safely snared the snake, which measured about five metres long and weighed more than 10kg.

“This is the fourth large king cobra we have caught in the area in the past month, and certainly the largest,” Mr Nattaphong said.

More snakes of similar



The latest king cobra caught measured some five metres long. Photo: Kusoldharm Rescue Foundation

size are expected to still be in the area, he added.

“The king cobras we have caught all have similar markings and are all about the same size, so it is likely they are all from the same nest,” Mr Nattaphong explained.

He urged caution in the area, notably Moo 2, where the snakes have been caught as he believes the area is perfect for snakes, especially if they all originated from the same nest in the area.

“The area is all rubber plantations and there is a natural creek nearby. There are fish and crabs in the

creek, and rats often come out for their food, so snakes come out for prey and chase them into the local farmer’s homes,” Mr Nattaphong explained.

Mr Nattaphong urged people to not engage with any large snakes they might find.

“Just call us and we will come and safely catch the snake,” he said.

All the snakes caught in the area are handed over to wildlife officers at the Khao Phra Thao Non-Hunting Area natural reserve and released into the wild, he added. Eakkapop Thongtub

‘Supermum’ leatherback turtle lays fifth nest

MARINE WILDLIFE OFFICERS believe that a large leatherback turtle that laid a nest on Thai Muang Beach in Phang Nga last Sunday night (Feb 7) is that same turtle that has laid four other nests in the area, including on Phuket’s Kata Beach on Jan 1.

Officers at Khao Lampi Hat-Thai Muang National Park in Phang Nga were patrolling the beach when they found the large mother turtle clambering ashore some eight kilometres north of the main park office, explained Park Chief Haritchai Rittichuay.

The turtle’s shell was



The large leatherback turtle laid another nest last Sunday (Feb 7). Photo: DMCR

150cm long and 100cm across, he added.

As the nest was laid in the sand above the high-tide mark, it will not be moved and the eggs will be allowed to incubate naturally, he said.

A bamboo pen has been erected around the nest to protect it from natural predators and officers have been tasked with ensuring that the nest is not disturbed, Mr Haritchai added.

Prarop Plangngarn, Chief of the Phuket Marine National Park Operations Center 2, based at Sirinath Marine National Park, said that officers believe that the nest at Kata Beach was the first laid by the turtle, and the nest laid last night was the fifth nest laid by the same turtle this year, he added.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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Blue Horizon Developments Partners with SolidBlock to Launch Thailand's First Real Estate STO

ADVERTORIAL

Blue Horizon Developments, one of Thailand's most decorated property developers, has partnered with SolidBlock, a smart contract development and management platform for transforming real estate into digital shares that can be traded, to tokenize The Beachfront Prime in Phuket, a project managed under the Best Western Plus brand.

The partnership between the award-winning property developer Blue Horizon Developments and SolidBlock, a portfolio company of BuiltUp Ventures, the leading PropTech venture capital firm investing in some of Israel's most innovative startups, marks the first real estate securities token offering (STO) and the first real estate project to raise money on the blockchain in Thailand.

"We are thrilled to introduce a new and more flexible way of investing in Thailand's real estate," says Andres Pira, CEO & Founder of Blue Horizon Developments. "We are confident that this partnership will make real estate investment more accessible to the masses, and in the process, grant them higher financial independence."



The Beachfront currently has three phases with a total of 190 units. In addition, a further 96 units which are being tokenized through SolidBlock will be added during the expansion phase, many of which will offer sea, pool, or mountain views.

Located on Rawai Beach along the island's serene southeast coast, The Beachfront Prime is a unique project that offers the ultimate no-risk investment in a sought-after tropical setting. The project offers buyers excellent investment opportunities in a prime location, inhabited by luxury resorts and world-class facilities.

The Beachfront currently has three phases with a total of 190 units. In addition, a further 96 units which are being tokenized through SolidBlock will be added during the expansion phase, many of which will offer sea, pool, or mountain views. All guest accommodations feature

a contemporary design and an array of amenities.

Investors can currently buy digital shares of The Beachfront Prime on pre-sale terms. For more information, please visit <https://www.bluehorizon-thailand.com/smart-investment-the-beachfront-prime-phuket/>.

ABOUT BLUE HORIZON DEVELOPMENTS

Blue Horizon Developments has over 16 years of experience providing excellent client satisfaction on construction projects, including institutional, industrial, educational, residential, and multifamily housing through project planning, scheduling, quality and cost control, and design-build construction. Blue Horizon Developments' vision is to expand its business on a global scale. It is on the lookout for new opportunities and constantly strives to deliver the best property developments to the markets while maintaining good relationships with local communities. The company currently has four on-going development projects with a few more due to commence construction in early 2021.

ABOUT SOLIDBLOCK

SolidBlock is focused on transforming real estate and other illiquid assets into a tradable financial product by using blockchain to establish the asset's financial history, increase its liquidity, and ensure optimal growth of the base asset via its data-driven platform. The company's mission is to create a market that is global, inclusive, transparent, and efficient, with no borders, limits, or unnecessary complexities and where capital is both accessible and protected.



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Singha Estate's SAii Laguna Phuket opens

THAI HOTEL GROUP S Hotels and Resorts PCL, has opened its first resort, SAii Laguna Phuket.

The resort, formerly the Outrigger Laguna Phuket Resort, has undergone an extensive renovation, including the creation of a new events hall, a seafront restaurant and an enhanced beachfront bar to integrate SAii wellness and culinary brand signatures. An integral part of Laguna Phuket, the world-class integrated resort at Bang Tao Bay, overlooking the Andaman Sea, targets "light-hearted couples, families, groups of friends, and one-of-a-kind weddings and events", said a release announcing the opening.

S Hotels & Resorts Public Company Limited, the flagship hospitality arm of Singha Estate PCL, is gearing up for "a defining year" in 2021. With at least six new and repositioned properties scheduled to be added in the next 12 months, 2021 will play a pivotal role in the company's five-year development strategy, which plans to double the company's global portfolio from 39 hotels to-



SAii Laguna Phuket. Photo: S Hotels & Resorts

talling 4,647 rooms today, to 82 properties with 9,000 keys by 2025.

S Hotels & Resorts late last year announced the next two SAii resorts in Thailand in the first quarter of 2021: SAii Laguna Phuket and SAii Phi Phi Island Village. Currently known as Phi Phi Island Village Beach Resort, the Phi Phi resort will undergo an extensive refurbishment and repositioning before reopening under the SAii brand.

New for 2021, S Hotels & Resorts is expected to unveil nābor (pronounced "neighbour"), an alternative collection of locally-inspired "luxury-midscale" resorts and hotels, in April 2021 with its first property in Bophut, Koh Samui.

"2021 will be a pivotal year for S Hotels & Resorts,

as we accelerate the expansion of our lifestyle brands," said Dirk De Cuyper, Chief Executive Officer, S Hotels & Resorts.

"Extensive upgrades to our resorts in Thailand have laid the foundations for our rebrandings, and we are very excited to be introducing our original concepts to stunning locations across Asia. Luxury is no longer defined by unnecessary bells and whistles; today's savvy travellers demand seamless stays, immersive experiences and the ability to uncover the essence of their locale. With SAii and nābor, we will create deeply personal journeys in a choice of highly-desirable destinations. We look forward to bringing our intuitive and inviting brands to all guests next year and beyond," he added. *The Phuket News*

PM defends vaccine policy

First doses to arrive this month, 2 million more by end of April

Bangkok Post

There will be 2 million COVID-19 vaccine doses in Thailand by the end of April, beginning with 200,000 doses this month, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said on Tuesday (Feb 9).

Speaking to reporters after the Cabinet meeting at Government House, Gen Prayut said that the first 200,000 doses would arrive late this month and 800,000 more doses would be delivered next month.

A further 1mn doses would arrive in April although he did not elaborate on the source.

The announcement came after the Prime Minister confirmed contingency plans are in place to secure COVID-19 vaccines from other producers if the British/Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca cannot deliver the doses it promised on time.

In a podcast last Sunday (Feb 7), Gen Prayut addressed a number of questions surrounding the government's vaccination programme, which ranged from procurement transparency, delivery sched-



Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha speaks to reporters at Government House in Bangkok on Tuesday (Feb 9). Photo: Bangkok Post

ules, efficacy, to safety and inoculation targets.

He also defended the government's COVID-19 vaccine deal and roll-out plan, as critics continue to question the country's immunisation policy.

The intense scrutiny began after Progressive Movement founder Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit criticised the government's

COVID-19 vaccination plan in a Facebook Live session.

He questioned the government's strategy for being too reliant on one company – Siam Bioscience, which is contracted by AstraZeneca to produce its COVID-19 vaccines under a technology-transfer agreement – to meet its vaccination needs.

To date, the government has purchased 26mn doses

and reserved an additional 35mn doses from AstraZeneca.

In his podcast, Gen Prayut said the government isn't relying on a sole candidate to meet its COVID-19 vaccine needs, adding it is still looking to seal deals with other vaccine manufacturers.

He also addressed concerns about the number of procured doses which, according to some critics, won't be enough

to reach herd immunity, thus rendering the vaccination programme ineffective.

Gen Prayut said the procurement will continue and the government has not set a target as to how many doses should be secured.

On Monday it was confirmed that the 2 million doses ordered from Beijing-based Sinovac Biotech have been approved for export and will be delivered "as soon as possible".

The announcement followed recent media reports which said China's drug regulators have given Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine conditional market approval.

On effectiveness and the safety of the vaccines, Gen Prayut said under the WHO guidelines, both AstraZeneca and Sinovac are considered effective although, so far, only the AstraZeneca vaccine has been approved for domestic use in Thailand by the Food and Drug Administration.

A further development occurred on Monday when the Department of Local Administration (DLA) issued

an order to clarify that local administrations and private sector organisations cannot currently purchase or distribute COVID-19 vaccines by themselves.

It reiterated that only central government can purchase, manage and distribute vaccines under the proposed vaccine management plan at this stage.

As the number of COVID-19 vaccines being imported into the country is limited, the priority is to establish an effective vaccine management campaign for those considered at high risk while ensuring the highest safety standards.

"In the first stage, only central government can purchase, manage and distribute the vaccines under the vaccine management plan, in order to distribute to the targeted group of people and be able to follow up on their symptoms after being injected," the order stated.

"Consequently, at this stage, we do not permit private sector and local administrations to directly purchase the vaccine from the producers," it added.

COVID handout eligibility reassessed

THE FINANCE MINISTRY is preparing to reconsider the eligibility criteria for receiving financial aid under the Rao Chana (We Win) scheme, which stipulates recipients should have a taxable income of no more than B300,000 per year.

Approved in January, the We Win scheme aims to provide B210 billion of financial handouts for 31 million people to alleviate hardships caused by the recent outbreak.

Last Friday (Feb 5) was the first day the ministry began transferring money to 13.8mn state welfare cardholders, with a combined disbursement sum of B9.4bn.

Citizens who are not state welfare cardholders can check their eligibility for the We Win scheme through www.เราชนะ.com.

The key criteria for those receiving the B7,000 financial remedy for two months, with B1,000 disbursed per week, consist of a taxable income of no more than B300,000 per year, or a monthly income not exceeding B25,000. Money in bank deposit accounts must not exceed B500,000.

Registration started on Jan 29 and will end on Feb 12.

Finance Minister Arkhom



Basic public transportation costs, including trishaw fares, are included in the government's new financial relief scheme. Photo: Bangkok Post

Termpittayapaisith said many people laid off from their jobs last year because of the first wave might not be able to receive the We Win assistance because their taxable incomes filed in 2019 may exceed B300,000 per year.

These unemployed individuals were allowed by the ministry to submit their annual income review through www.เราชนะ.com as of Monday (Feb 8).

The ministry uses the 2019 tax filing data as the main reference point because the tax database is not fully complete. The Revenue Department extended the 2020 tax filing deadline to June 30, 2021, said Mr Arkhom.

For those who have been laid off this year and are not covered by Section 33 of the Social Security Act,

they will have to register at a later stage, he said.

Mr Arkhom reiterated the government is willing to help every segment affected by the pandemic crisis, but they will have to register themselves.

The government aims to provide financial relief to cover 41mn people. Of the sum, 13.8mn are state welfare cardholders, 17mn are recipients via the Pao Tang app, 9mn are those covered by Section 33 of the Social Security Act and the remaining 1.2mn are classified as other groups.

The 9mn people covered by Section 33 are expected to receive a weekly payment of B1,000 starting next month, up to a maximum of B3,500-4,500. This package is scheduled for Cabinet approval next week.

Bangkok Post

Phuket Residents' Staycation Offer

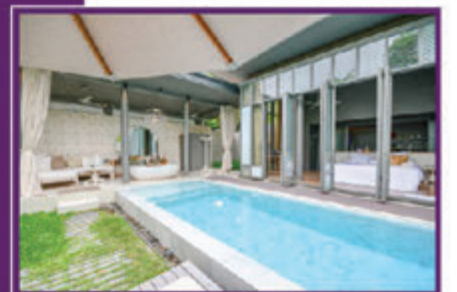


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The reason we need glasses or bifocals, while getting older, is that our natural lens inside of the eye becomes degenerated and loses its flexibility. The process starts as you become 40, and it will get worse over time.

This explains why your visual range will be more limited, and your reading glasses gradually become stronger with time.

Laser vision correction (LASIK) will not fix this degeneration, due to the fact that the technology can't give you back your visual range nor can it be fixed for "both" far and reading vision.

The only solution which gives you the best chance to permanently fix the



problem and enhance your visual range to the maximum, will allow you to see both near and far with your own bare eyes, is achieved by one-time multi-focal lens replacement surgery.

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Dr Captain is recognised as among the top 5 Trifocal Lens Replacement surgeons in Thailand, assuring our patients with more precise surgery, and the highest success rate during and after the surgery.

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No, this is mine!

Photo: Karsten Winegeart / Unsplash



UNLEASHED

Russell D Russell
info@k9pointacademy.com

Food is a primary resource – this is true of all animals. However, having a dog that guards their food can be problematic. I'm not one to advocate reaching into your dogs bowl, and whipping their food away to prove "you're the master" – and if anything, depending on the dog, this could make things much worse – but I do advocate doing lots of work with your dog with food being a central tenet.

The language barrier that exists between us humans and our canine companions is such that when dogs snap, or bite, it is often described as "something out of the blue". However, dogs are zen masters of communication and body language, so the signs and signals are all there. The reason people end up on the receiving end of a snap, or a bite, is that they've misread, or missed entirely, the signals the dog was displaying.

Resource guarding in general is quite common in dogs as their way of simply saying, "No, this is mine!" But if a dog is guarding his food, or her toy, and (for whatever reason) you simply need to take it away – then there is likely to be some issues. Knowing what to look for is the first step in helping to modify this behaviour, before it be-

comes a serious issue. There are some key things to look for.

SPEED EATING

Some dogs always eat fast – it's just them. If you have a Lab or a Beagle (without being breed-ist about it!) you probably know what I mean. However, these dogs probably eat fast, regardless of situation. But for dogs that feel threatened when people, or other dogs approach will noticeably increase their speed, and maybe position their bodies differently to try and block access to their food bowl.

THE HARD FREEZE

If the 'intruder' continues to close in on your dog's food bowl, the next step is likely to your dog freezing on the spot. Your dog's snout may still be in the bowl, but he won't be eating. He will be glancing at the approaching target with what is called a 'hard eye'. This is a warning shot, essentially saying, "I'm not messing about here."

GRRRR...!

If the body block, the freeze and the hard stare don't work, then the dog will escalate to a low, deep growl, which usually includes a lip curl. It's worth noting at this point that dogs aren't stupid – and would generally prefer to avoid confrontation. They know it's costly in terms of energy expenditure and its risky business. Hopefully a well-intentioned threat of violence will suffice. The lip curl and low growl is that, well-intentioned threat. Addition-

ally, the level of the lip curl will give you an insight into the dogs mentality. Dogs that only very slightly curl the lip, maybe just showing the side of a front canine, are dogs that are seriously confident about their abilities if this has to continue. The dogs that are baring ALL their teeth, with the lips pulled right back, are the ones that are perhaps more unsure, and likely to back down if things escalate. The full teeth display is almost a sign of "I seriously hope this works, as it's all I have."

SNAP!

If all warning signs have so far gone unheeded, the next level on offer for a dog is an air snap. This is usually the point where folks start to back out. The dog may partly lunge, snapping his teeth together a few times in your direction. I've often heard people saying they didn't get bitten, because they "moved their hand away too quickly for the dog". Rubbish. Dog reactions are five to seven times faster than ours. If the dog wanted to bite you at this point, he would have done. He just didn't want to, he only wanted to warn you. This air snap may be repetitive and also coincide with further growling, or even barking.

HOLD IT!

If at this stage, either the person, or other animal, still hasn't got the picture, then the dog may offer what's called a bite hold. This isn't a bite per se, it's not intended to puncture or

cause damage, it's literally a hold. It's akin to someone putting their hands on you really firmly as if to say, "Enough is enough."

CHOMP

And lastly, the actual bite. But, darn it, you can't say you weren't warned! It's also worth mentioning here that the time it takes for dogs to go through these stages depend on numerous factors. Not least of which is the dog's own temperament. You all know people that have very 'short fuses' when it comes to anything confrontational, dogs can be the same. Equally, some dogs are very tolerant – it's not breed-specific, it's purely down to the individual dog.

So, as you can see, there is a lot of information that our dogs will give us when guarding particular items, be it toys, or food. And whilst growling on its own may be impolite to you, it is also a key piece of information. The dog is clearly saying, he's uncomfortable with something. Identify what is causing the dog to feel that way, and that's the bit we work on re-conditioning.

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

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POP QUIZ

1. What percentage of an iceberg remains unseen underwater?
2. What does JPEG stand for, as in a JPEG file?
3. What do Edward Koch, David Dinkins and Bill de Blasio all have in common?
4. Which French resistance fighter was awarded the 1969 Nobel Prize in Literature?
5. What number can be dialled to reach all three emergency services anywhere in Europe?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

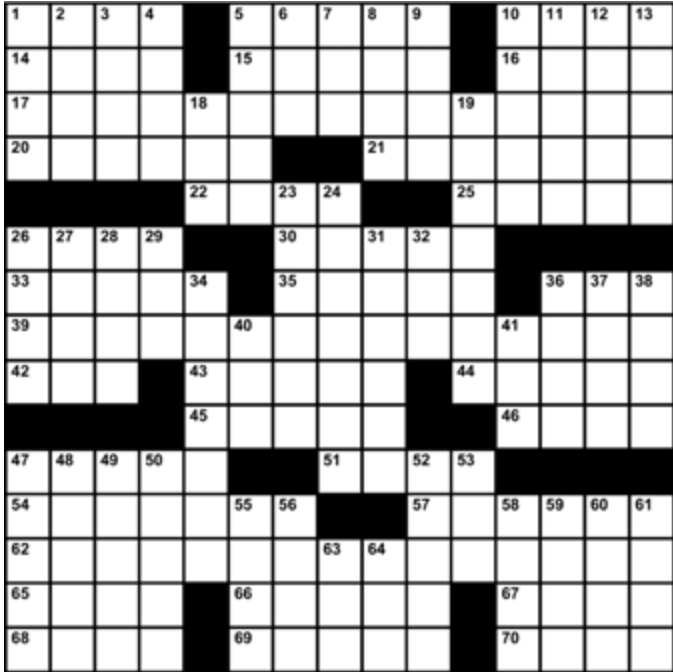
1. Spread choice
5. Cuisine experts
10. Way
14. Elbow bone
15. Backcountry
16. Curve
17. Settle an angry dispute
20. Barefoot
21. Putting in place
22. Imagining that
25. Skater Harding
26. Big oil exporter
30. One of the Osmonds
33. Roman god of love
35. Bedroom clock
36. Calendar abbr.
39. UN's activity, at times
42. Football gains, abbr.
43. Scornful expression
44. Canvas shelters
45. ____cotta
46. Itemize
47. Mexican artist Rivera
51. Attempt to score
54. Neat
57. Pet
62. Work out a cessation of hostilities

Down

65. Flat
66. Charley horse
67. Fed. workplace watchdog
68. Destroy
69. Listlessness
70. Norse, God of thunder
1. Kind of platter
2. First American in space, first name
3. Explosives
4. Apiece
5. Nasty substances
6. Marching syllable
7. Baseball stat
8. Internet info sources
9. Swing around
10. ____ Novo (Benin capital)
11. Smiling
12. Pint-sized
13. Hagar the Horrible's wife
18. Gp. in charge of condos
19. Crack
23. Graphics machine
24. Stumbles
26. Offensive
27. Regretted
28. Primates

29. Bite

31. Enthusiastic
32. Fiery reaction
34. Misrepresent the truth
36. "Pedi's" mate, in day spa lingo
37. Fall times, abbr.
38. Oriole's hangout
40. Compass direction
41. Pickled delicacy
47. Foundation, frequently
48. Poetic name for Ireland
49. Nips
50. Rockhound's find
52. Giraffe like animal
53. Songbird
55. Vermin
56. Fabrication
58. Home-run pace
59. Keister
60. Sound in a cave
61. Close
63. Light brown
64. Flightless bird



Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) 90%; 2) Joint Photographic Experts Group; 3) They are all former New York City Mayors; 4) Irishman Samuel Beckett; 5) 112

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

in 5 women buy Valentine's gifts for themselves.

20

baby girls in the US were named "Kindle" in 2013.

6,000

cell phones, 3,500 digital cameras and 18,000 hats are handed in to 'Lost and Found' at Walt Disney World each year.

40 million

Americans have tattoos, and 17% of those people are figuring out how to get them removed.

10 billion

doughnuts are consumed by Americans every year.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Mai Khao sunset. Photo: Robert Tosh

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

This week in history

Feb 12, 1954

British tea maker Lyons's "LEO" (Lyons Electronic Office I) produces a payroll report. It is the first time in history a computer is used in business.

Feb 13, 1981

A series of sewer explosions destroys more than two miles of streets in Louisville, Kentucky.

Feb 14, 1779

Capt James Cook is killed by Native Hawaiians near Kealahou on the Island of Hawaii.

Feb 15, 2013

A meteor explodes over Chelyabinsk, Russia, injuring 1,500 people as a shock wave blows out windows and rocks buildings.



Howard Carter opens the innermost shrine of King Tutankhamun's tomb.

Feb 16, 1923

Howard Carter unseals the burial

chamber of Pharaoh Tutankhamun.

Feb 17, 1867

The first ship passes through the Suez Canal.

Feb 18, 1977

The Space Shuttle Enterprise test vehicle is carried on its maiden "flight" on top of a Boeing 747.

Source: Wikipedia

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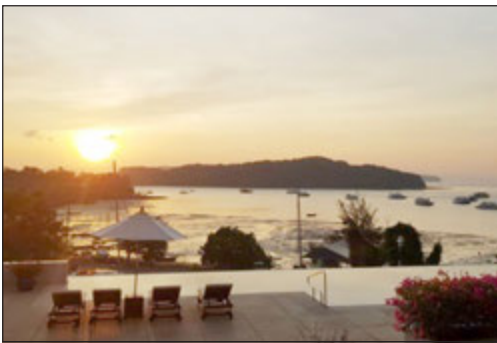
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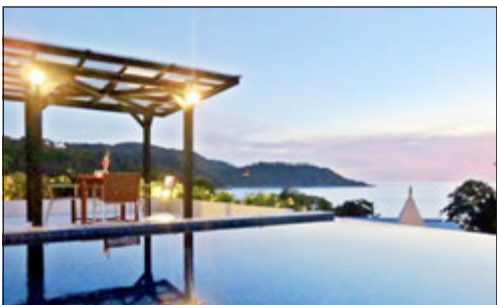
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City state title intent

Liverpool demolished as champions-elect lay down a marker

FOOTBALL

Ben Tirebuck
editor@classactmedia.co.th

One got the distinct impression that more than just a game of football was decided at Anfield last Sunday (Feb 7).

On a bitterly cold evening in the northwest of England, red-hot Manchester City all but extinguished any hopes Liverpool had of retaining their Premier League crown as they dazzled in a comprehensive 4-1 victory, laying down a legitimate claim as champions-elect in the process.

City moved 10 points clear of fourth-placed Liverpool in what was their first win at Anfield since 2003, as they became the first team to score four times in a league game there in 12 years.

They also hold a five-point lead over second-placed Manchester United and have a game in hand on their local rivals as they eye a third title in four seasons.



Manchester City's Ilkay Gundogan (left) celebrates with teammate Bernardo Silva after scoring the opening goal in the 4-1 win at Liverpool last Sunday. Photo: AFP

Their dominant recent form means they have won 14 successive games in all competitions to equal the

record for an English top-flight club, set by Preston in 1892 and Arsenal in 1987.

The worrying thing for the

rest of the league is not only have City hit an excellent run of form but they don't seem likely to let up anytime soon,

as Sunday's game illustrated.

Everything went right for City whereas it was, and has been for sometime, the complete opposite for the hosts.

Despite missing a first-half penalty, Ilkay Gundogan atoned in the second half by scoring twice, with further strikes from Raheem Sterling and the exquisite Phil Foden sealing the rout.

Mohamed Salah's second-half penalty to level the scores was dubious at best and only offered a brief false sense of hope as City moved through the gears and Liverpool contributed to their own demise as the usually unflappable and hugely reliable goalkeeper Alisson Becker gifted City two goals.

Liverpool's fall from grace of late has been startling, especially their home form at what was previously a seemingly impenetrable fortress Anfield; the City thrashing was preceded by shock defeats to lowly Brighton and Burnley.

They are the first side to lose three straight home matches the season after win-

ning the title since Chelsea in March 1956 and have 27 points fewer than they did at the same stage last season – the biggest drop by any reigning champions in top-flight history.

City, however, are on an upwards trajectory, all the more impressive given they have been operating without a centre-forward and without key players Kevin de Bruyne and Sergio Aguero.

Gundogan has stepped up and been an inspiration of late, the club's highest scorer this season; John Stones, Ruben Diaz and Joao Cancelo have forged a formidable rear-guard and Foden is finally being allowed to showcase his sublime talents on the highest stage after being held back by manager Pep Guardiola for so long.

Despite a cautious Guardiola correctly stating no title is won in February, Sunday's result hinted at an unstoppable charge and the question of when and not if City are crowned champions come season's end.

Brady joins the immortals after Super Bowl triumph

NRL

IF TOM BRADY DIDN'T already occupy a seat at the top table of North American sport's greatest icons, he will now be pulling up a chair.

The 43-year-old quarterback authored another implausible chapter to his age-defying career last Sunday (Feb 7), winning a record seventh Super Bowl as the Tampa Bay Buccaneers stunned the Kansas City Chiefs 31-9.

It was a victory that elevated Brady alongside names like Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky, Babe Ruth or Serena Williams – the rare, once-in-a-generation athletes whose achievements are expected to stretch long into the future.

The victory in Tampa saw Brady improve a slew of records he already owned, putting them even further out of reach.

At 43 years and 188 days old, Brady is the oldest man



Tom Brady after his seventh Super Bowl win. Photo: AFP

ever to play in a Super Bowl, let alone win it.

His seventh Super Bowl victory means he has now won more Vince Lombardi Trophies than every team in the league.

Brady's fifth Super Bowl Most Valuable Player award is two more than his nearest rival, boyhood idol Joe Montana.

And the victory with the Buccaneers means he is only the second quarterback to take two different teams to a Super Bowl title.

True to form, Brady brushed off questions about where he ranks Sunday's

victory in his catalogue of success.

"I haven't had time to think about that," Brady said. "We've been blessed. It's been a great year."

Brady's win with the Buccaneers came after he stunned the NFL last March by quitting the New England Patriots after two decades.

Earlier in the week Brady said he could "definitely" see himself playing two more seasons, which would take him up to his 45th birthday, while confirming he is not going anywhere.

"Oh yeah, we're coming back," he said. AFP

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Phuket cricket and rugby teams face off at ACG for charity

CRICKET / RUGBY

Neil Quail

Players from Phuket's rugby and cricket communities came together at the ACG last Saturday (Feb 6) to face off in each other's sports, with proceeds from the day's event going to the Asia Centre Foundation (ACF).

Cricket was first on the card, with the Phuket Cricket Group (PCG) expected to comfortably overcome their rugby counterparts, Phuket Vagabonds R.F.C, in a T20 game that included a few rule variations to ensure everyone had an opportunity to contribute.

The format called for paired batting through four overs where 5 runs would be deducted from the batting side's total should a wicket be taken rather than the batsman having to leave the field of play.

The Vagabonds batted first, with skipper Dave Walker (5 n.o.) and Barney Turner-Mendis (11 n.o.) combining to make 19 from the first four overs, with the latter securing the game's first boundary.

Vagabonds' second pairing of Anthony Van Sleetwen and Dave Cross found the going a little more troublesome, managing to score 16 runs, but suffering four dismissals (-20) to leave the score at 15 by the end of the 8th over.

Mike Whippy (10) and Ken added a further 19 to the score but three dismissals moved the score to just 24 by the 13th over.

Next up were Richard Pompilis and Paul Rothwell who, despite losing a wicket on the first ball, recovered



Phuket Vagabonds and Phuket Cricket Group players pose before taking to the ACG paddock for the sports challenge on Saturday. Photo: Neil Quail

well to post 21 runs including two fours from Rothwell (11 n.o.) to bring the score to 35 by over 17.

Zac Foose and Nic Bruno were last to the crease for the Vagabonds, with American Foose (9 n.o.) showing his baseball batting skills on his first ever visit to a cricket crease by immediately dispatching Curt Livermore for 8 runs. Bruno ended the innings with a boundary to close the Vagabonds' total at 55.

Following the break, Michael Flowers and Jeremy Bootsy began PCG's chase with Bootsy hitting a brace of fours off Van Sleetwen to boost PCG's score to 21.

The breakthrough came in the

3rd over when Rothwell clipped the top of Flowers' off-stump before Van Sleetwen bowled Bootsy lbw with the score at 37.

Unfortunately, that wicket-taking momentum would not materialise again until the final three overs when Rothwell bagged a hat-trick with the final three balls of the innings.

Finishing on 168, the winning margin was exaggerated by 103 extras leaked by the Vagabonds compared to the PCG's 37, a refinement of which would undoubtedly make any future encounters much closer.

Top scorers for the game went to PCG's Bootsy (21) and Paul Judge (20 n.o.), while the game's bowling MVP

went to Rothwell for his 4 for 33.

SCORES EVENED

Following a brief interval to refuel, the teams returned for a touch rugby showdown and an opportunity for the Vagabonds to redress the cricket result.

Immediately, the Vagabonds' pace and handling took a toll on a more mature PCG side as they ran in two tries during the first quarter, taking a 3-1 lead by half-time.

The addition of Merrick Fairall to the PCG side certainly helped, with the endurance athlete being at the heart of every attack while also making a number of try-saving touches in defence.

With Turner-Mendis running in a try in the dying seconds of the match, the Vagabonds claimed a 6-3 victory.

Performances of note went of course to PCG's Fairall, while Foose was Vagabond's most threatening presence.

Regardless of results, the cross-over challenge was an enjoyable day for both players and spectators, with several praise-worthy individual performances from both camps, and much needed funds raised for the ACF.

If anyone is interested in playing either rugby or cricket, please contact via the ACG Facebook page.

Fossils overcome Kids

CRICKET

Continued from page 16

In fact, excluding the openers' scores, the combined total achieved by the remaining Kids batsmen came to 68, just 9 runs more than the extraordinary 59 extras gifted to them through Fossils' frequent wayward bowling.

Thankfully for the Kids, Bhattacharya held firm to claim his first ever half-century, followed then by his maiden century off 70 deliveries to the applause from players and spectators, with the score then on 198 for 6.

Adding a further 41 runs in the next 10 overs, the Kids posted a relatively challenging target of 250 from 35 overs to win the match.

However, consummate batting performances from Fossils' openers, Jeremy Bootsy and Michael Flowers took the

competition away from their opponents, as both players carried their bats in scoring the same amount of 108 not out and reaching the target in 28 overs.

While it wasn't Bootsy's maiden century, it is his first at the ACG. And although Flowers has claimed several 50s during his cricket career, Sunday's maiden century was certainly a long sought after accolade for the Kiwi batsman.

Clearly, having three centuries in a game eclipses most other performances, but Sameer Khan's 4-30 off six overs for the Fossils was influential to the result. And while he took no wickets, Sajal Gaur's 0-31 off six overs belies a masterclass of line and length bowling.

The game's MVP went to Bootsy for his 108 not out off 73 deliveries and taking three catches behind the stumps.

Neil Quail

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Sport



Man City nets Anfield win in title race > p14



Fabricio 'Wonder Boy' Andrade lands a solid left on Shoko Sato at ONE Championship: Unbreakable on Jan 23. Photo: ONE Championship.

ANDRADE LANDS VICTORY

MMA

JP Mestanza
tv@classactmedia.co.th

For Fabricio "Wonder Boy" Andrade, it's all about the first letter of his nickname: W stands for winner.

The 23-year-old Phuket resident put on a show in the ONE Championship: Unbreakable 3 card at Singapore Indoor Stadium on Jan 23 (broadcast last Friday, Feb 5). In only his second fight for the promotion, Andrade used his striking to push the pace on the No. 2

ranked Bantamweight (65.8kg) in the promotion, Shoko Sato of Japan.

"I don't know who the matchmaker is, but I want to say thank you because when a lot of people said I could not do [this], he was matching me up with the No. 2 contender and I came here today to tell everyone now you've got to watch me," he said in the post-fight interview.

The fight wasn't expected to go this way, considering Sato was coming into this bout on a six-fight win streak, and had dismantled his opponent in his last outing in January 2020 (a

submission win in round one over Won Il Kwon).

Not to mention Andrade was unranked.

But from the opening bell the Brazilian showed just how fearless he was, using his kicks to set up powerful punch combinations. Considering Sato's expertise in grappling, many thought he could catch Andrade's kicks in order to put the Brazilian on the ground but this was not to be.

Peppering in those kicks, along with a precision counter-striking, Andrade was able to wear down Sato throughout the first round and a half, defending

all takedowns, and using the clinch to keep Sato up against the cage.

Sato closed the distance in the second round, pushing the pace further, and stunning Andrade with enough to keep the round very close. Andrade took back the momentum in the final round, setting up meaningful elbow shots. Not to be outdone, Sato moved in with some powerful uppercuts of his own to stun the Brazilian for some time.

Andrade's training at Tiger Muay Thai & MMA Training Camp in Chalong was put on full display, using carefully-

timed low kicks, and the clinch, although he admitted the fight was a lot tougher than expected.

"Sato is so tough," he said in the post-fight interview. "I expected him to be tough, that was way more than I was expecting. He works very hard to get here. I train a lot. I fight a lot. I talk a lot to get people to watch me.

"I've just taken (out) the No. 2 contender, and I want the belt next."

Andrade wasted little time after the fight to call for a title shot. Current ONE Bantamweight champion, and fellow Brazilian, Bibiano Fernandes

hasn't fought since October 2019, and the promotion has yet to announce his next fight. As it stands, the No. 1 contender for the title is former UFC fighter John Lineker (also a fellow Brazilian). Andrade has clearly emerged as another option for the promotion to book for Fernandes.

"I know a lot of people are going to keep doubting me, because that's what they do, but I come here to do my job, and if you want to prove that I'm wrong, let's see. I'm going to train hard, and I'm going to be ready," he said in the post-fight interview.

Fossils dig deep for historic ACG victory

CRICKET

SEEKING NEW FORMATS to offset the lack of national and international cricket competition on Phuket, the Phuket Cricket Group (PCG) arranged a 'Fossils v Kids' game played out last Sunday (Feb 7) at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG).

The first of its kind to be played at the island's home of cricket, the game was enjoyed in typically competitive spirits, and astound-

ingly produced three individual scores of 100 or more, two of which were player's maiden centuries, fantastic achievements at any level of the sport.

Participants for the fixture were categorised by age, with players over 35 years old placed in the 'Fossils' side, and those under 35 years considered for the 'Kids' team.

On paper, the squads seemed balanced, but while the Fossils held an advantage in batting, the

Kids looked to have a stronger bowling line-up.

Kids' captain Curt Livermore rested his trust in Dom Judge and Shivam Bhattacharaya to set a foundation. And his trust was repaid as the pair took the score to 88 by the 10th over, before Judge (22) found the hands of Sameer Khan off Seemant Raju's bowling.

While Bhattacharaya anchored his side's innings, he also watched as his team-mates came and went during his 23 overs in the middle,



Michael Flowers and Jeremy Bootsy in front of the ACG scoreboard showing their historic joint 108 not outs accomplished during Sunday's game. Photo: Neil Quail

with Ali Khan's 25 off 19 being the only notable Kids score coming

from those eight batsmen.

Continued on page 15