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CONFIDENCE BOOST



Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon receives his first Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine injection on Monday (Mar 8), his first day as the new Chief of the Phuket Provincial Health Office. Photo: PPHO

HOPE FLOATS FOR TOURISM AS SHORTER QUARANTINE NOW LIKELY FOR VACCINATED ARRIVALS

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Hopes are high that come Monday (Mar 15) Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha will announce that foreign tourists who have been vaccinated for COVID-19 will be required to observe a much shorter mandatory quarantine period – per-

haps as short as three days.

The news broke on Monday (Mar 8) as assistant spokeswoman for the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) Apisamai Srirangson announced that CCSA officials “favoured” Oct 1 for the easing of restrictions on travellers who have been given an approved vaccine.

The final decision would be made

by the CCSA board, chaired by PM Prayut, at its meeting on Monday (Mar 15), she said.

“The quarantine period will be different from those who are not vaccinated,” Dr Apisamai noted. “Travel from overseas would be easier,” she added.

In addition, moves are also afoot to reduce the mandatory quarantine

period as early as next month even for arrivals who have not been vaccinated for COVID-19. (See page 7.)

Currently, all arrivals in Thailand – whether vaccinated or not – must observe a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

Dr Apisamai said the board meeting next week would also discuss the possible lifting of the emergency...

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Noisy nightclub ordered closed for five years



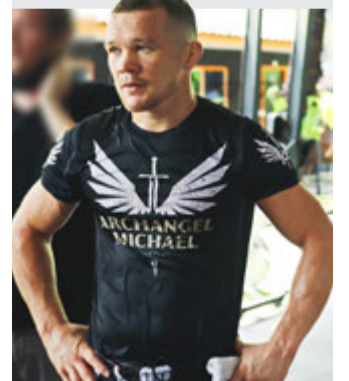
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Baz honours Duane Lennie: ‘Mr Koh Lanta’



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Yan loses UFC title following disqualification



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News



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Vaccine push vital for Oct 1

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...decree at the end of May, and reliance on communicable disease laws to contain the virus from June.

The Oct 1 deadline coincides with the #PhuketFirst-October campaign launched in January by a consortium of key tourism and other industry figures on the island, spearheaded by Phuket Tourist Association president Bhumikitti Raktaengam. Until now, the campaign seemed to have fallen on deaf ears.

However, a key requirement of the #PhuketFirst-October campaign is that at least 70% of the island's residents must be vaccinated in time to provide "herd immunity" from the virus as a way to safely allow foreign tourists to return by reducing the quarantine period for international visitors – while maintaining confidence among local people that they themselves are not being exposed to high risk.

Mr Bhumikitti and other strong supporters of the #PhuketFirstOctober campaign have repeatedly emphasised that in order for enough Phuket residents to be vaccinated to safely start receiving foreign tourists, private organisations, including hospitals, must be allowed to independently source large quantities of vaccines that have been approved by the central government.



Vachira Hospital Director Dr Chalermpong Sukontaphon speaks to the press. Photo: PPHO

Without private sector help, the Oct 1 deadline is simply not achievable, they say. At the time of going to press, no Phuket or Bangkok officials had made any announcement regarding how this was to be achieved.

At last report, as of Mar 1, Phuket had so far received just 4,000 doses of the Sinovac vaccine, all dedicated to inoculating medical workers, frontline staff dealing with the general public and those specifically at higher risk of infection.

Vachira Phuket Hospital Director Dr Chalermpong Sukontaphon in announcing the arrival of the 4,000 Sinovac

vaccine doses in Phuket explained, "In the next delivery, we will receive 16,000 doses of vaccine, and another 48,000 doses will come in May. In total, for the first three months, we will receive 68,000 doses of vaccine."

That will be enough to vaccinate just 34,000 people in Phuket, which has an estimated population of circa 400,000 people.

Although Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul on Monday said that first rollout of 117,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine was to start yesterday (Mar 11) with PM Prayut as the first recipient (see page 7), no officials in

Phuket or Bangkok have yet provided any details on the country reaching anywhere near herd immunity by Oct 1.

Dr Chalermpong last week said the delivery of AstraZeneca vaccines will not arrive until "around June to August".

He also confirmed that even with all Phuket public hospitals administering vaccination injections, the most the hospitals could achieve would be about 1,500 people a day.

That pushes herd immunity inoculation for Phuket back to late November at the earliest.

Mr Bhumikitti is holding on to the prospect that the central government will finally

understand that private sector help is needed in order to vaccinate enough people quickly enough to safely reopen Phuket to receiving international tourists by Oct 1.

"The number of vaccines is not enough for 70% of the Phuket population, so we have to wait and see how many vaccines from AstraZeneca we will receive in June to September. We need to propose the number of vaccines that we need to the central government," he told *The Phuket News*.

"We have been in constant contact with a few vaccine importers. At this stage it looks like we might be able to determine how many of which types of vaccines will come after Songkran," he added.

In order to reopen Phuket to international tourists by Oct 1, Mr Bhumikitti said, "Basically, we have a lot of things to do. Vaccination is one of the most important. To open the island to tourists without any quarantine, we have to vaccinate local people as much as we can, about 70% of the population. We have already received 68,000 doses, but we need about 900,000 doses.

"To fill the gap between 68,000 and 900,000, we have two sources. One is the government. We have to see how many doses [of vaccine] they will give us. We are working

on this. The other source is to purchase the vaccine by ourselves. But we have to see how many vaccines we receive from the government before we can know how much to order."

Time is of the essence, Mr Bhumikitti noted. The vaccination rollout must be coordinated so that operators could start marketing and promoting travel to Phuket to markets abroad so that tourists know what will be required if they chose to travel here.

"We have a lot of things to do, such as marketing and organising flights to Phuket, and so on. We will meet with 'big operators' in Phuket soon, in order to see and understand the demand from Europe," he said.

Mr Bhumikitti also pointed out that a recent survey had indicated that a staggering 80% of all tourism-related businesses in Phuket have closed their doors at least temporarily to ride out the storm.

"Before the second outbreak about 35-40% of the hotels on the island were open, but after the second wave hit our survey found that only about 20% of hotels are still open," he said.

"More hotels will gradually re-open, but the number of hotels that are temporarily closed at this stage is about 80%."

Tourism Ministry pushes vaccine passport system to skip quarantine

THE TOURISM AND SPORTS Ministry has asked the Public Health Ministry for approval to launch a vaccine passport system in a bid to kick-start the tourism industry this year.

Russian tourists in Phuket will likely be the first to experience the eased quarantine restrictions. Tour agents in Russia say demand is high enough for regular Phuket flights of 300-400 Russian tourists, reported state news agency NNT last week.

Tourism Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said adopting a vaccine passport or a similar method of enabling foreign tourists to skip quarantine would guarantee at least 5 million foreign visitors to Thailand in 2021.

He said the government was



Tourism Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said adopting a vaccine passport or a similar method of enabling foreign tourists to skip quarantine would guarantee at least 5 million foreign visitors to Thailand in 2021. Photo: NNT

waiting for a World Health Organization (WHO) announcement on vaccine passports before issuing the measure, adding that the Centre for COVID-19 Situation

Administration (CCSA) was also discussing a 14-day quarantine that would allow foreign tourists to leave their hotel rooms after just three days of self-isolation.

Mr Phiphat also said the government has unveiled its "area quarantine" plan to re-open Thailand to foreign tourists from next month.

Mr Phiphat said area quarantine will be piloted in five provinces popular with foreign tourists – Chiang Mai, Phuket, Krabi, Surat Thani and Chon Buri.

He said after meeting with the Public Health Ministry and 216 tourism operators that tourists will quarantine in their rooms for the first three days and they will be granted access to the whole hotel or resort until their 14-day quarantine ends if they test negative.

Then, they will be allowed to travel freely through the quarantine area.

The plan will be operated via 29 travel agencies supervised by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), he added.

TESTED

The "area quarantine" has already been tested in Phuket with the arrival on Feb 21 of Phuket's first 'travel bubble' tourists, who observed a 14-day 'villa quarantine' at the five-star Sri Panwa resort on the island's east coast.

Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong praised the test, highlighting that the 'villa quarantine' was to be deployed elsewhere throughout the country once proven successful.

"At this stage, the villa quarantine has been well organised and

it will be used as an example for other hotels across the country to accept foreign tourists

"Thank you to all the officers involved for their cooperation in making everything done very quickly, from the identification-checking process, whereby we had received the information before the tourists arrived on the island, all the way through to taking the tourists to the hotel," he said.

V/Gov Pichet in his report also pointed out the requirements for implementing a 'villa quarantine' at a resort, including that hotel staff must stay only in the resort area while the tourists are completing their 14-day quarantine.

"They cannot go outside of the location to ensure confidence for all people," he said.

The Phuket News

Gov shutter noisy nightclub

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Two nightclubs in Phuket Town central to noise complaints filed by the Provincial Police Chief from another province have been closed by order of the Phuket Governor. One of the venues has been ordered closed for five years.

The two nightlife venues, Maldives and H2O on Lim Sui Ju Rd on the south side of Phuket Town, were ordered to close immediately following the orders issued by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew last Friday (Mar 5).

The orders noted that the operators of both venues had separately violated a raft of laws, but none of the violations were for noise.

The Maldives nightclub was ordered closed for five years under provincial order 1232/2564.

The order explained that on Feb 18 Phuket City Police inspected the venue and arrested the manager, named as Ms Mintra Yindamnoon, for the charge of operating an entertainment venue without a permit, selling alcohol without a permit and for allowing people younger than 20 years old to work or "use services in the venue".

The acts violated National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) order 22/2558 and 46/2559. The manager was found guilty by Phuket



The Maldives nightclub in Phuket Town was ordered closed for five years. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Khwaeng Court (Municipal Court) as confirmed by judgments handed down for Black Case 164/2564 and Red Case 136/2564, said a report announcing the closures.

The court judgement noted that the defendant was to be punished for each violation under Section 91 of the Criminal Code.

However, as the defendant had entered a plea of guilty to each charge, the court would reduce the punishment to half, as follows:

- B10,000 fine for operating

an entertainment venue without a permit;

- B5,000 fine for violating or failing to comply with the order of Phuket Provincial Communicable Disease Control Committee;

- B250 for selling alcohol without permission; and

- B10,000 fine for encouraging and supporting youths to behave in an unreasonable manner.

In short, the total fines handed down was just B25,250.

Governor Narong cited his au-

thority under the Section 4 of NCPO order 22/2558 to order the Maldives nightclub to be closed for five years, from Mar 5, 2021 to Mar 4, 2026.

The order also banned the operators from opening any other entertainment venue elsewhere during the same period.

If caught violating the order, the venue owner and manager faced a penalty of up to one-year imprisonment or a fine of up to B20,000 or both.

The owner and manager of the venue have the right to file an ap-

peal with the Phuket Administrative Court within 90 days from the date of the order.

The H2O nightclub was ordered closed by provincial order 1233/2564, also issued last Friday.

The order explained that Phuket City Police had inspected the venue and later charged the operator, named as Mr Thipasut Prateep Na Thalung, for selling or providing baraku (shisha) without permission, operating an entertainment venue without a permit and violating the Phuket provincial order enforcing COVID-19 protection measures.

Unlike the order closing the Maldives venue, the order to close H2O did not confirm what penalties, if any, Mr Thipasut was handed down for the violations.

Instead, Governor Narong cited his authority under Revolution Council announcement No 50, issued on Jan 15, 1959, to order the venue to close for 30 days, from March 5, 2021 to April 3, 2021.

If found violating the order, the operator faced up to 10 days imprisonment or a fine of up to B500, or both.

The operator of H2O also had the right to appeal the closure, the order noted.

To do so, the operator had 15 days to file an appeal directly with the Phuket Governor, the order concluded.

Man arrested for stealing police officer's gun 15 years ago

A CONSTRUCTION worker in Koh Kaew has been arrested by officers from the Royal Thai Police Special Service Division, which calls itself the "Commando" division, for a gun he stole from a police officer's house in Nakhon Ratchasima 15 years ago.

The "commandos" arrested 57-year-old Jamkat Sriwawong on Mar 3, one of the arresting officers told *The Phuket News*.

Jamkat was wanted on arrest warrant No. 52/249 issued by Nakhon Ratchasima Provincial Court on Sept 8, 2006, for the charge of "theft from an accommodation in the nighttime", said the officer.

The arrest was conducted by officers under the command of Lt Gen Torsak Sukvimol, the officer added.

The officer explained that Jamkat and his three friends entered a house owned by a police officer and stole a revolver on July 25, 2006.

Police had already arrested two of Jamkat's ac-



Jamkat Sriwawong, 57, was arrested at a construction site in Koh Kaew on Wednesday (Mar 3). Photo: Royal Thai Police Special Service Division

complices and recovered the stolen firearm, he said.

Police kept investigating until they eventually learned that Jamkat had fled to Phuket and worked as a construction worker at a site in Koh Kaew, the officer explained.

Jamkat was arrested and taken to Chumphuang

Police Station in Nakhon Ratchasima to be charged. His arrest came four months before the warrant for his arrest was to expire, the officer noted.

The officer did not explain who the gun was stolen from or whether it was used in committing any other crimes.

No serious injuries in underpass pile-up

ALL DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS IN four cars and a pickup truck luckily escaped any serious injuries in a pile-up involving a 22-wheeled truck and trailer while exiting the Darasamut Underpass on the afternoon of Mar 3.

Wichit Police were called to the scene, in the southbound exit lane just north of the intersection to Naka Temple, at about 4:10pm.

At the scene officers found a 22-wheeled truck and trailer had struck the back of a small white hatchback. The collision started a chain reaction, with four other cars rammed into each other, and one black pickup truck pivoted across the lane with its tailgate resting on a station wagon that had ploughed through the concrete divider separating oncoming traffic.

Only two people, one man and a woman, were reported as suffering any injuries, both



Photo: Jongpit Thonglangphra

experiencing minor chest pain and arm pain.

Kusoldharm rescue workers transported both of them to Bangkok Hospital Siriraj for treatment.

Wichit Police soon had the vehicles removed to allow traffic flow to resume, while they continued their investigation to determine whether any charges were pending.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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WED MAR 17

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Low: +27°

Wind 7 m/s

THU MAR 18

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Thief slashes German expat

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Police have arrested a man in Patong for robbing a German expat's home in Karon last month, and slashing the German man's arm with a knife after being confronted over the robbery.

Maj Pitchayut Srinak of the Karon Police reported that the suspect, Sompong Chaichana, 28, originally from Phang Nga, was arrested at a house in Patong last Sunday (Mar 7).

Sompong faces charges of theft causing others to be seriously harmed and using a vehicle to flee the scene of the crime, attempted manslaughter, trespass and carrying a weapon in a public area, Maj Pitchayut noted in his report.

In placing Sompong under arrest, police also seized his black Krabi-registered Mitsubishi Cyclone pickup truck as evidence, he added.

Maj Pitchayut explained that the arrest came after Saritrat Hiranwanthanadet,



Photo: Karon Police

42, filed a complaint at Karon Police Station on Feb 26.

Ms Saritrat explained that her husband, German national Ralph Jaiser, 58, had his left

arm slashed by a man in front of their house in Soi Patak 24, Karon.

After being discharged from hospital that same day,

Mr Jaiser told police that he was standing in front of his house when he saw a man walk past carrying a green basket filled with some items.

Mr Jaiser noticed that some of his belongings were in the basket, and whistled to call his son to see. The man, Sompong, heard the whistle and quickly ran to his black pickup truck, which was parked in front of a construction site nearby.

Mr Jaiser ran in front of the pickup to prevent Sompong from escaping.

Sompong got out of the pickup with a knife and proceeded to attack Mr Jaiser, who used his left arm to protect himself. In doing so, he suffered a large slash wound to his arm.

Fearing for his safety, Mr Jaiser fled, and Sompong got back in his pickup and drove off, said Maj Pitchayut in his report.

Mr Jaiser returned home and his wife, Ms Saritrat, took him to Bangkok Hospital Phuket for treatment.

Through CCTV, police managed to track down Sompong to the house where he was staying in Patong and take him into custody, Maj Pitchayut concluded.

Navy inspections find no illegal workers on Phuket fishing boats

RANDOM INSPECTIONS of four Phuket fishing boats by Navy personnel last Thursday (Mar 4) found no illegal migrant workers among the 147 fishermen checked, reports the Thai Navy.

The raids were conducted to prevent any illegal human trafficking, reported Vice Admiral Chongchai Chomchongpat of the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command.

V/Adm Chongchai also serves as Director of the Third Area Command's Maritime Enforcement Coordination Centre (THAI-MECC Area 3), which conducted the inspections on Thursday, led by Capt Kriangkrai Lai-ngern of Phuket Naval Security Control Centre.

The Hua Hin class patrol boat *Tor 543* was used to carry out the inspections.

Present to oversee inspections were Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong, and Thanapong Orachorn from the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare.

Of the 147 fishing workers found on the four boats, 76 were

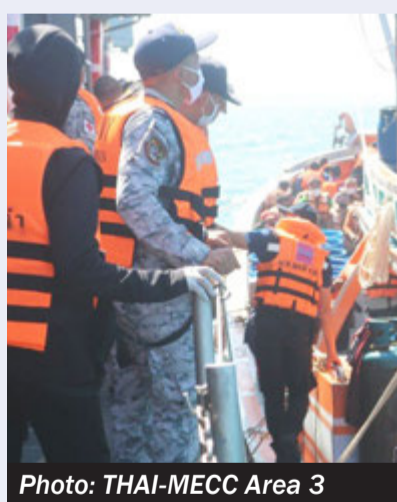


Photo: THAI-MECC Area 3

Thai nationals, 31 were Myanmar nationals, 38 were Cambodian nationals and two were Lao nationals.

"The results of the inspections, which included random interviews of the workers on the boats, showed that there were no illegal acts or human trafficking," said Vice Governor Pichet.

"The inspections went very well. All fishing crewmen had proper identification documents making sure that they were not illegal migrant workers," he added.

The Phuket News

Wichit street shooting was over blocking traffic, reveal police

WICHIT POLICE HAVE REVEALED that the street shooting in front of Soi Hua Hom, off Sakdidee Rd, last month was the result of an argument over the victims parking in the middle of the narrow street, preventing any other motorists from passing through.

Wichit Police Deputy Superintendent Lt Col Thammasan Bunsong told *The Phuket News* on Mar 2 that the suspect wanted for the shooting had already been arrested.

Lt Col Thammasan said he was unable to provide the name of the suspect as he did not have that information available at the time *The Phuket News* called, but said the man was "about 20 years old" and was a local resident in the area where the shooting took place.

"The father of the suspect brought him to Wichit Police Station on Feb 20, just one day after he conducted the shooting," Lt Col Thammasan said.

"The suspect confessed that the motive of the shooting was that the victims had parked their vehicle in the street, preventing other vehicles from passing," he said.

An argument ensued and the 20-year-old pulled out a gun and



Officers at the scene of the shooting on Feb 19. Photo: Phuket Provincial Police / file

started shooting at them, then fled, leaving fellow residents Thammaboot Prachumphan, 46, with a gunshot wound to his head and his son, 28-year-old Anusit, with gunshot wounds to his leg and stomach.

Of the victims of the shooting, Lt Col Thammasan said, "The father, who suffered a gunshot graze wound to his head, has already been discharged from hospital, but as for his son, I do not have any information."

Lt Col Thammasan confirmed that the 20-year-old man has now been charged with attempted murder.

The Phuket News

Koh Maphrao sighted for sustainable development

The Phuket News
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Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew led an inspection and beach cleanup at Koh Maphrao last week as part of a campaign to highlight and support community development on the small island, located off Phuket's east coast.

Joining Governor Narong during the visit on Mar 3 was Wiwat Sanlayakamthorn, President of the Agri-Nature Foundation, along with Vice Governor Piyapong Choowong, local officials and staff from the foundation.

In the morning, Vice Governor Piyapong together with Koh Kaew Tambon Administrative Organisation (*OrBor-Tor*) Deputy Chief Pongsatorn Rangsinthurat and Phuket Reporters Association President Watcharaporn Kulsiri-ithikorn led local reporters to collect trash along the beach on the island.

The cleanup was held under the banner "Reporters do only good things 'Hidden island@ Koh Ma Prao'" as part of the "national mass communication day" activities.



Transport fares remain a key issue for Koh Maphrao's long-term sustainable development. Photo: PR Phuket

In the afternoon, Governor Narong led reporters and officials on a field trip, and led a public hearing for local people to share their problems and suggestions to develop the island in terms of 'agrinature'.

Governor Narong explained to reporters that Koh Maphrao covers about 2,000 rai, and is home to about 700 people living there.

"About 99% of the island's residents are Muslim and work as fishermen and farmers. The island has one school, Koh Maphrao School, which is open [to students] from kindergarten to Prathom 6 [final year of elementary school], as well as a Health Promotion

Hospital and two hotels on the island," he said.

The goal of the development plan is to create a model to be used elsewhere, Governor Narong noted.

"The development plan must focus on the [economic] potential and lifestyle of local residents as its priority," Governor Narong said.

"The main feature of the island is its distance from Phuket, only 10 minutes by boat. The island has beautiful beaches, rich nature, good soil for agriculture and has a calm and private atmosphere, which is perfect for relaxation," he said.

"However the weakness of the island is the local trans-

port. Visitors have to pay for transport many times before reaching their destination, such as the cost of parking at the pier or taking a local taxi [to the pier], then paying the boat fare and then paying for tuk-tuks on the island," he explained.

If such issues could be resolved, "this could be a charm and a selling point of the island," Governor Narong said.

"The 'Koh Maphrao Model' must develop all aspects of society at the same time, with a plan to enhance the quality of life of the people on the island to have a better life, but the development must be people-centered. People must be ready to cooperate. They must create their own products. People must have skills in welcoming tourists," he added.

The development plan must also support career development, ensure children and young people have access to a good education and that elderly persons and people with disabilities receive comprehensive care through government welfare campaigns, Governor Narong concluded.

Hundreds of sea urchins wash ashore Patong Beach

MARINE LIFE EXPERTS are trying to figure out what caused many hundreds of red sea urchins to wash ashore Patong Beach last week.

Lifeguards and members of Patong Baywatch discovered the urchins after arriving to begin their patrols on Mar 2.

The phenomenon inspired locals to turn out in droves to see the red spectacle stretching hundreds of metres along the beach, with some people alarmed by what may have caused it.

Officers from the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) collected some specimens for investigation and took water samples for testing, while lifeguards called in officers from Patong Municipality, who together helped clear the mass of sea urchins from the sand.

"I have never seen anything like it," said lifeguard Somchai Tiangnoi, who urged all beach-goers beware the sharp thorns or any sea urchins that may still remain on the beach.

"Sea urchins usually live in deep water, and are rarely found near beaches. It is worth thinking about what caused them to end up here."



Hundreds of sea urchins lined Patong Beach last Saturday (Mar 2). Photo: Patong Lifeguards

Respected marine biologist Dr Thon Thamrongnawasawat, who serves as the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Fishery at Kasetsart University in Bangkok, noted that some species of sea urchins, with short thorns, could be found in some relatively shallow waters, such as near rocks.

However, he pointed out that if deep sea waters had been disturbed, officers could expect to see many more sea urchins wash ashore during high tides in the coming days.

The DMCR the next day (Mar 3) identified the sea urchins as 'Astropyga radiata Leske', and posted their explanation that the mass of sea urchins washing ashore was nothing more than the result of strong waves during the recent spring tide.

Eakkapong Thongtub



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Phuket-based Businesses Have Adapted to the 'New Normal' and Are Redefining Consumerism

Phuket-based Blue Horizon Developments has introduced the concept of remote property investments to its customers, reinforcing its status as one of the leading property developers in the region

ADVERTORIAL

Having come to terms with the fact that waiting for the COVID-19 pandemic to pass is not the best financial decision, many businesses have adapted to the 'new normal' and come up with creative solutions to not just stay afloat, but to thrive and come out on top once the pandemic blows over.

From further digitalizing the way they operate in reaction to the social distancing measures to creatively addressing customer needs, businesses are redefining consumerism by proving that neither distance nor borders are deterrents in our highly globalized world, and the Phuket-based property developer Blue Horizon Developments is no exception.

Since the first quarter of 2020, Blue Horizon Developments experienced fewer property sales as its customers, both old and new, could not travel to the highly-frequented island to complete property transactions because of the pandemic. However, CEO & Founder Andres Pira had an in-



For more information go to: bluehorizon-thailand.com or WhatsApp: +66 94 580 4602.

spired idea to introduce the concept of remote property investments to his customers.

"It's important for businesses to be open to new ways of thinking,

especially during times of crisis, even if they have operated in a certain way for years and decades," says Pira, a serial entrepreneur. "If they choose not to change with

the changing times, they will be left behind."

Blue Horizon Developments has been offering its customers the option to buy their dream homes and

ideal investment properties from the comfort of their couches. The company offers virtual property tours, carries out the negotiations over video meetings, and sends contracts via courier for buyers to sign and execute the deals. Buyers also have the option to provide a power of attorney to a third party of their choice to take care of the paperwork.

"Investing in a property remotely is not as simple as online shopping," explains Pira. "It involves a lot of time, effort, and most importantly, trust. Our long-standing reputation and credibility have allowed us to successfully garner the trust of international investors and proceed with property transactions even during this pandemic. We hope to continue to lead the evolution in high-quality developments and to offer excellent client satisfaction."

Blue Horizon Developments is currently developing more construction projects that are set to launch this year. The company is confident that its newer projects will receive the same level of international recognition as its existing ones.

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Phuket News



AirAsia ramps up Bangkok-Phuket flights to six a day

AIRASIA HAS INCREASED its number of flights between Bangkok and Phuket to six a day to serve what the airline calls "pent up demand" for travel following the COVID lockdowns earlier this year.

The move to ramp up flight services to Phuket comes ahead of upcoming holidays that are expected to see a surge in demand, AirAsia said in a release on Mar 4.

At an event also held on Mar 4 for AirAsia to thank the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) for its support in promoting safe domestic tourism, AirAsia Thailand Chief Executive Officer Santisuk Klongchaiya, said, "We wish to thank TAT for their continued support to promote safe domestic travel. We expect tourism to recover continuously from this March and April, when Songkran and other long holidays will provide more opportunities for travel.

"AirAsia is preparing to bring back 100% of its domestic network by April, including domestic cross-re-



AirAsia has increased its Bangkok-Phuket flights to six a day to serve 'pent up demand'. Photo: AirAsia

gion connections, to meet an expected surge in demand. Higher frequencies are expected for popular routes as well, with seven flights daily from Don Mueang-Chiang Mai, three flights daily for Suvarnabhumi-Chiang Mai, six flights daily from Don Mueang-Phuket, five flights daily from Don Mueang-Hat Yai, and four flights daily from Don Mueang-Khon Kaen, while Don Mueang-Udon Thani will have three flights daily," Mr Santisuk said.

At the event, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Yuthasak Supasorn stated, "Now that the government has relaxed COVID-19 prevention meas-

ures in many areas, tourists can travel more confidently and conveniently... We are assured tourism industry operators in both major and secondary cities are fully ready to accommodate visitors, especially during the upcoming holiday periods when demand is usually highest."

Mr Santisuk noted, "There is much pent up demand for travel and the recent release of our #FlyRu-aRu-aPass promotion, which saw all 80,000 privileges snapped up in just 48 hours is testament to that."

"Relaxed health measures, a lift on 14-day quarantine in most provinces and vaccinations have significantly added to consumer travel confidence," he added.

The news of increased flights to Phuket came as Phuket International Airport released its full monthly schedule of domestic flights, showing Bangkok Airways, Thai Lion Air, Vietjet, Nok Air and Thai Smile all flying to and from Phuket.

The Phuket News

Ministry proposes shorter quarantine from next month

Bangkok Post

The Public Health Ministry is to ask the government to consider reducing the length of mandatory quarantine for incoming travellers from 14 days to 7-10 days, from next month.

The plan was announced on Monday (Mar 8) by Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, in his capacity as chairman of the National Committee on Communicable Diseases.

Mr Anutin said the ministry would ask the government to cut the length of mandatory quarantine in order to help stimulate tourism and give the economy a boost.

"We are prepared to open the country to help drive economic growth," he said after the committee met.

"If we can administer vaccines to 70% of all medical workers by October, we may consider abolishing mandatory quarantine requirements for some groups."

"We have enough vaccines from AstraZeneca, and we are planning to get 10 million more doses from them, if they



A group of Thai returnees head into the Ambassador Hotel in Bangkok last April to quarantine for 14 days after returning from Russia. Photo: Bangkok Post

can produce more for us."

If approved, shorter quarantine requirements will apply to travellers who fall into the following three categories, starting in April, he said.

The first are non-Thai citizens who were vaccinated against COVID-19 between 14 days to three months before their arrival in Thailand and have tested negative for the disease. These travellers, Mr Anutin said, will be required to quarantine for only seven days.

The second are Thai returnees who have been vac-

inated against COVID-19 between 14-days to three months before their arrival in Thailand. These travellers, he said, also will be required to stay in quarantine for seven days.

Third, Mr Anutin said, are non-Thai citizens who have not been vaccinated but possess COVID-19-free certificates. These travellers will be required to stay in quarantine for 10 days, he said.

These shortened quarantine requirements will not apply to travellers arriving

from Africa, who will still be required to observe the full 14-day quarantine, as the Public Health Ministry is concerned about the possibility of more contagious COVID-19 variants from the continent spreading to Thailand.

On a separate note, the public health minister insisted that the government never had any intention to block private hospitals from providing COVID-19 vaccines to paying patients.

"But they must comply with guidelines on vaccine registration," Mr Anutin said.

Songkran is crucial to help boost economy, says PM

PRIME MINISTER Prayut Chan-o-cha insisted on Monday (Mar 8) that Songkran celebrations be held to revitalise the struggling tourism industry.

People would be allowed to travel across the country to celebrate, the PM said, but each area must impose measures to prevent the virus spreading.

Gen Prayut said he wanted to see the economy improve and people's income boosted by tourism activities over the long holiday.

He therefore vowed to ease restrictions ahead of the festival so that people had enough time to plan their trips and make hotel reservations.

The Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) said Songkran this year would be celebrated as a "new normal" festival, the goal being to preserve Thai culture while containing the virus.

Spokesperson Apisamai Srirangson said the CCSA would meet next Monday (Mar 15) to consider rolling out a further relaxation of restrictions in three phases.



Samut Prakan celebrates Songkran in April 2019. Photo: Pattarapong Chatpattarasill

The first phase starting on April 1, the easing would be in line with the government's vaccination plan with adjustments to the colour-coded status of each province, she said.

The second phase will include the lifting of the state of emergency at the end of May, and thereafter a reliance on communicable disease laws to contain the virus.

From Oct 1, the third phase will likely begin with a further easing of measures, including entry and quarantine requirements for foreign visitors. This phase will coincide with more people having been given their COVID-19 vaccinations.

Quarantine requirements would vary based on the vaccination status of foreign visitors, Dr Apisamai said.

Bangkok Post

AstraZeneca vaccine rollout confirmed

AFTER MUCH ANTICIPATION AND delay, Thai authorities announced on Monday (Mar 8) that the roll out of AstraZeneca jabs were to begin yesterday (Mar 11) with Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha the first recipient.

Anutin Charnvirakul, Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health Minister, told the media on Monday that the Department of Medical Sciences would soon complete the mandatory quality check on 117,000 doses sent to Thailand late last month.

"[The rollout of] AstraZeneca vaccines in Thailand will take place on March 11 at the earliest with the PM to be the first to receive the vaccine," Mr Anutin said.

Initially, the rollout was set for Feb 28, but it was pushed back pending the mandatory quality check on the shipment of vaccines.

Mr Anutin said senior Cabinet members, including Khunying Kalaya Sophonpanich, acting education minister, and Don Pramudwinai, foreign affairs minister, wanted to obtain COVID-19 vaccines from AstraZeneca.

Senior citizens aged 60 and over would be prioritised to receive the jabs, while younger people would be given China's Sinovac vaccine, according to the authorities.

VACCINE PASSPORT

Mr Anutin said the Beijing-based manufacturer is considering making Thailand a regional vaccination centre for Chinese citizens living in Asean.

He said the country has asked his min-



At time of press Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha was expected to be the first person in Thailand to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine. Photo: Bangkok Post

istry to help provide vaccines to 200,000 Chinese citizens living in the kingdom. Beijing will provide the vaccines for free, Mr Anutin added.

In another development, officials have met to discuss the World Health Organization's COVID-19 passport proposal.

They focused on the criteria needed to obtain a vaccine passport, according to Dr Apisamai Srirangson, assistant spokeswoman to the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration. "The Public Health Ministry insisted that the use of the vaccine passports must wait for standards to be set by the WHO," she said.

Dr Apisamai said the ministry would issue a certificate only to those who had received two jabs. Those certificates, she said, had been approved by the WHO.

An immunised person could use the certificate to acquire a vaccine passport, she said. Bangkok Post



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SUSTAINABLY YOURS

Palmer Owyong

A year and a half ago Netflix released the documentary *The Game Changers*, about injured MMA fighter James Wilks looking for a way to heal his body. What he found was that many professional athletes, including Olympic cyclists, runners, weightlifters and American football players, had all switched to plant-based diets to improve their performance.

When the documentary was released, it stirred up a lot of emotion and brought the debate against eating animal products into the mainstream, with everyone from Joe Rogan to Arnold Schwarzenegger commenting on whether a plant-based diet is healthy.

Fast forward 18 months, several major fires, a few hurricanes and a global pandemic later and plant-based diets are more popular than ever. By now you know about the health benefits of eating less meat and dairy, but what you may not know is that when done correctly plant-based food can be just as, or even more, delicious than meat-based dishes.

Meet Jamie Raftery, the owner and founder of the Holistic Chef Academy, a website where he shares ideas on how to make plant-based cuisine, healthy, delicious and affordable. Besides sev-



eral Thai dishes, the site also has American, Indian and European recipes and a food library which contains the nutritional value of various ingredients with instructions on how to integrate them into your cooking.

Trained by famed Michelin Star-winning chef Thomas Keller, Raftery was at one time a butcher, so moving to a strict plant-based diet was initially foreign to him and happened by accident. In his 20s he paid his dues, working 80- to 100-hour weeks at award-winning restaurant The French Laundry, which eventually took its toll.

In 2014, he left California exhausted and started interning with 3 Star Michelin Chef Rasmus Kofoed at

Geranium restaurant in Copenhagen, Denmark. While there, he began his foray into a plant-based lifestyle. Kofoed taught Raftery how to take the humblest of ingredients, from seeds and nuts to seaweeds and onions, and elevate them into something sublime and worthy of an award-winning restaurant.

After his internship, he came to Thailand in search of new culinary adventures and a healthier lifestyle. During a trip to Chiang Mai, he stopped eating meat in what he thought was a temporary reprieve. What he found was that besides adding yoga, meditation and Muay Thai, eating a plant-based diet became a way of life, that not only made him healthier, but happier, stronger and fitter as well.

Raftery also found inspiration from looking at food in another way. He replaced the meat-heavy French cuisine with plant-based dishes, now that he was cooking for health, rather than awards and accolades.

He also took a job as Director of Culinary Development at Thanyapura, where he regularly consults with visiting elite athletes and weekend warriors on improving their diet for better performance. In addition, he runs workshops, cooking demonstrations and of course cooks for Divine and the Booster Deli and Café, the two restaurants at the sport and health resort. There you can find anything from soups, salads and wraps to pizzas, pastas, burgers and ice creams, which sound anything but healthy, but since they are plant-

based, in moderation they actually are.

You probably already know the health benefits of reducing or eliminating meat and dairy from your diet. Done correctly, eating a plant-based diet is scientifically proven to fight heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

However, there are also environmental benefits as well. According to a recent study published by the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) our global food system is the main driver for loss of biodiversity and that as the population increases, this will only accelerate, noting that 86% of species are at risk of extinction. The paper states moving to a more plant-based diet that has fewer animal products will help to reduce pressure on forests and other ecosystems. To help Thais transition to a healthier and greener diet, Sinergia Animal created the Thai Challenge 22, where you can get tips and recipes from nutrition experts.

For more tips ongoing plant-based:

- Visit Jamie Raftery's Holistic Chef Academy
- Root The Future is a site started by a Bangkok-based expat couple who share tips on embracing the lifestyle.
- Search on Facebook for Kombuchawow to get delicious ice cream and yogurt delivered to your door.
- Try some frozen entrees from Vegan Ready available for sale at Villa Market.

Palmer Owyong is an environmental activist working with the Kamala Green Club and the Global Sustainability Hub.

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'Mister Koh Lanta'



BLAZING SADDLES

Baz Daniel
baz_gunner2000@yahoo.com

Based in Bangkok and still with one foot in the high (blood)-pressured world of advertising, I started pursuing my retirement dream of becoming a travel writer in 2004 by freelancing for John Everingham's iconic Art Asia Press and *The Greater Phuket Magazine*.

December of that year saw me on an assignment to a magical realm called Koh Lanta, where John said I should get in touch with a fellow named Duane Lennie... who he described as "Mister Koh Lanta" and who was reputed to know everything there was to know about this fabled isle.

Getting to Koh Lanta in 2004 represented something of a challenge in itself as one had to drive on and then off two ancient, decrepit, car ferries to cross two pieces of water separating the mainland Isthmus of Kra from firstly Koh Lanta Noi, and then onward to Saladan Town on Koh Lanta Yai.

Now, 17 years later, we are down to just one decrepit car ferry to get there, and that folks seems to be progress Koh Lanta-style for you! Maybe it's this eccentric indifference to the outside world which fosters much of the charm of this other-worldly island, beloved to the hippy back-packer party crowd, as much as to the sophisticated well-heeled international jet-set hidden away in their luxurious hillside villas, or billeted at stellar five-star resorts such as Pimalai on stunning Kantiang Bay in the southwest corner of the island.

My first visit in 2004 saw me settling into a little beach-side cottage overlooking Long Beach to the south of Saladan Town on the northwest coast. Once settled, I duly called "Mister Koh Lanta" and he agreed to drop over that evening for a sun-downer drink at my resort. A deep West Canadian vocal burr with honeyed edges announced the arrival of the warm-hearted fellow who turned out to be Duane Patrick Lennie... a big teddy bear of a man with a twinkle in both eyes. We hit it off immediately and settled down with some cold ones for a long, beachside chat about the island, as a stunning Andaman sunset engulfed us.

Duane's story was notable because he had chosen in 2001 to forsake a successful career in one of the world's most desirable and liveable cities, Vancouver, to travel out to this far-flung corner of Thailand in search of adventure and serendipity. Prior to relocating, Duane was a founding partner in Curve Communications, one of Vancouver's top billing public relations companies, yet his pioneering adventurous spirit had brought him to this fabled isle to set up various tourism-related businesses and become 'Mister Koh Lanta'.

Over the ensuing years, by then working as Editor of *The Greater Phuket Magazine*, I became immensely fond both of Koh Lanta and of Duane himself. I travelled there many times and stayed with Duane at his funky Mango House Boutique Resort nestled in a cluster of 100-year-old wooden Chinese Shophouses jutting out over the turbid waters of the bay in the heart of Lanta Old Town (known as Sri Raya in Thai).

Very few foreigners called this Muslim fishing town home, but one was Duane's great friend Julie Prescott, who helped him design and furnish aspects of Mango House Resort. With guesthouse rooms, over-the-sea villas and a 50-seat bar and bistro, Mango House Resort was as unusual and creative as Duane himself and became one of the region's unique places to stay, winning accolades and write-ups in prestige publications from *Conde Nast Traveller* to *The Sun* newspaper in the UK.

Over the years I wrote many laudatory stories about Koh Lanta for this ongoing 'Blazing Saddles' column, after pedalling along the beguiling beaches, or up into the silent hills of the central spine of this magical island. After each day's adventures I'd look forward to a sunset return to my romantic base at Mango House and drawn-out suppers with Duane holding court at some ramshackle water-side restaurant long into the tropical night.

As our friendship developed, I had the pleasure of working with Duane as a writer and consultant on several marketing and communications projects which his consultancy handled around the Andaman region. This was not without its challenges, as anyone who has toiled in the shark-infested depths of the property and tourism business around the Andaman will know. How-



Duane Lennie, 1964 - 2020.

ever, we managed to keep on laughing and enjoying our shared sense of humour in spite of the many rogues and villains we encountered!

Duane was a major force in the Laanta Lanta Annual Festival, one of the most charming events you'll find around this region and a rich celebration of the peaceful cultural diversity of Koh Lanta's residents. It's a chance for the various ethnic groups to say thank you to each other, displaying the best of their own art and customs to each other and to visitors. Duane and his funky resort were at the centre of all this and many of us enjoyed the wonderful musical raves which Mango House hosted as a part of the Festival.

Tragically, Duane suffered a mild stroke in 2015 and subsequently decided to return to Vancouver in September

2017. His friend Roman Weber took over the running of Mango House and it remains to this day as beautiful and beguiling a place to stay as you'll find in all the Andaman.

Like so many of his friends around the region, I was devastated to learn of Duane's passing in August last year aged just 56. It was a cruel blow and it's supremely unfair that such a lovely, lively soul, who brought so much happiness to others, has been taken away from us.

Personally, I wanted to write this piece to thank Duane for all the laughter and joy we shared. Duane Lennie was certainly a one-off character, a true romantic adventurer, but to me he was and will always be.. 'Mister Koh Lanta'.

R.I.P. Duane Patrick Lennie, 1964 - 2020.

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POP QUIZ

1. Triton is a moon of which planet?
2. The Australian film 'Crocodile Dundee' was released in which year?
3. Which name did Karl Marx give to all four of his daughters?
4. In the northern hemisphere, moss mostly grows on which side of trees – north, south, east or west?
5. Which cathedral contains the world's oldest working clock and the best surviving copy of the four original Magna Cartas?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

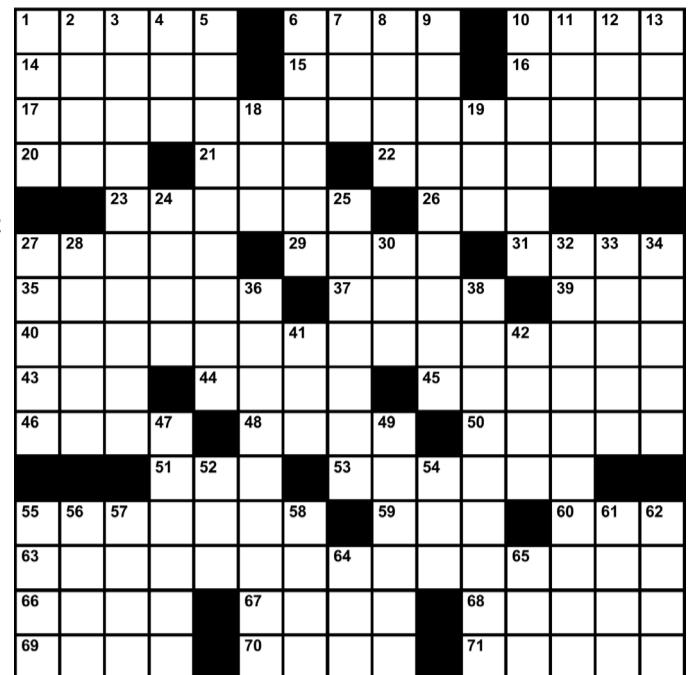
1. Cores
6. Tacky chic
10. Enhances
14. Courtyards
15. Sea position
16. Hawaiian tuber
17. Mags
20. Increase, with "up"
21. Poetic palindrome
22. WWII battle site
23. Crackers
26. Mandela's org.
27. Stimulant ingredients
29. Kuwaiti, e.g.
31. Land of leprechauns
35. Profits
37. Indonesian roamer
39. Australian runner
40. Rags?
43. Addition
44. Affectation
45. Cow fuel
46. Some beans
48. Campaigns
50. Some bays
51. Family dog, for short
53. Psychoanalyzed?
55. Cooling-off periods?

Down

1. Perry Como's "___ Loves Mambo"
2. Any thing
3. In Aruban fashion?
4. Cool
5. Vendor's mistake?
6. Linked series of writings
7. "Aladdin" prince
8. Exec's note
9. Gotcha moments
10. Immediately
11. "Two Years Before the Mast" writer
12. Attracted
13. Bean used to make miso
18. Time piece?
19. Time div.

24. Catch

25. Alain Robbe-Grillet novel, with "The"
27. "Who ___?"
28. Kind of molding
30. Aardvark's tidbit
32. Worthy of comment
33. Candidate's concern
34. Certain posers
36. Quail food
38. Disney workers
41. Fed. construction overseer
42. Brio
47. Sirhan Sirhan, e.g.
49. Fuse mishaps
52. Back when
54. Churchill's "so few," (abbr.)
55. Creep
56. Bird beak part
57. The America's Cup trophy, e.g.
58. Gull-like bird
61. Neuter
62. To be, to Tiberius
64. Paranormal ability
65. Line



Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1. Neptune; 2. 1986; 3. Jenny (after his wife); 4. North; 5. Salisbury Cathedral

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

in 3 children in the UK, even before COVID-19, spent less time outside than maximum-security inmates did.

41

percent of women and 9% of men admit to crying at work, according to one research study.

2015

was the first year since 1974 that nobody climbed to the top of Mount Everest.

81,000

drug overdose deaths were recorded in the US in the 12 months ending in May 2020, the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a 12-month period, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

1

million

US dollars is how much the 'DKNY Golden Delicious Million Dollar Fragrance Bottle' costs, last year rated the most expensive perfume in the world. It came in a bottle studded with 2,909 precious stones including 2,700 hand-cut white diamonds.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Windsurfing fun off The Play Yard Phuket, Mai Khao (east coast). Photo: Brian Stamm

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

This week in history

Mar 12, 1881

Andrew Watson makes his Scotland debut as the world's first black international football player and captain.

Mar 13, 1921

Mongolia is proclaimed an independent monarchy, ruled by Russian military officer Roman von Ungern-Sternberg as a dictator.

Mar 14, 44 BC

Casca and Cassius decide, on the night before the Assassination of Julius Caesar, that Mark Antony should live.

Mar 15, 1985

The first Internet domain name is registered (symbolics.com).

Mar 16, 597 BC



Ash plume from Mount Agung on Nov 27, 2017. Photo: Michael W. Ishak

Babylonians capture Jerusalem, and replace Jeconiah with Zedekiah as king.

Mar 17, 1963

Mount Agung erupts on Bali killing more than 1,100 people.

Mar 18, 1241

First Mongol invasion of Poland: Mongols overwhelm Polish armies in Kraków in the Battle of Chmielnik and plunder the city.

Source: Wikipedia

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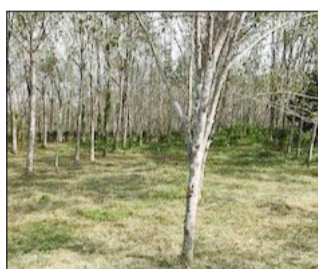
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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY LUNCHEON - EMPOWERING WOMEN TO SUCCEED

Over 130 like-minded guests enjoyed a fantastic luncheon held at Angsana Laguna Phuket's ballroom on Tuesday, March 8. The welcome address by Matthew Barclay, Australia's Consul-General to Phuket and inspirational speakers Thanaporn Phonboon, from the Australian Consulate-General; Jo Barnes, Globetrotting Lifestyle Entrepreneur; and Karine Gauthier, Body Temple, Singapore, were warmly received. The event was proudly supported by The Australian Consulate-General, Phuket, *The Phuket News* and Angsana Laguna Phuket. Congratulations to the organisers from Good Shepherd Phuket and Phuket Has Been Good to Us on a great event and raising much-needed funds for their local charities.



A close encounter at the ACG

CRICKET

Neil Quail

Bagging rights went to the Rest of the World (ROW) select XI following their grand final victory over the Asia select XI last Sunday (Mar 7) at the ACG in yet another incredibly close-fought match.

Having the series poised with two wins apiece, and more than 350 overs played by the end of the weekend's action, the winning runs came in the very last over, with just two balls remaining in the game.

Both teams fielded their strongest teams possible, Asia buoyed by the inclusion of pace bowler Ashan Fonseka, while Stuart Hamilton's return was a welcome boost to the ROW.

Asia looked to set a challenging target as Joe Ninan and Imtiyaz Mushtaq opened the batting, facing ROW's bowling attack of captain Jason Robertson and Dom Judge.

Ninan's innings was to be short-lived, however, edging a shot in the 3rd over for Judge to take a sharp catch at first slip.

Mushtaq was then joined by Fonseka (63), and the pair



ROW's Jeremy Bootsy and Michael Flowers celebrate their batting performances and the series win against Asia last Sunday at the ACG. Photo: Stuart Hamilton

would go on to build a powerful partnership of 145 runs before Fonseka was bowled by Justin Swart in the 18th over with the score at 166 for 2.

Supported by Bhanu Pratap, Mushtaq continued to frustrate the ROW bowlers and was just eight runs short of reaching his ton when his

lofted shot fell short to Michael Flowers at deep cover.

Pratap would also find himself tantalisingly close to a milestone before falling victim to the combination of Robertson and Judge in the 31st over just seven short of his half-century.

Captain Shivam Bhat-

tachayraya (20 n.o.) and Sami Pir (17 n.o.) added to the score, with Asia eventually setting ROW a total of 289 to win.

A deserved break from the day's heat and for lunch then brought Jeremy Bootsy and Dan Nicholson to the middle, beginning ROW's chase.

In needing a confident

start, Bootsy stepped up to the task and blasted his way to 50 at a blistering pace, reaching it in just the 8th over.

By the 14th over, the partnership had reached cricket's superstitious score line of 111, which if believed would have an immediate negative effect. With Bootsy on 81 runs, a tally that included a number of superbly timed shots off Fonseka's fiery pace, Mushtaq's four-wicket haul began by cart-wheeling Nicholson's off-stump, and just five balls later bringing Bootsy's dramatic innings to a close in a repeat of Nicholson's demise.

The new partnership of Swart and Paul Judge fared well in adding 50 runs to the total, before Mushtaq bowled Swart and then took Judge's wicket with a catching assist from Pir.

Flowers and Livermore raised the tempo with a little help from a loose Yassir 30th over which gifted a vital injection of 23 runs, and arguably became the game's turning point in favour of ROW.

Now needing 38 runs to win from four overs, Flowers and Livermore knuckled down to exploit any wayward deliveries, eventually bringing

the target within six runs for the start of the final over.

Given an opportunity to redeem himself, Yassir took the ball for his team and looked to have swung the odds back in Asia's favour with only 2 runs scored from his first four balls.

However, his next delivery veered wide down Livermore's leg-side, allowing the pair to scramble an extra two runs, but importantly levelling the scores.

Yassir's frustration was complete in seeing his next delivery beat Livermore's bat, but also the wicket and then the wicket-keeper to trundle over the boundary for four invaluable runs as the sun set over the ACG and the series, with a hard won victory going to the ROW.

An MVP performance from Mushtaq (92 runs and bowling figures of 4 for 40) was unfortunately not enough on this occasion. Bootsy's 81 runs certainly gave ROW a crucial platform for their win, while the 82-run partnership during the last eight overs between Flowers and Livermore will also be remembered as integral to an overall solid team performance from the ROW select XI.

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BISP students climb the national tennis ranks

TENNIS

THREE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL School, Phuket (BISP) students are working their way up the national tennis rankings after their recent success on the Lawn Tennis Association of Thailand's (LTAT) national tournament circuit.

Year 7 student Tarita (Ig) has moved up one place in the national rankings for Under-12 Girls Singles and is now the second-ranked player in her age category in the country.

Year 8 player Thanwarat (Bebe) has recently edged her way into the top 10 in the Under-14 Girls Singles category and Tinnapat (Luke), Year 10, is currently ranked fourth in Thailand for Under-16 Boys Singles.

The LTAT's national tennis rankings are updated every week. Although many ranking tournaments have been cancelled this year due to the pandemic, the students have continued to train hard and travel to weekend tournaments when they can.



Photo: BISP Media

In late February, Ig and Bebe competed at the PTT LTAT Development Tournament, Southern #1 in Hat Yai, where Ig won the Under-12 Girls Singles and Bebe finished runner-up in the Under-14 Girls Singles.

Luke competed at the PTT LTAT Development Tournament in Phang Nga at the end of November, where he was the winner of the Under-16 Boys Singles category.

The BISP Sea Eagles RPT Tennis Academy High-Performance players train between 11 and 13 hours per week.

"Ig, Bebe, Luke and the rest of our High-Performance team continue to show great dedication to the programme by working hard in training sessions, listening to feedback and putting what they learn into games and

tournaments," said Acting Head Coach Rachna Sharma. "They are supportive of each other and we also have a great community of parents supporting our players."

"The coaching team are thrilled to now have three of our players ranked in the top 10 in Thailand for their age groups. Congratulations to all our students on their great attitudes and commitment. Keep up the great work."

Upcoming tournaments for BISP's High-Performance players include the PTT LTAT Development Tournament, Southern #2, in Surat Thani from 13-15 March.

Congratulations to all players and the entire BISP Sea Eagles RPT Tennis Academy coaching team!

For more information on British International School, Phuket please contact info@bisphuket.ac.th. Lee Blake



Bruno Fernandes scored a first-minute penalty as Manchester United ended their rivals' winning run at the Etihad Stadium last Sunday. Photo: AFP

United hush their noisy neighbours and halt run

FOOTBALL

AFP

Manchester United shattered Manchester City's record winning streak with an impressive 2-0 victory against the Premier League leaders, while Liverpool hit a new low as relegation-threatened Fulham won at Anfield last Sunday (Mar 7).

Pep Guardiola's side were on an English top-flight record run of 21 successive wins in all competitions heading into the Manchester derby.

But United ruined City's 28-game unbeaten run in all competitions thanks to an early penalty from Bruno Fernandes and Luke Shaw's second-half strike at the Etihad Stadium.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team, unbeaten in their last 22 away league games, moved into second place but they were still 11

points behind City with 10 games left at time of press.

Despite surrendering their 15-match winning league run in their first defeat since losing at Tottenham in November, City remain firm favourites to lift the title for the third time in four seasons.

Leicester are in third after a 2-1 win at Brighton and Chelsea a place behind them after overcoming Everton 2-0 on Monday.

West Ham continued their fine form with a 2-0 win over Leeds, which keeps them in fifth, and Gareth Bale's resurgence continued as he scored twice in Spurs' 4-1 win against Crystal Palace.

LIVERPOOL CRASH AGAIN

Liverpool have now lost six consecutive home league games and gone eight without a win at Anfield after a 1-0 loss to Fulham.

That run is all the more remarkable as Jurgen Klopp's men had gone nearly four years without a league defeat at home in 68 games between April 2017 and January this year.

Liverpool's best chance of qualifying for next season's Champions League may now be in winning this season's competition for a seventh time as they sit eighth, seven points adrift of the top four, having played at least one game more than all their rivals.

Despite their lowly position in the table, Fulham had lost just one of their previous six games and were well worthy of the win courtesy of Mario Lemina's first-half goal.

Fulham remain in the bottom three but only on goal difference behind Brighton.

Newcastle, one point above in the relegation zone, remain in deep trouble after a 0-0 draw at West Brom.

Running through quarantine

MARATHON

Continued from page 16

...“We had to remain in our room without exception for the first five days,” Nick said. “We had temperature checks twice a day during that time, once in the morning, once in the evening.”

“After five days we took the mandatory COVID swab test and were then allowed to go onto the roof of the hotel for fresh air but were not permitted to use any of the facilities such as the gym or pool. That’s why I took to running in my room,” he added.

“I’ve always been an active person,” Nick said. “When I was a child I walked 3km to school every day for years. I took up running seriously when I was 31.”

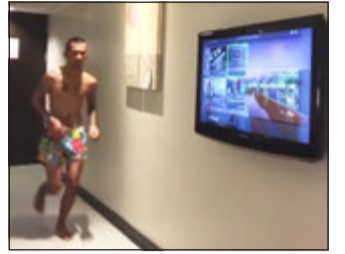
He also inspired one of his fellow quarantine mates to take up the activity, although he did not achieve anywhere near the kind of distance that Nick accomplished.

“Even a small amount of exercise is better than nothing during quarantine,” he said. “I would find it very challenging to be so inactive for that length of time.”

On arriving back in Phuket post-quarantine, Nick immediately took to the streets of his Pa Khlok neighbourhood for a 14km run.

Did he find it strange running once again in a more familiar or natural environment?

“Actually I did, yes,” he replied. “The one thing I did notice when running in the room is how much more focused you become – there are



no distractions or potential dangers that are presented when on the streets such as traffic, other people, etc.”

It was that laser focus generated in his hotel room in Bangkok that allowed Nick to breeze through his quarantine and not be at all desuaded if he had to do it again.

“We are waiting on the finalisation of a contract with a client which would mean delivering another boat to the Philippines,” Nick said.

“I would be more than happy to take on quarantine again if necessary.”

“It would be a great opportunity for me to beat my personal best,” he concluded with a smile.

Nick is part of a 25-strong running group that regularly meet and take on routes in the Pa Khlok area. Anyone interested in joining in the fun can contact him on 091-154-4569 or Naruttama4569@gmail.com

Nick's quarantine-run breakdown was as follows:

Day 2: 15km, 1hr 30mins
Day 4: 21km, 2hr 5mins
Day 6: 7km, 40 mins
Day 7: 11km, 1hr 2mins
Day 8: 20km, 1hr 49mins
Day 10: 42km, 3hr 55mins
Day 11: 11km, 1hr
Day 12: 15km, 1hr 30mins
Day 13: 11km, 1 hr
Day 14: 1hr, 2mins

Gerrard hungry for more

FOOTBALL

STEVEN GERRARD HAS his sights set on more silverware with Rangers after leading the club to their first Scottish league title for 10 years.

The former Liverpool and England midfielder celebrated his first managerial trophy on Sunday (Mar 7) after Celtic's goalless draw at Dundee United ended their chances of retaining the Premiership.

Gerrard's men have not lost a single game in the league in their successful quest to end Celtic's record-equalling run of nine consecutive Scottish league titles.

Rangers were not even in the top flight for four of those seasons after they were demoted to the fourth tier following liquidation in 2012 due to financial troubles.

“There is more to come



Gerrard is aiming high. Photo: AFP

and the next thing for me, when you win, it is always about what is next, and I am so proud of the players first and foremost – they are the most important people inside the club,” Gerrard told the club’s website.

The 40-year-old added that he wanted his players to “keep delivering” until the end of the season.

At time of press they were to meet Slavia Prague in the Europa League last-16 last night and Cove Rangers in the third round of the Scottish Cup on April 3. AFP

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**BISP students
a big hit on the
court > p14**



Naruttama 'Nick' Jarat back on the streets doing what he loves best: running. Photo: Naruttama Jarat

THE RUNNING MAN

MARATHON

Ben Tirebuck
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Should you be faced with the scenario, how would you likely spend your time during COVID-19 quarantine? Relax and do very little? Watch an endless amount of TV? Catch up on current affairs, box-sets and movies? Learn a new language? Read a series of books? Write a book even?

For Phuket resident Naruttama 'Nick' Jarat the answer was none of the above. Instead

he decided to take a leaf out of Forrest Gump's book and run. And run. Then run some more.

Nick, 37, recently spent two weeks in quarantine at a hotel in Bangkok after he and fellow crew members had delivered a yacht to a customer based in the Philippines.

Faced with the daily restriction of his hotel room's four walls and the ensuing boredom this would bestow on such an active character, Nick decided to use his time as productively as possible by continuing his hobby of running. In total he had amassed more than 140km by the time

his quarantine ended.

Nick and the crew left Phuket on Dec 4 and sailed their client's 115-foot boat to Manila, arriving on Dec 17. The client had invited friends for a nine-day cruise which took in island hopping, snorkelling and New Year's Eve celebrations at sea. Nick worked onboard as the head chef.

They flew back to Bangkok on Jan 19 after a mix-up with the initial immigration stamps in Manila meant they had to stay aboard the boat until the situation was resolved and they could leave the country.

On returning to Thailand, Nick and three of his colleagues stayed at the Radisson hotel in Bangkok's Sukhumvit 13, where they served their mandatory quarantine, paying B43,000 for the two-week stay.

Managing to see out the first day, Nick knew he would very soon grow restless. However, that same day a friend who had recently undertaken quarantine in New Zealand messaged him to say she had run 10km one day in her hotel room in a bid to pass the time.

A keen runner since a youngster, this was a light-bulb moment for Nick, who

decided to not just emulate his friend's feat but to take a it a step or two further.

"On my second day of quarantine I ran 15km, non-stop," Nick told *The Phuket News*.

"The room was relatively small but I was able to run back-and-forth in the corridor from the front door to the window, using my watch and running app on my phone to track the distance and time.

"I made sure I had water and fruit to hand so I could grab it when needed and not interrupt my running, which I did barefoot. I completed

that first run in 1 hour and 30 minutes."

Nick then staggered a further nine runs across his remaining 12 days of quarantine, running an impressive 144km in total.

"I managed 20km on day 8 in 1 hour 49 minutes," he beamed.

"Although day 10 was my highlight – I managed 42km that day in 3 hours and 55 minutes!"

Nick said the manner in which the quarantine was handled by hotel staff was very professional...

Continued on page 15

No mercy for disqualified Yan as he loses UFC belt

MMA

PETR YAN LOST HIS UFC bantamweight championship to Aljamain Sterling at UFC 259 in Las Vegas last Saturday (Mar 6) due to disqualification, the first time that a UFC belt has changed hands in such a manner.

In the fourth round, Yan, known as 'No Mercy', delivered an illegal knee strike to Sterling's head, who was in a grounded position at the time of contact, before referee Mark Smith intervened and waived the

contest, meaning Yan forfeited the title.

Phuket-based Yan, who trains at Tiger Muay Thai & MMA Training Camp in Chalong, claimed in the post-fight interview he did not mean to strike with the knee.

"I don't even know what to say," the 27-year-old Yan said.

"Of course, if his knee was on the ground, he was grounded opponent, but I didn't do it intentionally. There is a belt on the line and you make mistakes," he added.

It appeared there was some confusion with instructions being

relayed from Yan's corner while Sterling was grounded, with claims that one of his coaches had urged him to strike.

"To be honest, I didn't really understand what they were yelling, I was just focused on the hands, and throwing the knee when he would be up," Yan said.

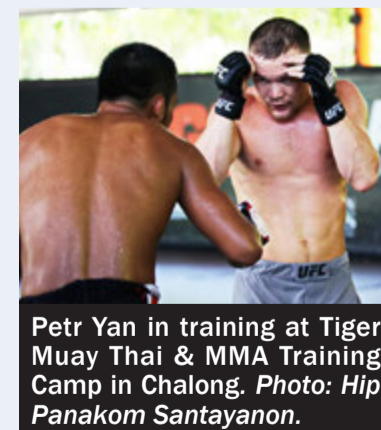
"For a while I thought I did everything right and that he was knocked out."

The 31-year-old Jamaican-American Sterling, who broke down in tears in the ring after Smith had stopped the contest, was visibly

shaken and took a while to regain his senses. His trainer had to physically hold him up when the fight outcome was delivered and the newly crowned champion threw the belt on the Octagon canvas soon after UFC president Dana White had wrapped it around his waist.

"Not the way I ever want to win a fight," Sterling said via Twitter afterwards.

Yan took to Twitter himself to exclaim: "I apologize and wish speedy recovery to @funkmasterMMA. I didn't mean to throw an illegal strike, I just made a big



Petr Yan in training at Tiger Muay Thai & MMA Training Camp in Chalong. Photo: Hip Panakom Santayanon.

mistake and paid for it."

White said he would like a rematch between Sterling and Yan to be booked "as soon as possible."

Ben Tirebuck