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# LAST CALL



Photo: The Phuket News

## BANGLA GOES DARK AS 9PM BOOZE CURFEW FORCES EARLY CLOSING

The Phuket News  
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A police car sounding its siren to signal closing time for pubs and bars along Bangla Rd became standard this week as the 9pm curfew on licensed venues serving alcohol, and allowing alcohol to be consumed on the premises, came into effect.

The forced early closing of night venues across the island was first rolled out last Sunday night (Jan 8), and made legal by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew the next day.

Governor Narong formalised the ban with an island-wide order signed into effect late Monday (Jan 10). The ban was implemented under Phuket Provincial Order No. 143/2565, regulating the operation of venues under COVID-19 restrictions.

The order brought into effect the

exact same requirements announced by the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) last Friday (Jan 7), when the ruling national authority declared the 9pm alcohol ban to be implemented in “Blue Zone” areas where tourism was deemed important.

The Blue Zones are found in 18 provinces. The remaining 69 provinces were handed down a complete ban on the sale of alcohol at any service venues, hence not including wholesalers and retailers.

Pubs, bars and other entertainment venues may open under the term “restaurants”, but only if they satisfy the SHA Plus (SHA+) requirements and the “Thai Stop COVID 2 Plus” COVID Free Setting operational requirements set out by the Ministry of Public Health.

All such businesses must be approved by the provincial commu-

nication committee before opening as a restaurant, and even then they may serve alcohol and allow alcohol to be consumed on the premises only until 9pm.

Enforcing the same requirements as ordered by the CCSA in Bangkok, the provincial order gave business operators until Jan 15 to apply for the right to open their entertainment business as a restaurant.

The provincial order included the standard warnings that breach of the order may be deemed an offense under Section 51 of the Communicable Diseases Act B.E. 2558, which may incur a penalty of a fine of up to B20,000.

Violating the order may also be deemed a breach of Section 52 of the act, which may incur a penalty of up to one year in jail or a fine of up to B100,000, or both.

Breach of the order may also be

punished under Section 18 of the Royal Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations, incurring a penalty of up to two years in jail or a fine of up to B40,000, or both, the order warned.

The order also included the standard explanation that people have no legal right to contest the order as it had been issued under the power of the emergency decree.

The order was even backdated, marked as effective from Jan 9, making the 9pm shutdown of venues along Bangla Rd and other areas across the island last Sunday night legal.

The order is to remain in effect until further notice.

While the 9pm ban on serving alcohol remains clear, the order to have pubs and bars in Phuket vetted before they are allowed to open has become an issue for provincial authorities as pubs and bars in Phuket...

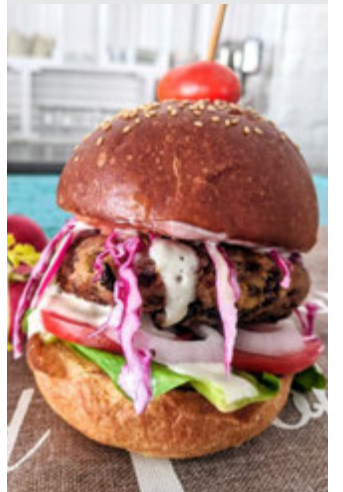
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Phuket Town market shooting leaves two dead



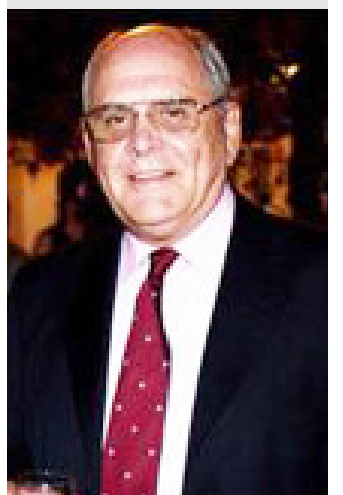
## LIFE PAGE 8

Plant-based menus making good business



## SPORT PAGE 16

ACG founder honoured with memorial match



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## News



**Tourists return to Maya Bay > p6**

# COVID-lax pubs, bars warned

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...have been operating as “restaurants” for months.

At the time of press, Governor Narong had not given any explanation as to what operators are supposed to do now: whether they must close until vetted and approved to open, or whether they may continue to trade while their application is being processed.

Although it has been plain common knowledge that pubs and bars in Phuket have been operating as restaurants, including confirmation by senior national officials visiting Bangla Rd in person, the CCSA has never publicly recognised that pubs and bars in Phuket were already open and trading as “restaurants”, while pubs and bars in other parts of the country were banned from opening.

The latest edict from the CCSA made no account for that, leaving Governor Narong with yet another bureaucratic hurdle that can only be accommodated by breaking the rules that the CCSA put in place.

By the time the order was issued, many pubs and bars in popular expat areas had already “chosen” to close at 9pm. Meanwhile, Patong Police last Sunday night ensured that venues along Bangla Rd stopped serving alcohol and escorted patrons out of some establishments to enforce the rule, while other venues in the nearby area were allowed to remain trading.

On Monday night all that was required was for police vehicles to drive slowly down the busy street and sound their siren every 50 me-



Ministry of Public Health Permanent Secretary Dr Kiatipoom Wongrachit delivered a stern warning to nightlife operators last Thursday (Jan 6). Photo: PR Phuket

tres. The bar owners were already well rehearsed in shutting down, leaving the street dark and nearly empty within 15 minutes.

## RISK vs FEAR

Pubs and bars, specifically on Bangla Rd, have been targeted by officials for special attention after 11 nightlife staffers in the area tested positive for Omicron earlier this month.

To help bolster confidence, mass testing of staff working in the Bangla Rd area in Patong by antigen test kits

(ATKs) was held on Jan 6, during which 159 people were identified as infected with COVID-19. In total, 948 people were tested.

“All of them are undergoing treatment. However, most of the patients are Green patients because of the proactive effect of vaccination in Phuket,” said a local government report.

The tests were available free to all people working in the area as part of the “Big Cleaning Day” conducted on Jan 6 to disinfect the street. All

Bangla Rd businesses closed for 24 hours in order to carry out the mass cleaning, and mass testing.

Present to carry out the tests were staff from the Kathu District Public Health Office, Patong Hospital and Patong Municipality as well as members from the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA) and the Patong Development Foundation, founded by Patong businessman Preechavude ‘Prab’ Keesin.

PEBA President Weerawit Krueasombat called on people to not panic over COVID infections being identified in the popular nightlife area.

“We do not want the public to panic over the rising number of infections found because all of them were found through proactive screening,” Mr Weerawit said.

“We would like all parties to have confidence that we will move forward under strict disease control measures. And nowadays, there is a regular detection of infection with ATK testing, which if any venue finds more than two cases, the venue will be closed for three days for cleaning,” he said.

“This is considered to be a measure and to build confidence and build a good image for Patong,” he added.

## WARNING

The Big Cleaning Day came on the same day that Dr Kiatipoom Wongrachit, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), in Phuket delivered a stern warning that any pub or restaurant found lacking in upholding

COVID-prevention requirements where a person is later confirmed as infected with COVID-19 would face legal action.

Speaking at a live press conference at Vachira Phuket Hospital, Mr Kiatipoom announced that the Ministry of Public Health had raised the COVID-19 alert from Level 3 to Level 4 in response to the growing number of Omicron infections throughout the country.

Mr Kiatipoom urged people to refrain from travelling between provinces and to follow the government’s latest catchphrase policy, VUCA (Vaccine, Universal Prevention, COVID Free Setting, ATK testing).

Prolonged periods in enclosed spaces such as restaurants, pubs, at events and traveling back to hometowns during the New Year were factors that assisted the spread of infections, Mr Kiatipoom said.

“To slow the spread of infections, the MOPH said that indoor venues would be required to close. The gatherings or events must limit the number of participants and we also ask to slow down travel across provinces,” he repeated.

Mr Kiatipoom said that the MOPH has instructed the Provincial Communicable Disease Control Committee in each area to use law enforcement strictly to curtail the spread of infections.

“Legal action will be taken if an infected person is a case who was drinking in a pub or restaurant that does not follow the COVID-Free Setting,” he said.

## Foreigners told to follow the COVID rules, wear a mask in public

PHUKET GOVERNOR Narong Woonciew last Friday (Jan 7) met with the Consul Generals and Honorary Consuls of eight countries to remind them that their respective citizens must adhere to the COVID-19 health and safety protocols in effect on the island.

Governor Narong met with the Consul-General of Australia, Honorary Consul of Austria, Honorary Consul General of Mexico, Honorary Consul-General of Nepal, Honorary Consul of the Netherlands, Honorary Consul of Norway, Consul General of the Russian Federation in Phuket and the Honorary Consul of Switzerland.



Russian Consul General to Phuket Vladimir V. Sosnov (left) and Australian Consul-General to Phuket Matthew Barclay (right) at the meeting. Photo: Radio Thailand Phuket

Joining the meeting were Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan, and Bhumikitti Raktaengam, President of the Phuket Tourist Association.

Governor Narong gave an update on the COVID-19 situation in Phuket, detailing the rise in recent cases and

the latest safety measures employed to combat the spread of the virus.

He then requested all the Consul-Generals and Honorary Consuls present at the meeting to ensure that their respective nationals currently on the island were fully aware and updated as to the safety

measures and to make sure they were abided by.

Governor Narong added that any foreign nationals who test positive for the coronavirus or who are showing symptoms that place them in a high-risk category need to demonstrate social responsibility and seek treatment

at an appropriate venue as designated by the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO). This is standard policy for all Thai nationals, Governor Narong added.

He also reminded the foreign delegates that the wearing of a face mask in all public areas is mandatory as per Phuket Provincial order 62/2564, which states whoever leaves their residence, buildings, or vehicles in order to enter into a public place must wear a mask or cloth mask at all times.

Failure to adhere to the above will result in legal penalties and could impact the decision to allow the foreign national to remain in Phuket, the Governor said. Specifically anyone violating the

wearing of facemasks in public spaces rule can face up to two years in jail and/or a fine of up to B40,000.

In response, the foreign envoys requested that additional vaccines be made available to their nationals to combat the spread of the virus, with a clear and accurate timeline as to when such vaccines will be accessible.

Additionally they requested that all information and updates on regulations set by Phuket authorities be sent to the consuls via a Line group to ensure the details can be disseminated to their respective nationals in a timely and effective fashion.

*The Phuket News*



# Two slain in market shooting

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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Escalating arguments over customers and setting the price of shrimps being sold sparked a shooting at a main fresh market in Phuket Town that left two people dead and three injured.

Region 8 Police Deputy Commanders Maj Gen Wankai Eka-phonphit and Maj Gen Naphanwut Liamsanguan explained the motive for the shootings at a press conference held at Phuket City Police Station in Phuket Town on Monday (Jan 10).

The press conference was held as the arrested – and now confessed – killer, Maneenop Meethong, was escorted to a meeting room on the second floor, where he was questioned by Region 8 Police Commander Lt Gen Amphol Buarabphon.

Maneenop was arrested in his hometown of Hat Yai, in Songkhla province, last Saturday (Jan 8). He was brought back to Phuket to face charges on Sunday, the officers reconfirmed.

Maneenop has confessed to fatally shooting Sarayuth Thinsathan, 47, and Toi Limpananurak, 53, and injuring three other people at the Phuket City Municipality Fresh Market 2 on Ong Sim Phai Rd in the heart of Phuket Town at about 10am last Friday (Jan 7).



Region 8 Police Commander Maj Gen Amphol faces the relatives and the press. Photo: Phuket City Police

Maneenop, registered as living in Rassada, and the five people he shot were all shrimp vendors at the market.

The vendors had shrimp stalls next to each other for many years. Often there were conflicting problems with setting the price of products and undercutting each other, the officers explained.

Frustration over customers moving from one stall to the next on a regular basis led to the vendors getting angry at each other, they added.

On the day of the shooting an argument broke out between the vendors and the Maneenop's wife, resulting in Maneenop going home to fetch his revolver and return to

shoot the five other vendors.

Maneenop fired "five to six times" before fleeing the scene in his black Toyota Fortuner, the officers continued.

Maneenop, 49, parked his car near the Laem Hin Pier in Rassada and boarded a passenger boat to the Bang Mad seafood raft off the east coast.

From there he hired a passenger boat to take him to Klong Muang Beach Pier in Krabi. During that part of the journey Maneenop threw his gun into the bay.

On arriving in Krabi, Maneenop made his way to the Krabi Bus Terminal, where he boarded a passenger van to Hat Yai, Songkhla. Officers tracked him down and arrested him at 6pm last Saturday, the officers said.

Maneenop has admitted to all charges against him in light of the witnesses and CCTV footage police had as evidence, the officers said.

Maneenop has been charged with murder, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition and illegally carrying a firearm in a public area.

Region 8 Police Commander Lt Gen Amphol, who on Monday received flowers from relatives of the two people slain in the attack, said he will pursue legal proceedings to the utmost.

"The relatives do not need to worry that the gunman [sic] will be released on bail and return to attack them. Everyone will be in good police care," he said.

The officers gave no update on the condition of the survivors of the shooting: Ms Aporn Thansathan, 52; Kriengkrai Limpananurak, 56; and his son Pornchai.

*Eakkapop Thongtub*

## Local helpline launched for people suffering COVID fallout

PHUKET OFFICIALS have launched a 24-hour hot-line to help people who are struggling to cope with the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 1300 hotline, launched last Friday (Jan 7), provides advice and coordinated assistance from a range of government departments and support agencies to those that have been affected in various ways by the pandemic, be it emotionally, mentally, financially or otherwise.

At the official launch Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew commented, "With the pandemic now entering its third year, there have been huge numbers of people affected mentally, emotionally and financially by the fallout."

He highlighted extreme cases where people had become so desperate that they took their own lives, citing numerous examples of people who had jumped from the bridges at the north end of the island.



Photo: PR Phuket

Rewat Areerob, President of Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), added that there are so many examples of people who have lost their jobs and income stream due to the pandemic and see no way out which is why the PPAO and the Phuket Office of the Office of Social Development and Human Security have decided to collaborate and offer a service to help those in need.

The 1300 helpline will have professionally trained staff at the end of the phone who can offer support and guidance that can help relieve people's problems

and improve the overall situation for residents in need on the island, he said.

"With every case, every problem, people are asked to leave their information," Mr Rewat said. "If there is a problem that the provincial administrative organisation can take action on and help immediately then they will do."

Mr Rewat added that the strain on families in dire need, who are struggling for bare essentials such as rice and food, has resulted in family members taking their own lives but that now the PPAO is ready to visit these areas and such families to provide support.

*The Phuket News*

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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FRI JAN 14



High: +32°

Low: +25°

Wind 18 m/s

SAT JAN 15



High: +33°

Low: +25°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN JAN 16



High: +32°

Low: +25°

Wind 7 m/s

MON JAN 17



High: +32°

Low: +25°

Wind 7 m/s

TUE JAN 18



High: +33°

Low: +25°

Wind 7 m/s

WED JAN 19



High: +32°

Low: +26°

Wind 11 m/s

THU JAN 20



High: +32°

Low: +26°

Wind 11 m/s

## Heartbroken man found drowned

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Police recovered the body of a 33-year-old man from Sakon Nakhon found in the Bang Yai Canal in Kathu on Monday (Jan 10). The man is believed to have taken his own life after becoming depressed after losing his girlfriend and being sent to Phuket to work.

Lt Col Kiattisak Saengmanee, Deputy Chief Investigator of the Kathu Police was called to the scene, near the main three-way intersection in Moo Baan Irrawaddy – Ketho in Kathu, at about 12:50pm.

Police found a Sakon Nakhon-registered motorbike parked on the footpath near the intersection. About 100 metres away in the canal police found the body of Tossaphon Phankham, 33, originally from Sakon Nakhon province.

He was dressed only in boxer shorts. He had taken off his shoes, which were found nearby, Lt Col Kiattisak noted in his report.

Police found no traces indicating that Mr Tossaphon had been involved in any struggle or attack.



The body of Tossaphon Phankham, 33, is recovered from the canal on Monday (Jan 10). Photo: Kathu Police

Mr Tossaphon had been working as a painter and lived with his employer, Supachai Pew-ngam, who works for Friend Car Group Co Ltd in Rassada, Lt Col Kiattisak noted in his report.

Mr Supachai lives in Moo 7, Kathu, he added.

Mr Tossaphon had worked with Mr Supachai “about six to seven years ago”. He had resigned and went home to Sakon Nakhon, but came back to work after he broke up with his girlfriend at the end of 2020, Lt Col Kiattisak reported.

At 11pm last Friday (Jan 7), Mr

Tossaphon had called Mr Supachai, but Mr Supachai did not answer that call, Lt Col Kiattisak noted.

Then at 1:30am on Saturday (Jan 8), Mr Tossaphon called his father, Thiab Phankham, and told him to come pick him up because he wanted to go home, and told his father that he wanted to die, Lt Col Kiattisak added.

Mr Tossaphon was last seen riding his motorbike from his workplace at 1:33am.

“The assumptions from inspecting the scene, it is believed that the deceased committed suicide due to

stress that he had broken up with his girlfriend, who lives in Sakon Nakhon, and his father had asked him to work with Mr Supachai in Phuket,” Lt Col Kiattisak said in his report.

“The deceased had complained to his father that someone had insulted him,” he added.

“Mr Supachai and the deceased’s father are not suspicious of the cause of death,” Lt Col Kiattisak reported.

Mr Tossaphon’s body was taken to the morgue at Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town.

Mr Thiab would collect his son’s body on Wednesday (Jan 12), Lt Col Kiattisak concluded.

*If you or anyone you know is in need of emotional support and counseling, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their 24-hour hotline 02-713-6791 (English), 02-713-6793 (Thai) or Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai).*

*Also, Phuket authorities last week set up a 24-hour hotline – Tel: 1300 – to help those who have been affected in various ways by the pandemic, be it emotionally, mentally, financially or otherwise (See page 3).*

## False alarm over missing infected tourists

REPORTS OF A FRENCH COUPLE disappearing from their hotel in Kalim, north of Patong, after testing positive for COVID-19 have been dismissed as false.

Tritsanu Uthaipan, Assistant Manager at the Kalima Resort, explained to *The Phuket News* that the couple (names withheld) had left the hotel without informing hotel staff in order to have a second swab test for COVID-19.

“They left the hotel on their own at around 11 am and returned around 4pm,” Mr Tritsanu said.

“They have not fled at all, as has been reported in the news,” he confirmed.

The couple had entered Phuket under the Phuket Sandbox scheme, Mr Tritsanu explained.

“After receiving the results from their swab test at the airport, the hotel contacted hospitals and test centres for tourists so they could have a second test to be sure of the results,” he said.

“But every hospital and test centre said they were full, and unable to conduct the tests for the tourists,” he added.

The couple themselves finally managed to organise the Paweena Clinic in Patong to take swab samples and perform a second RT-PCR test, Mr Tritsanu explained.

“We are waiting on the results of



The inaccurate news of the couple fleeing their hotel comes as Phuket officials continue to confirm the rising number of tourists testing positive for Omicron. Image: Phuket Info Center

that test now,” he said.

The couple were staying in their room at the hotel, awaiting confirmation of the test results and further instructions from officials.

The inaccurate news reports of the French tourists allegedly fleeing their hotel in Phuket spread quickly online after Israeli tourist Ohad Baruch, 29, made national headlines earlier this month for fleeing his hotel in Bangkok to visit Pattaya and then Koh Samui before he could receive a positive test result for Omicron.

He was finally arrested and fined B2,000, and at last report was to be deported.

Meanwhile, Phuket officials later provided three updates on the number of foreigners who have tested positive for Omicron after landing in Phuket, already rising above 160 as of late last week

*The Phuket News*

## Sambar deer on road to recovery

A SAMBAR DEER LEFT UNABLE to walk after a fall onto beach access track at Nui Beach last Wednesday (Jan 5) has received treatment and will be better within a week, a wildlife veterinarian has confirmed.

Jirayu Niraniwrot, a Senior Veterinarian at the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office, arrived at the beach access track early evening on Jan 5 to provide assistance to the wounded animal.

“The deer’s injuries were not serious. The deer’s left foreleg was better than we thought. It was only sprained and it can walk up a short distance to find food,” he said.

Mr Jirayu administered antibiotics via anesthetic shots with the help of locals and tourists.

“The second injection was to treat the pain, swelling and inflammation,” he said.

“The deer’s injury will be better in about a week. The deer will be able to walk back into the woods by itself. But I will come back to check on it if it does not get better,” he assured.

However, the deer was already showing signs of a quick recovery. Before Mr Jirayu had left the deer had wandered into a local shack to seek refuge.

Tourists at the beach who saw the deer in distress provided whatever assistance they could.

One tourist, Paisan Phithakwong,



The injuries to the deer’s front legs were not as serious as initially believed, and the deer is already making a recovery. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

said that he could do nothing but help after seeing the injured deer on the path.

“I waited to assist and help the doctor after knowing that the staff would send a doctor to treat the deer,” he said.

Dr Jirayu said that ‘Queen deer’, or sambar deer, is an animal that people may raise as a business.

“This deer has no fear of people, I think it’s probably a deer that has an owner and escaped out of the enclosure,” he said.

Chinnatthep Kanghae, Chief of Khao Phra Thaeo Non-Hunting Area, whose office is responsible for all wild animals on Phuket, confirmed to *The Phuket News* earlier on Jan 5 that the animal is legally, privately owned.

“The deer had escaped its enclosure. It actually has an owner who is licensed to raise it even though it is a protected wildlife animal. It can be checked because it has an embedded chip,” he said.

Mr Chinnatthep declined to reveal the name of the owner.

*Eakkapop Thongtub*



# Key problems targeted

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Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew is targeting a slew of problems in the hope of launching 'Sandbox v2' so that tourism to Phuket may remain open and continue to generate much-needed income for people living on the island.

"The situation with COVID-19 cases increasing after the New Year's festival may be a public concern, but I confirm there is no idea to close the island in any way," Governor Narong said last Wednesday (Jan 5).

"Due to what has been carried out all along, there are two main issues, namely solving the problems of feeding the people, along with disease control," he added.

"From the Delta era to the Omicron era, we have been able to control the disease to a satisfactory level before the new year, and at the same time also help with the economic recovery... The economic recovery is going well, but in the field of disease control, we have to think about how to live with



Tourists enjoy Patong Beach. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

COVID-19," he said.

## KEY PROBLEMS

Governor Narong last Wednesday also chaired a meeting at the Phuket Sandbox Operations Center to highlight key issues affecting tourists wanting to come to Phuket.

Vice Governor Pichet Panapong explained that four key issues were directly affecting tourists that the national government needs to attend to.

"The problem of delays in

the approval of Thailand Pass for foreign tourists. There are not enough staff resulting in late approval," was one key issue.

"The province [Phuket provincial government] proposes to bring to the Ministry of Interior to discuss with the CCSA the power to approve foreign tourists traveling into Thailand via Thailand Pass at Phuket Airport. This is currently not the jurisdiction of the Phuket Provincial

Government.

"We need the integration of relevant agencies to establish a one-stop service centre and the people, budget, location and tools that must be able to work 24 hours a day.

"We also must establish a Call Center to answer all the problems of foreign tourists, which is beyond the potential and beyond the power of Phuket provincial government," Vice Governor Pichet said.

The second problem was

Phuket's capability to conduct the second mandatory RT-PCR tests for foreign tourists. "This is not enough for the increasing number of tourists," V/Gov Pichet said.

Action has already been taken to call in support from the Ministry of Public Health Region 11 office as well as hospitals and other private medical service providers to cope with the increasing load, he said.

"Five mobile lab vehicles will be coming. The first two mobile labs arrived on Jan 4, an additional 1,200 people will be tested for infection per day and we have adjusted the lab method to a full sample. We have also set up a call center to coordinate with SHA+ managers. An option is to increase the cost of the second PCR test, which should be an incentive for private hospitals to join and take more action to support us," he added.

V/Gov Pichet also raised the issue of not enough hospital rooms on the island for tourists who test positive are designated 'green' patients (experiencing only mild symptoms of infection).

"The problem is that the number of Hospital Isolation and Hotel Isolation rooms is not enough to support the number of Green patients," he said plainly.

"The Phuket Provincial Public Health Office, Vachira Phuket Hospital and the Thai Hotels Association Southern chapter are negotiating with hotels to open up as a Hospital, or convert some rooms to Hotel Isolation to accommodate their own positive customers without being pushed to stay elsewhere," he said.

"Meanwhile, Vachira Phuket Hospital is currently exploring and evaluating more hotels that voluntarily want to become a hospital. It is expected that we will be able to add another 200 rooms," he added.

The fourth key issue was insurance companies not willing to cover expenses for tourists designated 'Green' patients.

"We propose that the CCSA prescribe measures for incoming foreign tourists that they must be insured with Thai insurance companies in order to solve the problem," he said.

## Not enough hospital beds

PHUKET GOVERNOR NARONG Woonciew has called on local officials to push the home isolation "treatment at home" policy for handling new COVID-19 infections as the Phuket health chief remains adamant that there are not enough hospital beds on the island to cope with the rising number of infections.

Governor Narong made the policy clear at a special meeting held at the new Phuket Provincial Hall last Sunday (Jan 9).

The focus is to be on organising treatment at home, in hotel accommodation or in "community isolation" centres in order to support hospitals in the treatment of "Yellow" and "Red" patients and to ensure the rising number of cases does not affect the treatment of other patients, Governor Narong said.

Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO), said that Phuket does not have enough hospital beds to cope with the rising number of infections and that the infection rate was likely to increase significantly.

"The number of infected people in the group of foreign travelers has been continuously increasing, both in the form of Test & Go and Phuket Sandbox, as well as increasing in the number of infections in provincial areas," he said.

"The infected persons were mostly in close contact with confirmed cases, attending joint activities or work in close contact with tourists or at tourist attractions," he added.

"And there is a link to rising infections in the Test & Go group... Omicron has been



Dr Kusak initially explaining the bed shortage on Jan 5. Photo: PR Phuket

found to be 66.3% of infections," he said.

"The occupancy rate of patient beds has increased considerably. There is an insufficient number of beds to support the number of patients, but the mortality rate has decreased," he added.

"The local quarantine rooms for the quarantine of high-risk contacts have become inadequate," Dr Kusak added.

The PPHO daily COVID report for Monday (Jan 10) marked 468 new local infections of COVID-19, bringing the total local infections for the previous seven days to 2,421.

The report marked two 'Red' patients, 404 'Yellow' patients and 175 'Green' patients in care.

A further 712 people were at 'hospitals', and 289 were in "Community Isolation", which includes self-quarantining at home.

The report for Jan 10 also marked that of 2,536 hospital beds in total available, 1,582 were occupied (62.38%)

Phuket officials have yet to report a single COVID death this month. *The Phuket News*



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# Ex-employees working against you

## LEGAL MATTERS

By Dr Paul Crosio  
of Silk Legal

Information and intellectual property are valuable assets for many businesses. As employees change jobs, which many have done in the past 18 months, they create significant challenges for businesses in protecting their information and competitive advantages.

### NON-COMPETITION

An employee owes a duty of non-competition, meaning the employee should not compete with their employer during their period of employment. This includes a duty not to divert (e.g., stealing business or holding back business) and should not take any conflicting work. Unless the contract is clear, potential conflict may be hard to prove, as it's based on the risk of conflict or damage to the employer's business.

Though there are a few exceptions, unless there is a specific agreement these obligations largely disappear once the employee leaves the business. The ex-employee may work for a competitor and may compete directly with his or her former employer. Nonetheless, there are some protections employers have once an employee leaves the business.



### CONFIDENTIALITY

Unlike the duty of non-competition, the duty of confidentiality normally survives the termination of the employment.

During and after employment, the employee must keep confidential information and trade secrets obtained through his or her employment. Confidential information can relate either to the conduct of a business or its structure, and may include the identity of its suppliers, customer lists, pricing, marketing techniques, and trade secret formulas.

The obligation does not extend to all information that is acquired during employment. For example, while an employee may not copy a written customer list, it is unclear if

the ex-employee can use information about customers learned through day-to-day contact.

The employer should mark sensitive information as confidential and take other steps to reinforce the confidential status of particularly sensitive information, such as limiting access to this information. This will help prevent the unwitting disclosure of sensitive information and potentially assist in a lawsuit for breach. Markings and warnings will help identify which information should have been kept confidential.

### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

An employer owns the intellectual property created by an employee

during employment if that employee has been hired for research or innovation. An employee is obligated to transfer the invention if it is the result of the work the employee is paid to do.

To avoid the uncertain position concerning the ownership of inventions, and to avoid arguments regarding developments outside an employee's scope of work, employers should put in place a written agreement covering the ownership of intellectual property. These types of agreements are typically called "Invention and Trade Secret Agreements."

There are several gaps in the rights provided to employers under general Thai law. To protect sensitive information and intellectual property, the employer should require all incoming employees to sign an agreement dealing with confidentiality, inventions, and trade secrets.

### ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Emails and the internet present a significant threat to an employer's confidential information through improper activities. As a result, monitoring may be necessary to maintain the employer's IT systems and ensure there is no improper use.

Although in Thailand the courts have not specifically addressed the legality of employers monitoring

their employees' computer use, it appears likely that employers may monitor email. However, this should be explained in a policy to which the employee has agreed and consented to.

The forthcoming Personal Data Protection Act also applies to the personal information of employees, customers, and others. Employers should be aware of the impact the legislation has on their obligations to employees and have proper consent documents and policies which sets out the scope of monitoring.

In conclusion, a well-constructed employment agreement including specific references to trade secrets, confidentiality, and competition is crucial in today's highly competitive industry.

Basic housekeeping requires disclosure and consent to practices that will monitor employees' use of computers and internet, and capture personal data, as well as set out guidance on public disclosure practices.

Without these specific provisions, general employment laws in Thailand provide little relief for an employer who find themselves in conflict with their former staff.

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



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## Tourists return to Maya Bay

MAYA BAY HAS REOPENED TO tourists, with the number of visitors limited to just 375 at a time and visits limited to one hour only.

Krabi Governor Phutthiphong Sirimat and Pramote Kaewnam, Chief of Hat Noppharat Thara – Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park, led a ceremony to officially reopen the world-renowned beach on New Year's Day.

"Maya Bay reopened to tourists on January 1 as a New Year's gift to the people in accordance with the government's policy," Mr Pramote explained.

Tourists have been allowed onto the beach since last Jan 2.

Since then, most of the tourists have been Thais, Mr Pramote said.

"More and more foreign tourists are coming in, which is now full of reservations to visit the bay all day," he said.

The number of tourists allowed onto the beach is limited to 375 at a time, and visits are restricted to one hour only, to avoid congestion and maintain the sustainability of natural resources, Mr Pramote said.

The beach is open to visitors each day from 7am to 6pm.

Tourists arrive on the island via a dock built by the national park at Loh Samah Bay, on the other side of the island, and walk the few hundred metres across the island to visit the beach made famous by the Leonardo DiCaprio movie 'The Beach'.

Boats are not allowed to enter the bay, but may hover at the entrance so tourists can enjoy the view.



Tourists have returned to the beach at Maya Bay. Photo: Krabi PR

In order to be allowed to join a tour to visit the bay, which was closed for three years to allow the environment to recover from heavy tourism, people must register through the QueQ app (on Google Play and Apple's App Store).

Of note, the National Park listings on the app are in Thai language only.

"Closing the bay for restoration has been a success because the ecosystem around the beach is better. A large number of Blacktip reef sharks have returned to Maya Bay," Mr Pramote said.

Swimming in Maya Bay is strictly prohibited to avoid the dangers of the blacktip reef sharks, he added.

The opening of the bay is strictly under the measures to prevent COVID-19 in accordance with the measures of the Ministry of Public Health, Mr Pramote said.

All tour guides must be fully vaccinated and must ensure that tourists have their temperatures checked before allowing them to join a tour to visit the beach, he added.

"We also require that all visitors help keep Maya Bay's beach clean," he said.

*The Phuket News*



# Children prioritised for COVID treatment

## BANGKOK

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

All hospitals are being instructed they must not reject children infected with COVID-19 and must also have on hand suitable medication for their treatment.

Traisuree Taisaranakul, deputy government spokeswoman, said on Monday (Jan 10) that Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha had ordered the Public Health Ministry to ensure public and private hospitals do not refuse admission to children infected with the coronavirus and that young patients should be prioritised. "The prime minister is concerned about the reported case of a hospital rejecting a child. He asked the Public Health Ministry to arrange for the efficient admission or referral of this group of patients, because children have lower immunity from not having been vaccinated like adults," Ms Traisuree said.



Prime Minister Prayut insists that young COVID-19 patients should be prioritised. Photo: Bangkok Post

Her comments follow reports that a couple in Nonthaburi province could not find a hospital that would immediately admit their 8-month-old grandchild for treatment. The child had been infected with COVID-19 by its parents and had a fever and low blood oxygen levels. It was reported that hospital staff had told them to queue and wait their turn. Prayut had ordered the Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health to admit all COVID-19-infected children whatever the severity of their

symptoms, and to advise hospitals nationwide on treatment for the young and the preparation of liquid favipiravir antiviral medication for them, the spokeswoman said. She also advised parents to avoid taking their children to crowded places and to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 themselves, to reduce the chance of their youngsters being infected.

This came after the government confirmed last Saturday (Jan ) it has prepared doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for chil-

dren between the ages of five and 11.

The vaccination drive is expected to begin next month, according to the Public Health Ministry. It is entirely voluntary to them and their parents, and the Education Ministry is taking a voluntary survey to gauge the demand, deputy government spokeswoman Rachada Dhnadirek said.

Schools and hospitals will serve as vaccination sites. Children over 12 who have not been vaccinated can walk-in to any hospital or clinic, as notified by provincial communicable disease committees or Bangkok Communicable Disease Committee, to receive the shot.

The spokeswoman added that the government last year had targeted to vaccinate 50 million of 70mn people, or 70% of the total population, using 100mn doses. It had administered 104.4mn doses and acquired 130.6mn doses up to Dec 31.

This year, it is ready to acquire 120mn doses to be used as a booster shot as well as doses for children.



Haew Narok Waterfall, Khao Yai. Photo: Bangkok Post

## Resort vows to sue guest for B3 million over bad review

### BANGKOK

A RESORT IN KHAO YAI has allegedly threatened one of its customers with a B3 million defamation case for posting a bad review online.

Lawyer Sittra Biebangkerd revealed last Friday (Jan 7) that a female client was threatened for posting the bad review on travel booking platform Agoda on Dec 19.

Mr Sittra posted the comment on his Facebook account on Jan 6 about a client he referred to as Ms Khing, claiming she is now facing a lawsuit filed by the unnamed resort.

Ms Khing stayed there from June 13-14 and subsequently complained about the quality of the facilities and service, giving it six stars out of 10 on the app, Mr Sittra said.

Afterwards, Ms Khing re-

portedly received a threatening call from the resort, claiming her review was defamation and had sullied the resort's reputation.

The resort demanded she immediately delete the post, pay B3mn compensation within 15 days of receiving a letter notifying her of the damages, and issue an apology via five copies of a newspaper for a week.

If she failed to comply, she would subsequently face both civil and criminal lawsuits, the resort said, according to her lawyer.

In response, Mr Sittra said he would be able to defend his client and also identify the resort.

The issue sparked a backlash on social media about a customer's fundamental right to complain about substandard services, as well as the app's privacy policy. Bangkok Post

## Huge patient data leak from Siriraj Hospital

### BANGKOK

ABOUT 39 MILLION PURPORTED patient records from Siriraj Hospital have been offered for sale on an internet database-sharing forum in what appears to be the latest hack of the country's public health sector.

Authorities are investigating the post, which was on raidforums.com. The leak is said to include records of VIP patients.

There was no clear indication whether the person who offered to sell 38.9mn patient records last Sunday (Jan 9) really had such a huge trove of data.

However, the poster said a sample file was available and contact could be made through a Telegram app account. The price for the data was negotiable and it would go to only one buyer, the poster added.

The data supposedly comprises names, addresses, Thai IDs, phone numbers, gender details, dates of birth and other information, according to the poster, who used the name "WraithMax".

"There was a large data leak concerning Siriraj's patient records that has been offered for sale," said Dr Sutee Tuvirat, an information systems security professional.

The data is not only from Siriraj Hospital but also from nearby Siriraj Piyamaharajkarun Hospital, which has records of VIP patients, he said.

Most local hospitals still had no cybersecurity teams or chief information security officers who could monitor threats.



Patients at Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok. Their records may be among the reported huge data theft from the hospital. Photo: Chananat Katanyu / file

"Even some department stores which invested in cybersecurity have been hacked, but hospitals which keep a great deal of sensitive data still do not make investment in this area a priority," Dr Sutee said.

"Healthcare is one of the targeted sectors as it contains a lot of sensitive information.

"Victims may not even know their data has been misused. Once data is breached, hackers will steal all the data. They work professionally, making money and gaining credibility."

The acting deputy secretary-general of the National Cyber Security Agency, Grp Capt Amorn Chomchoey, said he was aware of the Siriraj case and was investigating it.

Bangkok Post

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Plant-based dishes are not just better for health, they're better for business. Photo: Adelaide Castano of 'Soul' cafe



Sardinia, one of five Blue Zones where people live longer, healthier, lives. Photo: Pexels / Oleg Magni

# Plant-based menus good for business



## SUSTAINABLY YOURS

Palmer Owyong

It's that time again for New Year's resolutions, promises that we make ourselves to change the way we live our lives. According to a survey from 2021, the number one resolution is to exercise more, number two was to lose weight, and number four was to eat healthier. Unfortunately, a study published in the Journal of Clinical Psychology tells us that only about 46%

of people who make resolutions are successful in keeping them.

### Blue Zones

With that statistic in mind, instead of jumping onto the latest fad diet, why not try a proven lifestyle makeover that will not only help you to lose weight and get healthy, but could also help you to live longer?

The Blue Zones are five areas in the world that have a disproportionately large number of centenarians (people who live 100 years or more). However, not only do they live longer lives, but they live healthier ones as well, staying active well into their later years. The

Blue Zones are Okinawa, Japan; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Sardinia, Italy; Ikaria, Greece; and Loma Linda, California.

The diet is similar to the Mediterranean diet, which is scientifically proven to reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and dementia. Like the Mediterranean diet, it prescribes eating whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, seeds, spices, and olive oil is preferable to butter.

In addition to eating healthy, people from the Blue Zones have a good social network, have a clear purpose in life, and exercise regularly. While they don't take supplements, read food labels or even eat the same foods, there are a few other things they have in common that we can learn from them:

#### 1. Eat a 95% plant-based diet.

They eat very little meat, on average just 50 grammes twice per week. To put that into perspective, an average burger weighs about 200g, and an average steak served in a US restaurant is 400g.

#### 2. Eat whole foods. Blue Zoners avoid

processed foods, especially processed meats like bacon, salami and sausage, which the World Health Organization considers to be a type-1 carcinogen.

#### 3. Reduce dairy consumption. They generally eat little dairy which can be laden with fat, and sugar and is hard to digest for most people.

#### 4. Eat a half-cup of beans daily.

Beans are high in fibre and act as a probiotic helping the bacteria in your gut to flourish. People in the Blue Zones eat on average four times as many beans as the rest of the world.

#### 5. Drink moderately. Since main-

taining a good social network is prescribed in the Blue Zones lifestyle, drinking one or two glasses of wine is allowed and even encouraged. The trick is to drink with food and friends. So, binge drinking alone is not allowed.

#### 6. Snack on nuts. They avoid processed foods and eat a wide assortment of nuts, which are rich in nutrients, provide fibre and good fats.

#### 7. Slash sugar. They eat on average about 7 teaspoons, or about 28g, of added sugar a day.

#### 8. Stop eating when you are 80% full. The Japanese call this hari hachi bu, the practice of not eating until you are full helps to prevent weight gain.

#### 9. Eat fewer eggs. On average people in Blue Zones eat only about three eggs per week, and they come from free-range chickens that aren't injected with hormones or antibiotics.

### Flexitarians

While the number of people who are going vegan or vegetarian has increased exponentially, going from an estimated 1.3 million to 2.6 million in just the past four years, the total percentage of people remains relatively low at about 3% of the global population for vegans and 5% for vegetarians.

However, the number of people who are becoming flexitarian (people who occasionally eat meat or fish, but mainly eat plants) is growing even quicker, which means that plant-based diets are not just a fad and are here to stay.

In fact, 47% of Americans consider themselves to be flexitarian, pescatarian, vegan or vegetarian, and two-thirds are cutting down on meat consumption.

Likewise, almost one-third of Europeans no longer consider themselves to be full meat-eaters anymore. The most commonly cited reasons people are eating less meat are for health, weight loss, animal welfare and the environment.

### Plant-Based is Good for Business

A plant-based menu is not just good for the environment and your health, if you are a restaurant owner it's also good for business. On average if you have a table of four Americans, two will likely want plant-based dishes. If you have a table of four Europeans it's likely that at least one will. So, offering plant-based options, even if your restaurant primarily serves meat, just makes good business sense as it allows friends who have different dietary requirements to dine together.

Many of the top restaurants in the world are beginning to offer plant-based cuisine. For example, Daniel Humm the owner of 3 Michelin Starred Eleven Madison Park in New York reopened with a vegan menu last year saying, "The current food system is simply not sustainable." Likewise, Geranium in Denmark which is rated number two by the World's 50 Best Restaurants has removed meat from the menu.

Phuket has also seen a surge of plant-based restaurants including the recently opened Soul located in Karon, owned by French restaurateur Adelaide Castano. Adelaide says, "80% of our guests are not vegan, but come just because they are curious about what plant-based cuisine tastes like."

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

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# Time to get Moody



## PHUKET MUSIC SCENE

Andy Tong Dee

**M**oody Paul is well known in Phuket as a gifted Burmese Blues and Rock guitarist and singer, particularly in Patong where he played in the Moody Café for many years before COVID.

I can well recall watching Moody perform in Patong pre-COVID. I was spell-bound by the passion of his performances, particularly when he was playing Blues, a musical genre he clearly loved so dearly.

However, Moody had to return to his home when the pandemic started. Happily, he has now returned and is playing here again, all made possible financially by an online crowd-funding appeal run by his fans.

### So Moody, tell me about your childhood in Myanmar.

I was born in 1974 in Hpa-An, the capital of the Karen region of Myanmar. I grew up in a Christian community where my father is still a pastor. I sang in the church when a child, but I was also interested in instruments like guitar and piano. My mother taught me how to play a three-chord song on

guitar when I was just five years old and I soon learned to transpose songs naturally into different keys. When my grandfather saw how much I loved to play guitar, he bought me my own acoustic guitar to practice with. Soon I was playing gospel songs in the church weekly.

### How did you get the name Moody?

It was given to me by my grandfather when I was born. He wanted me to become as famous a preacher or pastor as the great American evangelist Dwight L. Moody.

### When did you first hear Western music?

When I was a child I used to listen to my grandfather's records by Chuck Berry, Elvis, Little Richard, Jim Breve, Muddy Waters, Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles. I developed a great love of Soul, Blues and Rock and Roll music early on that has stayed with me all my life.

### When did you first start playing the Blues?

I first started when I was 12 years old. I loved to improvise and soon learned to compose my own Blues songs. It was all so exciting and so much fun.

### So how did you end up playing in Phuket?

I first started in Thailand in 1992

playing in Bangkok. After that, I got a contract to play at the Saxophone Pub in Phuket in 2005 after the tsunami. Then I started playing in Moody's Café in Patong until I had to return to Myanmar. I hadn't seen my family for so long and I was with them again for nearly two years. Sadly, there is a political crisis there and a civil war has started. It's a difficult situation.

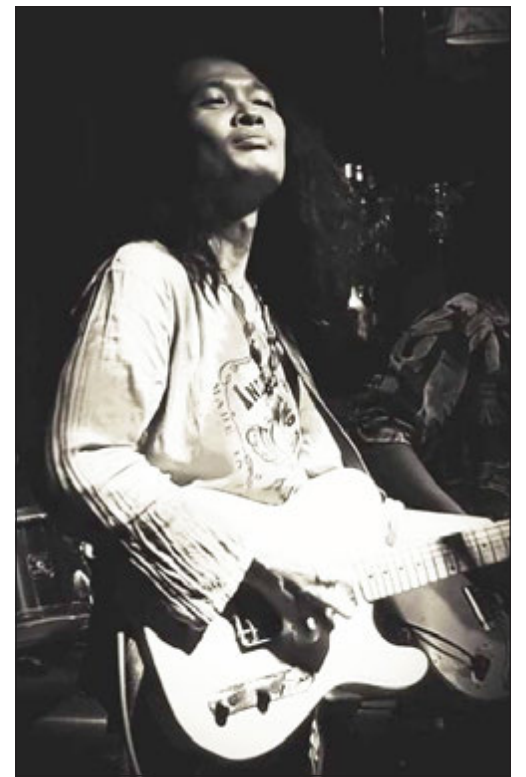
### You have had a difficult life.

### Has playing the Blues helped you?

As you know, a musician's career here is not an easy one and my life in Myanmar has been very difficult. When my life has too many problems and too much hardship, playing the Blues makes me happy and I can forget my problems for a while. It's truly therapy for me. Every time I play the Blues, I feel it so deeply inside of me and that means so much to me.

### Has your relationship with your family and God changed since you chose to leave Burma and come to Thailand?

I wanted to grow up to be a pastor like my father, and so I learned to preach and bring people to know the living God. I also used to sing gospel songs in church. But one day, for good reasons and because of the difficult situation I was in, I left Burma to follow my dreams. I too became a black sheep of the family just like early Blues singers. I've been away from my



family now for 20 years, and yes I've got the blues about that. I may have been tested by God, but I still believe that God is great.

### So now you are back here again, how does it feel?

Wonderful! I kept walking by trust and faith. I believe in music. Music leads me everywhere. I had to get back so I could play the Blues again and it was so hard to do so, but finally with the help of my wife and friends, I'm here. My life is Blues, and the Blues is my life.

Andy Tong Dee is a local expat, musician and live music enthusiast. Follow him at [www.phuketmusicscene.com](http://www.phuketmusicscene.com)



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## POP QUIZ

1. The volcano 'Semeru' that erupted last month is located on which Indonesian island?
2. Which Hollywood A-listers is the former mayor of Carmel, California?
3. What does the chat acronym TYVM stand for?
4. Which dinosaur, made famous in films and popular culture, is well known for having a large bony frill with three horns?
5. How many iPhones have been released, including "submodels" of the same release?

Answers below, centre

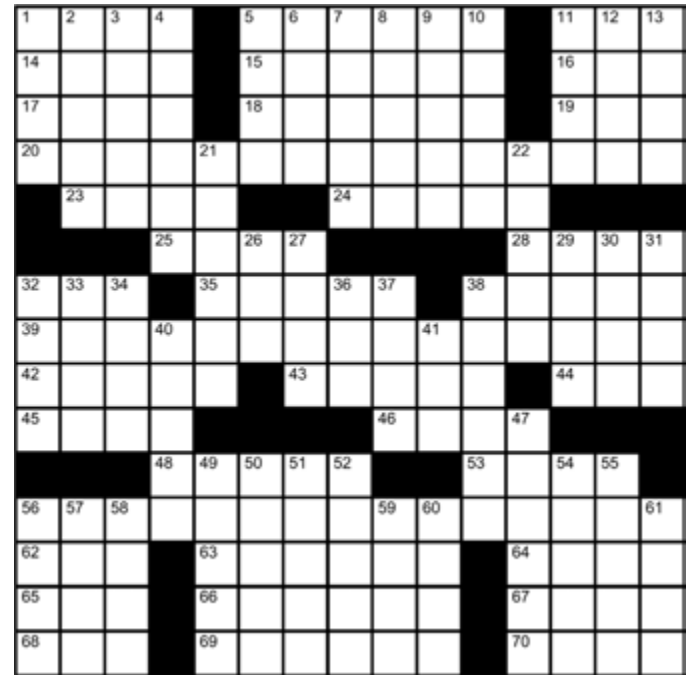
## SUDOKU

Hard

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. Graphical user interface feature
  5. Latke ingredient
  11. Attain
  14. Game name
  15. Trash container
  16. Old Tokyo
  17. Restrain
  18. Calkins
  19. Inflamed
  20. Not extreme
  23. Like old records
  24. Choppers
  25. Yellowfin, e.g.
  28. 1995 hurricane
  32. Its symbol is an omega
  35. Present
  38. Cartoon art
  39. Taking drastic measures
  42. Hitchcockian
  43. Like some colonies
  44. Harvester \_\_\_\_
  45. First place?
  46. Cargo boat type
  48. Cherokee and Wrangler
  53. Foreign currency
  56. Tolerance
  62. One with a
- Down
1. SALT concern
  2. Demand
  3. Best
  4. "You \_\_\_\_ bother!"
  5. Clip
  6. Capital on a fjord
  7. Grand \_\_\_\_
  8. Decrease
  9. Church donation
  10. Attack
  11. "My \_\_\_\_!"
  12. It comes to mind
  13. Sarah's husband
  21. Potter
  22. River of Lyon
  26. Excluding
  27. Asian buffalo
  29. Cotton fabric
  30. Grace period?
  31. In case
  32. Double curve
  33. Worked the soil
  34. Slough
  36. Mushroom you can eat
  37. Departure
  38. Historian
  40. Soldier of fortune
  41. Black gunk
  47. Alate
  49. Just beat
  50. Gush
  51. Reverent
  52. Like a snicker
  54. "\_\_\_\_ or not..."
  55. In reserve
  56. Give away
  57. Bank
  58. Lothario's look
  59. Bucks
  60. Start with while
  61. Telephone button



Visit: [www.ilovecrosswords.com](http://www.ilovecrosswords.com)

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

2.84

percent of worldwide deaths are caused by intentional injury (war, violence, suicide, etc) - 3.15% of worldwide deaths are caused by diarrhea.

10

times more likely are Americans to be bitten by a New Yorker than a shark.

99.9

percent of germs are killed by hand sanitizer, while 0.1% of germs actually makes us sick.

385,000

babies are born around the world every day, according to the UN.

25

million

US dollars is what Sony was offered to buy the rights to all Marvel characters in 1998. Sony rejected the deal, buying only the rights to Spider-Man for US\$10mn, which they thought was the only character people would care about.

Source: Uberfacts

## ISLAND VIEW



Early morning cat at Wat Chalong. Photo by Jeffrey Ephreim Villanueva Villegas

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket?  
Email it to [execeditor@classactmedia.co.th](mailto:execeditor@classactmedia.co.th)

## This week in history



Photo: US National Archives

Jan 14, 1967

Counterculture 1960s: The Human Be-In takes place in San Francisco, California's Golden Gate Park, launching the Summer of Love.

Jan 15, 2001

Wikipedia, the free wiki content encyclopedia, goes online.

Jan 16, 2003

The Space Shuttle Columbia takes off for mission STS-107 which would be its final one. Columbia disintegrated 16 days later on re-entry.

Jan 17, 1981

President of the Philippines Ferdinand Marcos - his regime infamous for corruption, extravagance and brutality - lifts martial law eight years and five months after declaring it.

Jan 18, 1591

King Naresuan of Siam kills Crown Prince Mingyi Swa of Burma in single combat, for which this date is now observed as Royal Thai Armed Forces day.

Jan 19, 1986

The first IBM PC computer virus is released. A boot sector virus dubbed (c)Brain, it was created by the Farooq Alvi Brothers in Lahore, Pakistan, reportedly to deter copying of software they had written.

Jan 20, 1265

The first English parliament to include not only Lords but also representatives of the major towns holds its first meeting in the Palace of Westminster, now commonly called the "Houses of Parliament". Source: Wikipedia



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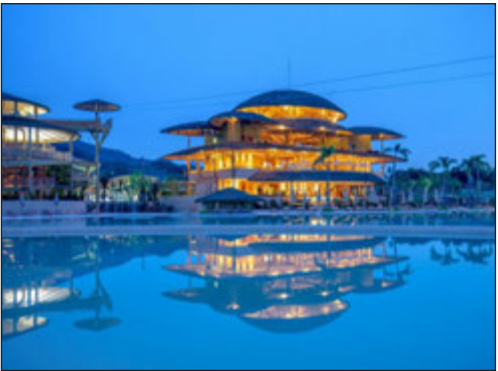


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## Self-driving race cars zip into history

### MOTORSPORTS

A RACECAR WITH NO-body at the wheel snaked around another to snatch the lead on an oval track at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas last Friday (Jan 7) in an unprecedented high-speed match between self-driving vehicles.

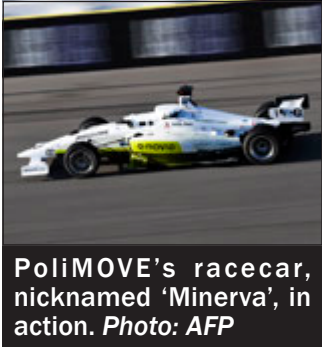
Members of Italian-American team PoliMOVE cheered as their racecar, nicknamed "Minerva", passed a rival from South Korean team Kaist doing nearly 115km/h.

However, organisers said the real victory was the fact that self-driving algorithms could handle the high-speed competition.

The race pitted teams of students from around the world against one another to rev up the capabilities of self-driving cars, improving the technology for use anywhere.

The single seat usually reserved for a driver was during this race instead packed with electronics. The students program the software that pilots the car by quickly analysing data from sophisticated sensors.

The software piloting the



PoliMOVE's racecar, nicknamed 'Minerva', in action. Photo: AFP

cars has to anticipate how other vehicles on the course will behave, then maneuver accordingly.

"It plays out in milliseconds," co-organiser Paul Mitchell said. "The computer has to make the same decisions as a human driver, despite the speed."

In October, the Indy Autonomous Challenge (IAC) put the brakes on self-driving cars racing together to allow more time to ready technology for the challenge, opting instead to let them do laps individually to see which had the best time.

Now the IAC plans to organise other races pitting two cars against each other, with the hope of reaching a level sufficient to one day launch all the vehicles together.

AFP

## Djokovic wins Australian visa case, set to play Open

### TENNIS

AFP

World number one Novak Djokovic won a stunning victory over the Australian government on Monday (Jan 10), overturning the cancellation of his visa on COVID-19 health grounds, and ending his detention.

It was an extraordinary setback for the government, which has imposed strict restrictions on its borders for the past two years to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

In an emergency online court hearing, the judge ordered that the decision to cancel Djokovic's visa "be quashed".

The judge ordered that the unvaccinated tennis superstar "be released immediately and forthwith from immigration detention".

Australian taxpayers will be asked to pay costs for Djokovic's high-powered legal team.

"Novak, Novak, Novak," chanted dozens of fans of the nine-time Australian Open



Novak Djokovic will be allowed to defend his title at the Australian Open, which starts on Jan 17. Photo: AFP

champion as they marched in celebration, drums banging, outside Melbourne's federal courthouse.

The 34-year-old Djokovic had arrived in Melbourne on Jan 5 ahead of the Australian Open, which starts on Monday (Jan 17), hoping to win a record-breaking 21st Grand Slam title.

But even as he savours an extraordinary win in the federal court, his tournament dream may yet be out of reach.

The government's lawyer told the court that Immigration

Minister Alex Hawke may decide to use his "personal power of cancellation" despite the player's legal victory.

After touching down in Australia, Djokovic was taken into an overnight interview with border agents, who decided the champion had failed to present a solid medical reason for not being jabbed.

Djokovic's visa was revoked and he was moved to a notorious immigration detention facility pending deportation.

He spent four nights in the

former Park Hotel, a five-storey facility that holds about 32 migrants trapped in Australia's hardline immigration system – some for years on end.

An early plea by Djokovic to be moved to a facility where he can train for the Australian Open had fallen on deaf ears, his lawyers said.

The court's finding, read out in an online hearing, said the player was not given the chance to reply fully before his visa was torn up.

In the early hours of Jan 6, Djokovic was told he had until 8:30am to reply to the proposed cancellation of his visa. But instead, the border agent cancelled it at 7:42am.

Had Djokovic been given until 8:30am as first promised, "he could have consulted others and made submissions to the delegate about why his visa should not be cancelled," the judge said.

Though it had no bearing on his court case, Djokovic's claim of a positive test on Dec 16 stirred controversy after he was pictured at a young players' event the following day where no one was wearing a mask.

## Thai whiz kid ready for Singapore

### GOLF

THAILAND'S 14-YEAR-OLD GOLF phenomenon Ratchanon Chantanuwat will add another arrow to his quiver this month when he competes in both The Singapore International and the SMBC Singapore Open to mark the first time he has played in professional events outside of his country.

The amateur star made a huge impression on both the Asian Tour and All Thailand Golf Tour last year and has been invited to play in both tournaments.

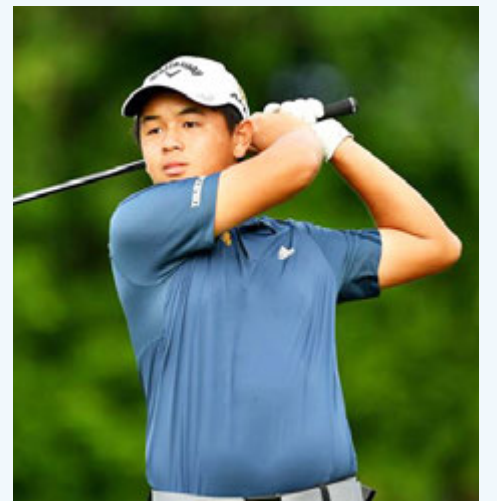
The Singapore International at Tanah Merah Country Club started yesterday (Jan 13) and runs until Sunday, followed by Singapore's national Open at Sentosa Golf Club from Jan 20-23.

"I'm very excited," said Ratchanon. "I'm a bit pressured to be honest and definitely nervous as well. But I'm just going to enjoy myself as much as possible. It's a new experience for me."

There were few signs of nerves last year when the junior star was regularly in the headlines.

In the Asian Tour Phuket Series last November and December he upstaged the field in the Blue Canyon Championship by closing with a 65 to finish 12 under and tie 15th before finishing joint 30th at the Laguna Phuket Championship.

Ratchanon also came close to winning on the All Thailand Golf Tour; he was second in the Singha Laguna Phuket Open,



Ratchanon Chantanuwat. Photo: Paul Lakatos / Asian Tour

equal third in the Singha Thailand Masters and joint fifth in the Singha All Thailand Championship.

"I'm really happy with how 2021 turned out. Overall, I've improved a bit in every component as a player so I'm happy," he said.

The rising star is grateful for the support he has received from many of Thailand's big-name players.

"I'm a really lucky kid that I've got the experience from playing with a lot of good players like Prom Meesawat and Thongchai Jaidee," he added.

"The advice I've taken from most of them is to have fun out there. I'm still an amateur and it's going to be first time playing outside of the country, so I won't pressure myself too much."

The Phuket News

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# English Premier League Predictions

[thephuketnews.com/predictions.php](http://thephuketnews.com/predictions.php)



# FA Cup sparkles during weekend of high drama

## FOOTBALL

Ben Tirebuck

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

The FA Cup is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and last weekend proved the most revered cup competition in world club football has lost none of its magic with a number of upsets emerging from a series of pulsating games.

The pick of the ties was Cambridge United, who ply their trade in the third tier of English football, conquering Newcastle United of the Premier League, a classic example of the underdog triumph.

Cambridge is world-renowned for its University but it was their players who gave the multi-national team of multimillionaire superstars from Newcastle a footballing lesson in their own back yard last Saturday (Jan 8).

Cambridge thoroughly deserved their win, demonstrating on the day crucial elements that are often overlooked in the modern game: passion and hard work.



Cambridge United players and staff celebrate their historic FA Cup victory against Newcastle United at St. James' Park last Saturday (Jan 8). Photo: AFP

Joe Ironside, a striker who grew up idolising Magpies legend Alan Shearer, scored the winner in the 1-0 win, prompting delirium among the 5,000 travelling supporters.

The fact that Newcastle are now the richest team in world football following the recent takeover by a Saudi-led consortium only compounded the embarrassment and means focus now turns completely to ensuring the club stay in the top division this season.

There were upsets elsewhere as Kidderminster Harriers, the lowest-ranked side left in the competition, produced

a remarkable performance to beat Championship side Reading 2-1. The Harriers will host high-flying Premier League side West Ham United in the next round after the Hammers breezed past Leeds United in their tie.

Non-league Boreham Wood overcame League One AFC Wimbledon 2-0 to progress, securing £82,000 (£3.8 million) as a win bonus in the process. "This is massive for the club," said manager Luke Garrard afterwards, whose side travel to Bournemouth of the Championship in the next round.

The fairytale nature of the Cup was epitomised at Hartlepool as teenager Joe Grey came off the bench to score the winner as the League Two team came from a goal down to stun Championship side Blackpool 2-1.

Arsenal, who have won the competition a record 14 times, were beaten by Nottingham Forest at the City Ground and Huddersfield Town overturned Premier League strugglers Burnley 2-1.

Most of the other Premier League teams managed to navigate their respective ties relatively easily with Manchester City, Manchester United, Chelsea, Liverpool, Spurs, Wolves, Brighton, Crystal Palace, Everton and holders Leicester City all progressing.

Stand out ties in the fourth round include Kidderminster's game at home against West Ham, an East Midlands derby as Forest host Leicester, Cambridge hosting Luton Town and European Champions Chelsea entertaining League One Plymouth Argyle, who managed to beat Championship side Birmingham City 1-0.

## 'Invaluable' Coutinho completes Villa loan

### FOOTBALL

ASTON VILLA MANAGER Steven Gerrard labelled Philippe Coutinho "invaluable" after the Brazilian star completed a medical ahead of a loan move from Barcelona.

Villa confirmed that Coutinho passed his medical and that he was in France while he obtained a work permit.

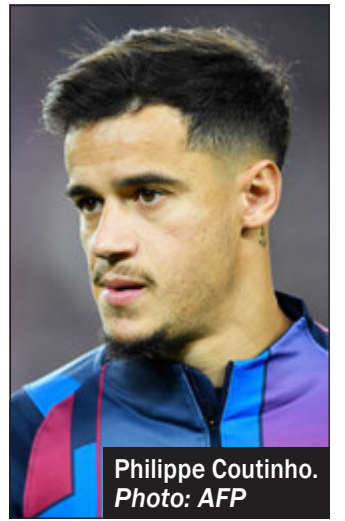
The 29-year-old was expected to join his new teammates at Villa's Bodymoor Heath training ground on Wednesday (Jan 12).

Gerrard played with Coutinho at Liverpool and believes the playmaker will have a big impact on his return to the Premier League.

"His presence will be invaluable, given injuries and the AFCON tournament have reduced our attacking options," Gerrard told Villa's website on Monday.

"He is a player I enjoyed playing with previously and I know the rest of the squad here at Aston Villa will benefit from his quality and experience."

Villa have signed Coutinho on loan for the rest of the season and have the option



to buy him in the summer.

Barcelona confirmed Villa will pay part of Coutinho's wages as he returns to the Premier League four years after leaving Liverpool.

Coutinho joined Barcelona in 2018 in a deal worth £146 million (£6.6 billion), but he has struggled at the Nou Camp and spent 2019-20 on loan at Bayern Munich.

He becomes Gerrard's first signing at Villa since joining from Rangers in November to replace Dean Smith.

Villa have also agreed personal terms with Everton left back Lucas Digne although the cost of the transfer has yet to be decided. AFP

## Root praises England's character in tense Test draw

### CRICKET

ENGLAND SKIPPER JOE ROOT praised his battered team's character to stave off Australia's victory push and hold on for a gritty draw in Sydney last Sunday (Jan 9) as injured wicketkeeper Jos Buttler prepared to fly home.

Old stagers James Anderson and Stuart Broad batted out the final two tense overs to give the beleaguered tourists a fighting draw and deny dominant Australia a fourth straight Test win in the lopsided series.

It comes after England meekly surrendered the Ashes, heavily losing the first three Tests inside 12 days amid bitter recriminations over the performances of the players, coaching staff and the captain.

But despite failing to pass 300 in any of their eight innings so far in the series, England, with nothing to play for but pride, saw the draw as a test of character.

"Relief is the overwhelming emotion and I'm quite proud too," Root said.

"We had a lot thrown at us in this game and guys have really stood up and showed a lot of character and pride.

"To come out and do that was really pleasing. It's a step forward and one we have to build on going into that last Test in Hobart."

Root, who had a low-key match with scores of 0 and 24, pointed to the positives.

"Today shows how much it means to



Jonny Bairstow celebrates his first-innings century in Sydney. Photo: AFP

them. When you find yourself out of the series it is really important you front up and time again show how much it means to you," he said.

"I think everyone has done that this week."

Root singled out the performances of injured pair Ben Stokes and Jonny Bairstow in helping their team get the draw.

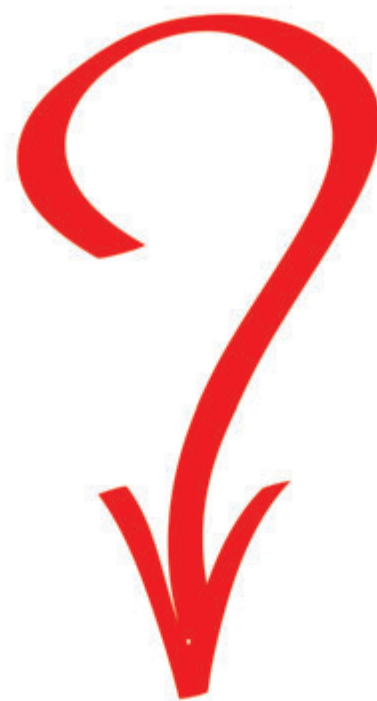
Stokes, with a gutsy 60, his second half-century of the match, and first-innings centurion Bairstow's 41 held up the Australian victory charge.

Team officials said that Buttler would head home after fracturing his left index finger.

Bairstow (right thumb) and Stokes (left side strain) will be further assessed and travel with the team to Hobart for the day-night fifth Test which starts today (Jan 14). AFP



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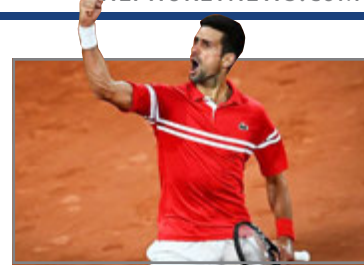
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# Sport



**Novak gets the all clear Down Under > p14**



## A FITTING TRIBUTE

ROW's star performer Van Blerk claims the MBE memorial trophy from Asia Captain Seemant Raju at the ACG last Sunday (Jan 9). Photo: Jin Siri

### CRICKET

Curt Livermore

A memorial game was held at the Alan Cooke Ground in Thalang last Sunday (Jan 9) to honour the memory of the ground's founding father, who passed away on Dec 8.

A Rest of the World (RoW) collective eased to victory with a score of 205/4 and took the "MBE" trophy and simultaneously the series lead (2-1) over Asia in game three of the 30-over, best of five series.

Following the recent pass-

ing of Alan Cooke MBE it was decided to create a yearly memorial match with the MBE trophy in his name at stake.

The RoW side, boasting a handful of newcomers to Phuket cricket, put in a true team effort, with every player chipping in with either bat, ball or in the field. Many of the veterans in the team also managed to get some valuable runs and time in the middle, which will set them in good stead as they attempt to clinch the series this weekend against what is a very strong Asia team.

Asia opened the batting but RoW started very strongly

with the ball. Newcomer Oliver Fitch (3/50) bowled excellently in his first cricket match in over five years, showing good pace, competitiveness and little mercy for young Ishaan Viswanathan (0), whose stumps were shattered by a Fitch thunderbolt before he picked up the key wicket of Manish Sadarangani (10) with a terrific caught and bowled effort.

Paddy Ledeboer (2/25) picked up a couple of wickets and is fast becoming a key all-rounder for the RoW while Jason Robertson (2/24) was of course excellent, as usual.

Just when the Asian side

had seemingly given up hope of posting a decent score, Mayur Deuskar (84\*) strode to the crease to set his highest score to date, helping his team post a very competitive 204 all out, an excellent fightback after being 23-4 early on.

As the RoW took to the crease, what little momentum Asia had picked up through Deuskar's bat was quickly snatched right back by a rampant Gonzo 'Fat Tony' Van Blerk (50), who scored his first meaningful runs in living memory, for any team.

'Fat Tony' seemed to send anything that came his way back past the bowler's head

with increasingly uncompromising vigour. When he eventually fell for a swash-buckling 50, to an almost unplayable delivery from Pir Sami (1/40), the foundations had been laid and he left his opening partner Michael Flowers (60\*) to anchor the rest of the innings and see his team home with 7 overs to spare.

Cameos from Ledeboer (32\*) and Aidan Wood (16) came in late to join Flowers, the latter having earlier bowled the longest over in ACG history (16 balls). Wood made up for the rather expensive over nicely with the bat

in his return to cricket after another lengthy layoff.

Game 4 takes place on Sunday (Jan 16) with a 10:30am start and should be a competitive affair with the series on the line. Full COVID-19 health and safety protocols will be employed at the ACG and spectators are welcome, with select food items, beverages and live sport available.

Phuket Cricket is always looking for new players so anyone interested please contact Phuket Cricket or ACG Phuket through their respective Facebook pages for more information.

## Supergirl ready for 'Barbie' in ONE showdown

### MMA

THAI TEENAGE STAR Supergirl Jaroonsak Muaythai is ready to take on Ekaterina "Barbie" Vandaryeva in what will be her second appearance in ONE Championship in Singapore this evening (Jan 14).

The 18-year-old high school senior, who switched camps recently, has been training at Marrok Force MMA in Bangkok to prepare for her strawweight Muay Thai bout against Vandaryeva at ONE: Heavy

Hitters at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

Although the Thai is 11 years younger than her opponent, the Bangkok resident owns a 38-5-1 record.

"Not everything depends on age and strength," Supergirl said. "There are things I can use to fight her, like my techniques."

One of those techniques is her spearing knee, a weapon she's perfected and is feared for. Being the taller fighter, Supergirl will, no doubt, try to use it.

However, she also must be

wary of the Belarusian's strengths, especially the kicks.

"Her kicks are super fast, and she looks quite stronger than I am, so I'm now trying to bulk up," she said.

Supergirl is no stranger to the ONE circle. She made her debut at ONE: A New Breed II and scorched Milagros Lopez with a right hand just 60 seconds into the bout for the knockout victory.

Despite looking in top form, Supergirl admits she wasn't entirely in control of the bout. "I was so nervous in that fight. I didn't

really do what I thought [I should have]," she said.

"Everything happened from muscle memory. Like when I grabbed her leg and punched her, I didn't plan to do that. It happened automatically because once you're punched, you punch back."

"When I won, I felt like it went so fast. I was so nervous, and it ended in just one minute. I didn't even put my all in yet."

Now that the Thai has got her first ONE match-up out of the way, she will be more comfortable in the circle against Vandaryeva.



Supergirl (right) in action during a recent fight. Photo: Bangkok Post

In fact, the high schooler sent a stern warning to her opponent.

"I might be young but my punches are not to be fooled around with," she warned.

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