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BRAVE MOVE



Korn Chatikavanij (in white shirt) stands with Thames Kraitat (in jacket), the KLa Party candidate for Phuket in the next general election, and other supporters. Photo: Supplied

KLA PARTY MAKES AN ELECTED PHUKET GOVERNOR OFFICIAL PARTY POLICY

The Phuket News
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The recently formed KLa Party (“Brave Party”) has made a more autonomous Phuket with Phuket people being able to elect their own Governor official party policy.

The news was announced by key party member Korn Chatikavanij in Phuket last Saturday (Oct 9). Mr Korn, a former Democrat Party member who served as Finance Minister under the Abhisit Vejjajiva government, was in Phuket to confirm Thames Kraitat as the KLa Party candidate for Phuket

in the next general election.

In a special interview conducted by Sasinkarn Rungruangroj on behalf of *The Phuket News**, Mr Korn explained, “KLa is a new party, It was formed last year. mostly by a variety of people with a shared goal, making Thai politics better, making Thailand a better place, creating good economic opportunities for all Thais, bringing wealth and increasing income for all – and it is something that we think is missing from the Thai political scene and we want to give the people a better choice.”

Recognising that the two current

MPs for Phuket are both representatives from the ruling Palang Pracharat Party, led by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, asked what attributes the KLa Party was specifically looking for among KLa Party candidates in Phuket, Mr Korn replied, “I think the main issue in the mind of Phuket residents is one concerning livelihood and quality of life in general.

“I think the past couple of years have been very hard on Phuket, so candidates that understand these issues, candidates that have something to say and a clear plan on how to alleviate the economic difficulties

of Phuket citizens are the ones we want representing the KLa Party and I’m sure are the qualities that Phuket residents are looking for come the next general election.”

With the financial hardship suffered by Phuket people over the past two years clearly on the agenda, Mr Korn explained the KLa Party’s focus on alleviating that suffering. “I think the short term clearly Phuket lives and thrives with tourism. We need to get that back, and that basically is the development of the current programme, the Sandbox, into a full reopening of Phuket.

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News



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New party puts Phuket on the agenda

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“The quicker we can do that, the quicker livelihoods will improve for Phuket residents,” he said.

“And the trigger to reopening clearly concerns health and safety issues, so the fact that Phuket residents are receiving a third shot of the vaccine is a good thing. I think that by the middle of this month I estimate that 50% of Phuket residents would have received their third shot. So we are moving towards a level when I think it would be safe for Phuket to reopen and go back to normality.”

Looking at the development of Phuket in the long term, Mr Korn noted, “In every aspect we want to take the opportunity to review what is good for Phuket in the long term, the type of tourists Phuket has. In my view Phuket is a premium world class destination. Everything Phuket has should be world class, the beaches and the people are already world class.

“I think we have to face the fact that the infrastructure broadly speaking is still substandard, care for the environment is still probably not as good as we would like to see to preserve what we have for future generations,” Mr Korn also noted.

“I think there’s a lot of work to do still to uplevel Phuket into a truly premium destination. There are also in my opinion other potential for Phuket especially for the young generation,” he said.

“I see Phuket in the future to



Korn Chatikavanij with Sasinkarn Rungruangroj in Phuket. Photo: Supplied

take advantage fully of the ongoing work from home, or work away from home trend and develop Phuket into a tech hub, to develop Phuket into a hub for digital nomads from around the world to develop startups here, so I think there are a lot of opportunities.

“People have also been talking to me about opportunities for Phuket regarding even premium agriculture,” he added.

“The fact that Phuket has suffered during COVID from lack of food security, the fact that it needs to import virtually everything Phuket eats... I think that has reawakened some thought in Phuket developing IN [investment]

in premium agriculture in order to support Phuket business and Phuket residents,” he said.

One critical question asked was about the KLa Party’s position on many Phuket people long calling for Phuket to be granted more autonomy in its own administration.

Key to that uprising in sentiment has been the feeling among many local residents witnessing years of what has appeared to be Bangkok-based decisions dismissing the island’s critical needs.

Asked whether he believes Phuket people should have more say in the political decisions that affect their lives and have an elected Governor, as they have in Pattaya,

instead of an official appointed by the Ministry of Interior, Mr Korn replied, “100% I totally agree with that sentiment.”

“In fact two days ago we already announced that as our official stance, our official policy for Phuket, Phuket is more ready than any other province in Thailand for devolution,” Mr Korn noted.

“It should be able to elect at least its own Governor. The Governor should have power over the budget in order to ensure that everything that we have discussed just now regarding improving infrastructure quality is done for Phuket by the Phuket people... I fully agree with that and that will be official Pak

Kla [KLa Party] policy,” he added.

In closing, Mr Korn was asked, in terms of improving the national economy, about his thoughts on the volume of trade already conducted with China, specifically Chinese companies and the Chinese government. Asked whether he foresees greater trade with China, Mr Korn replied, “I think that is an inevitable trend as the Chinese economy grows. Its proximity to Thailand and the fact that the Chinese people appreciate Thai goods and services means that trade with China will grow, which is a good thing.

“We of course need to make sure that trade with China is fair and that Thais fully benefit with trade, with not just China, but [also] with everybody else – that we get a good deal,” he said.

“I think it is of concern, not just in Phuket, but elsewhere in Thailand also, that a number of businesses are in Chinese hands, so we must make sure when Chinese do business with Thai companies that these companies as much as possible offer Thais [the type of trade deals] so Thais can receive full and fair benefit from that trade,” Mr Korn noted.

“So [Thailand will] continue to develop trade links with China, but make sure that it is the kind of trade that Thais benefit from,” he said.

** The Phuket News would like to extend our deep thanks to Sasinkarn Rungruangroj for conducting the interview on our behalf.*

Phuket starts vaccinating all children aged 12-18 years old

PHUKET HEALTH OFFICERS started vaccinating children aged 12-18 years old with injections of the Pfizer vaccine last Friday (Oct 8)

Announcing the move to vaccinate children, Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO), on Oct 7 explained that the first round of vaccinating children was to continue through to Monday (Oct 11).

“The first round will see some 12,000 students receive vaccination injections,” Dr Kusak told the press.

Of note, a national order issued by the Ministry of Public Health on Oct 6 confirmed that Phuket had been allocated 12,780 doses of Pfizer dedicated to vaccinating children.

In total, 27,000 children aged 12-18 years attending schools in



PPHO Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon. Photo: PR Phuket

the Phuket area were registered to be vaccinated, Dr Kusak said.

“Each school will take care of and control children for vaccina-

tions in schools in each area,” Dr Kusak added.

The vaccination of children will be conducted at three venues, one

in each district, as follows:

Muang District: at the Indoor Sports Stadium at Saphan Hin on Oct 8-11

Thalang District: at the X-Terminal Building at Phuket International Airport on Oct 8 and Oct 11

Kathu District: at Jungceylon shopping mall in Patong on Oct 8-9

“For the second round, they will be vaccinated at the end of October. In order for all children 12-18 years of age to be vaccinated they must have parental consent,” Dr Kusak said.

“In addition, Phuket has given importance to children aged 12-18 who are outside the education system. We have been surveying to vaccinate children in this group as well,” he added.

“Children in the area who are studying online now, they are to be the next group to be vaccinated. For all children aged 12-18 years,

Phuket Province will ensure that vaccinations are allocated according to the consent of the parents in full,” he said.

“However, for parents and children’s concerns about side effects of the vaccination injections, in fact there is a very small percentage of possible side effects,” Dr Kusak assured.

“Therefore, it is recommended that before vaccination you need to get enough rest, and after you have been vaccinated, you should refrain from exercising during the first two weeks, especially for boys,” he added.

“There could be a side effect of myocarditis [inflammation of the heart muscle]. This side effect is very unlikely, but can happen. Therefore, it is recommended that after vaccination children should stop exercising and get enough rest,” Dr Kusak said. *The Phuket News*

MorChana abilities expanded

Face recognition, tracking to enforce Sandbox zones

The Phuket News
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The MorChana app has been expanded to inform officials within 30 minutes if any tourists are not in designated zones where they are supposed to remain while observing their Sandbox quarantine period, and is now integrated where possible to use face recognition software, the Minister for Digital Economy and Society (MDES) has revealed.

MDES Minister Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn was in Phuket last Friday (Oct 8) to inspect and observe operations conducted for monitoring and enforcing Sandbox measures by using digital technology.

In addition to leading a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall to update Phuket officials about the expansion of the MorChana app, Mr Chaiwut during his visit inspected operations at the 'Phuket Sandbox Operation Center' in Phuket Town and the Command Control Center operated by Patong Municipality.

The expansion of the Mor-



MDES Minister Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn inspected the capabilities of the Command Control Center in Patong. Photo: PR Phuket

Chana app's capabilities by integrating it with the command control centres was part of the move "to support the plan to open the country to receive tourists in the next phase," Mr Chaiwut said.

The plan was to pilot the expanded integrated IT capabilities in Phuket first as a pilot area before rolling out similar integrated efforts in other Sandbox tourist areas in other provinces, he added.

Present at the meeting at

Provincial Hall to hear the news were Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw and Vice Governor Piyapong Choowong, along with Thammanoon Sriwathana, Vice Governor of Phang Nga.

"The Digital Economy Promotion Agency (Depa) has taken part in driving Phuket Sandbox by providing technological assistance to agencies involved in this project, such as developing face tracking systems, systems following the MorChana app, creating

dashboards used for situation reports, Phuket Tourism Sandbox system alerts, as well as the Shaba Plus system and tourist inspection system for use in quarantine," he said.

Mr Chaiwut noted that the 'Phuket Sandbox Operation Center', set up at the headquarters of the Phuket Provincial Police in Phuket Town, already received information regarding tourists from Immigration, all the major piers operating boat travel and tours to and from

the island, as well as SHA Plus reports, police reports and Tourist Police reports.

"By having tourists travelling to Phuket must download the MorChana app it can be used as a tracking system that will signal the location where tourists are every half an hour to the centre," Mr Chaiwut said.

"This makes it known where tourists who come to Phuket are at any point, and if tourists leave the area of Phuket, the system will alert the centre," he added.

"We are also expanding the use of the MorChana app to support the government's policy to open more areas in other provinces to foreign tourists," he said.

"Staff from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports have downloaded and installed the MorChana app and tested is outside the designated area, and found that the system will alert the control room that there are violators out of the area so that officers can locate the tourists and led them back to the area," Mr Chaiwut said.

The officers also tested the MorChana app's ability to

log information about foreign tourists' COVID-19 test history, confirming that they have tested negative for the virus so they may be allowed to enter other areas, he continued.

During his visit, Mr Chaiwut visited the 'IOC' (Intelligence Operation Center), or 'Command Center', operated by Patong Municipality.

The Patong IOC was originally developed to help manage traffic problems and other issues affecting residents and visitors to the town, and has CCTV throughout the town feeding footage to the centre, but is now linked to the 'Phuket Sandbox Operation Center' in Phuket Town, Mr Chaiwut said.

The CCTV cameras installed throughout the town through the project to develop Patong into a 'Smart City' have face recognition capability, Mr Chaiwut noted.

"In the next phase, the goal is to link the information of various agencies in Phuket together for the benefit of the people in the province before leading the drive with the Phuket Smart City project," he said.

Talks target arrival of Russian tourists

VLADIMIR V. SOSNOV, CONSUL GENERAL of the Russian Federation for Phuket Province, has met with Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong to discuss the prospect of Russian tourists returning to visit the island as soon as early next month.

Mr Sosnov and his delegation met Vice Governor Pichet and other high-ranking Phuket officials at Provincial Hall last Friday (Oct 8).

Among the issues discussed was the drafting of a "Memorandum of Understanding on Establishment of Relations between Phuket Province and Kamchatka City Russian Federation".

The meeting was also held to exchange ideas on the project to open the country to receive foreign tourists under the Phuket Sandbox scheme, including Russian airlines that will travel to Phuket in early November 2021, said a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

Mr Sosnov said there are many Russians tourists interested in coming by travelling under the Phuket Sandbox project, said the report.

"However, the Russian government continues to monitor the situation of infected people in Thailand, where the infection situation is high," Mr Sosnov said.

"Therefore, the Russian government has not yet recommended that Russian tourists come to Thailand," he added.

Mr Sosnov reported that The Russian federation considers 40 new cases per day per 100,000 people to be a safe level of infections for Russian tourists to visit.

"On this issue, Mr Pichet Panapong, Vice Governor of Phuket, explained that Phuket has only 30 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, which is considered a safe area and has strict disease



Mr Sosnov (left) at the meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on Oct 7. Photo: PR Phuket

control measures," the PR Phuket report said.

"In addition, more than 70% of the population in Phuket area has been fully vaccinated, and it is expected that by the end of October, there will be more than 70% of [the population having received] booster third injection vaccinations as well," he added, according to the report.

V/Gov Pichet noted that 496 Russian tourists had travelled to Phuket under the Phuket Sandbox project since Sept 1.

"On behalf of Phuket, thank you Consul General of Russian Federation for Phuket Province on the occasion of visiting and providing useful information about Phuket," V/Gov Pichet said, added the report.

"It is a great pleasure to welcome Russian tourists and we hope that airlines from Russia will fly directly to Phuket soon. We would like to recommend that the Russian government expedite the approval of charter flights to fly into Phuket to further promote tourism between Russia and Phuket," he said.

Before closing the meeting, and before the exchange of gifts, Mr Sosnov pointed out that the year 2022 will mark the 125th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Thailand and Russia, the PR Phuket report noted. *The Phuket News*

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Wind 7 m/s

WED OCT 20

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Wind 7 m/s

THU OCT 21

High: +31°
Low: +27°

Wind 7 m/s

Jobless robber surrenders to police

Eakkapop Thongtub
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A jobless man who robbed a 7-Eleven convenience store on the eastern outskirts of Phuket Town last Friday (Oct 8) surrendered himself to police the next day and now awaits prosecution. According to the suspect, he committed the crime because of financial problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Police were called to the 7-Eleven store on Karn Keha Rd in Rassada at around 11pm last Friday. The report was of a robbery.

At the scene, patrol officers led by Lt Col Sathit Nurit of the Phuket City Police found two female shop assistants in a state of shock. The shop counter was in disorder with things scattered around the place. Yet, neither of the women suffered any injuries.

Having questioned the staff and checked the CCTV cameras, officers learned that the suspect was a man dressed in a black long-sleeved shirt, black pants, and dark boots. He was wearing a cap and a face mask and also had a shoulder bag.



The man robbed a 7-Eleven store in Rassada last Friday (Oct 8), and surrendered to police the next day. Photo: Phuket City Police

The man approached the shop assistants and asked for cigarettes and a lighter. Then he jumped over the counter and emptied the cash register, and threatened to shoot the staff. The man then fled with B490 in cash.

Police officers tried to intercept the suspect but failed. Yet, on the next

day the man – Teerasak Rattanaphan, 32, from Rassada – surrendered himself to Phuket City Police after having seen pictures of his actions on social media.

Mr Teerasak explained that the COVID-19 pandemic left him without a job. The most recent attempts to borrow some cash from friends

failed and he could not find a better option rather than breaking the law.

During questioning Mr Teerasak fully confessed to committing the robbery and led police to the place where he disposed of the clothes he was wearing when robbing the store.

He now awaits prosecution for the robbery.

Teen killed as motorbike hits tree

A 14-YEAR-OLD BOY WAS killed when the motorbike he was riding with two friends sitting behind him hit a tree beside Thepkasattri Rd just south of the Heroines Monument late at night Wednesday last week (Oct 6).

Maj Niwat Timket of the Thalang Police was notified of the accident, near Ruampong Motor Co Ltd on Thepkasattri Rd northbound in Moo 3, Srisoonthorn, at 11:55pm.

Maj Niwat arrived at the scene, just over 500 metres south of the Heroines Monument, to find the damaged Phuket-registered Honda motorbike on the road and a large tamarind tree with a heavy impact mark.

On the road nearby was the body of Apinun Sanklong, 14, registered as living in Phuket Town. His body was taken to Thalang Hospital by rescue workers from the Kusoldharm Foundation Muang Mai branch.

Maj Niwat was informed that before he and other police had arrived at the scene rescue workers from Srisoonthorn Municipality had taken two other teenagers injured in the accident to Thalang Hospital.

At the hospital Maj Niwat



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

identified the two injured teenagers as Montri Muen-In, 14, and Athitaya Rodthong, 12 years old.

From questioning the injured two, Maj Niwat was told that the three were travelling from Phuket Town on the one motorbike, with Apinun driving.

The teens were travelling towards the Heroines Monument at high speed when Apinun lost control of the motorbike and crashed into the tamarind tree beside the road.

Police made no mention of the teenagers attending any Vegetarian Festival event, despite Apinun being dressed in full white in accordance with Vegetarian Festival tradition.

Maj Niwat that further investigation into the accident would continue after the condition of the two surviving teenagers had improved. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

Thammasat Massacre remembered in Phuket

A SMALL GROUP OF 14 PEOPLE gathered at Queen Sirikit Park in Phuket Town on Oct 6 to remember the slaying of at least 46 demonstrators by Thai soldiers in the Thammasat Massacre on Oct 6, 1976.

The gathering, calling themselves the 'Phuket Liberation Group', stood in front of the Mingmongkol Statue (Dragon Statue) and observed a minute's silence at 6:10pm. They then lit a candle for each of the protesters killed in the violent crackdown by the Thai Army 45 years ago, then read a poem to honour the lives lost and read out loud the names of those killed in the massacre.

The remembrance, which took about 20 minutes to complete, was held under watch by officers from Phuket City Police, Phuket Provincial Police, Region 8 Police and internal security agencies in Phuket. After completing their remembrance ceremony, the group disbanded peacefully.

Larger activities to remember the 1976 massacre were held in Bangkok, where activists and members of the victims' families gathered at the memorial at Thammasat University to pay their respects.

Speakers at the event noted that little had changed in the 45 years since students and activists were massacred by the military and rightwing radicals at Thammasat University, sending many survivors fleeing into the jungle where



The small gathering held the remembrance ceremony at Queen Sirikit Park in Phuket Town on the evening of Oct 6. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

they took up arms against the authoritarian government, reported the *Bangkok Post*.

Those killed in the 1976 massacre were protesting the return to Thailand of former dictator Field Marshall Thanom Kittikachorn. Official reports state that 46 were killed and 167 were wounded, while unofficial reports state that more than 100 demonstrators were killed.

Move Forward Party leader Pita Limcharoenrat in Bangkok on Oct 6 said the government's use of violence and legal action against young protesters and activists reflected the reality – that political differences remain a thorny issue never accepted by the state. The state had never been open to changes and showed no compromise in dealing with people holding different political opinions, he said.

Young protesters in Bangkok have been holding almost daily rallies calling for the ouster of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha that always end in clashes with riot police. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

Veg Fest upheld by the devout

The Phuket News
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The Phuket Vegetarian Festival this year marked a special edition of the 196-year tradition of observing nine days of abstinence from meat, dairy, alcohol and a variety of other 'vices'.

The first street procession of this year's Phuket Vegetarian festival, which began on Oct 5 with the raising of the Go Teng poles at participating shrines, was held on Oct 7 as devotees and Ma Song spirit mediums from the Naka Shrine in Wichit travelled to Saphan Hin and back, riding in the back of pickups and on the back of flatbed trucks.

The motorcade proceeded from the shrine on Chao Fa Luang Rd, north along Chao Fa West Rd, right onto Wirat Hongyok Rd and into Phuket Town, where the procession continued south to Saphan Hin.

In stark contrast to years past, very few people lined the streets to watch the procession pass by.

In accordance with requests from provincial officials for Ma Song and their devotees to abide by COVID prevention measures, the shrine asked



Devotees perform a Vegetarian Festival blessing ceremony at Saphan Hin, with the crowds of onlookers nowhere to be seen. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

all Ma Song to avoid wearing any piercings, the likes of which had previously made the Phuket Vegetarian Festival famous around the world, with spirit mediums sporting beach umbrellas, bicycles and even handguns protruding through their faces.

The traditional practice of face piercings is to carry sacred objects, such as blessed sceptres, rods and sometimes swords.

Of the four to five Ma Song who took part in the street procession on Oct 7, none wore face masks, though all their assistants did.

The same applied for all the ensuing street processions even by the major shrines taking part, such as the the Bang Khu Shrine in Koh Kaew and the Bang Neow Shrine in Phuket Town, which held its procession to Saphan Hin on Monday (Oct 11).

The turnout of spectators throughout the festival was very low, as the Vegetarian Festival this year suffered its worst attendance in years.

The atmosphere around many of the participating Chinese shrines across the island was quiet, with few people even venturing out to

sample the special vegetarian dishes sold by vendors during the annual festivities.

Following the example set by Jui Tui Shrine on Ranong Rd in Phuket Town, which serves as one of the busiest shrines during the festival, many participating shrines this year asked vendors to not even set up stalls along the streets in front of the shrines as a precaution against causing a cluster of COVID infections.

The festival this year draws to a close today (Oct 15), with the lowering of the Go Teng poles at the participating shrines.

A QUIETER TIME

The Phuket Vegetarian Festival over the years has inspired a host of many similar festivals now held across the country for Thai-Chinese communities elsewhere to observe, including in the Yaowarat area in Bangkok.

The "vegetarian festival season" had previously served as a key event on the domestic tourism calendar, and "has always been a major drive in economic growth", reported state news agency NNT.

However, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC) is expecting this year's festival not to be as lively as before due to economic strains from the COVID-19 pandemic, said the NNT report.

"The UTCC's Center for Economic and Business Forecasting has just released the results of its survey on consumers' spending behavior for this year's vegetarian festival, during which weaker economic activities can be expected," it said.

The survey, conducted with 1,208 participants across the country, showed that only 39.1% of the respondents would be observing this

festival this year, with 62.9% of respondents intending to observe the vegetarian diet for the entire festival, which by officials' account is held from Oct 6-14. The actual closing of the festival will be on Oct 15, when the participating shrines lower the Go Teng poles.

"Most people responded they would be making the same amount of spending for their grocery items, while some intended to leverage on the government's aid campaigns, particularly the 50:50 co-pay campaign where up to half of their individual purchases could be subsidized," NNT reported.

Only 10.1% of the respondents said they intended to visit places of worship this year, mostly within Bangkok and neighbouring provinces.

UTCC President Thanawat Polvichai said total spending from this year's vegetarian festival across the country is expected to be around B41.15 billion, which is some 14.5% lower than last year's figure at B46.98bn.

The decrease in spending would be the first in 14 years since 2008, Mr Thanawat said.

Vaccines for Krabi reopening

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND Minister of Public Health Anutin Charnvirakul has expedited the delivery of 500,000 doses of Sinovac and AstraZeneca vaccines to vaccinate local residents in Krabi to hasten the reopening of the province to tourism.

Anutin made the announcement at a press conference held during his visit to Krabi on Oct 7, accompanied by Minister of Tourism and Sports Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn. Joining the press conference was Phutthiphong Sirimat, who recently arrived to take up the position of Krabi Governor on Oct 1.

However, only through a later report by state news agency NBT World was it confirmed that the 500,000 vaccine doses were handed over to Krabi officials that same day.

Speaking on Oct 7, Anutin pointed out that Phi Phi Island, Koh Ngai and Railay Beach were now extensions of the Sandbox scheme, where Sandbox arrivals may visit after completing their seven day stay in Phuket.

Anutin pointed out that all local residents in the three areas had been fully vaccinated since June. However, he also added that so far the areas had received only 416 Sandbox tourists.

Yet other areas in Krabi were lagging behind, Anutin said.

Of the 'Group 608' residents in Krabi, comprising eight definitions of people at greater risk of developing serious complications if infected with COVID-19, only 62.51% had been vaccinated. Overall, the



Deputy Prime Minister Anutin speaks to the press in Krabi. Photo: PR Krabi

vaccination efforts had managed to provide injections to 35.71% of the province's population, he added.

Koh Lanta, as a key target area for more tourists, already has 90.22% of its residents vaccinated, and is to be targeted in the next phase of mass vaccinations to speed up the reopening of that island to tourism, Anutin said.

"Most important is that people in the area must jointly comply with the highest measures of self-defense [against infection] while establishments follow the 'COVID Free Setting' guidelines so that people and tourists can resume under a new way of life as safely as possible," he said.

"Krabi Province is a tourist area connected to Phuket Province, which receives a lot of people from outside. Therefore, vaccination must be accelerated to 100% in order to keep everyone in the area safe," Anutin said.

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Call for ATK tests for Sandbox

Move aims to reduce costs, save time, encourage more tourists

The Phuket News
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Phuket Tourism leaders have requested the government to ease the mandatory COVID tests required of Sandbox tourists to be antigen tests, instead of RT-PCR tests as is required now, to reduce the cost for Sandbox tourists and to encourage more people to come to Phuket under the scheme.

Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) President Bhumikitti Raktaengam announced that the request had been made at a PTA tourism event at the Royal Phuket City Hotel in Phuket Town last Saturday (Oct 9).

The move also is expected to speed up the time taken for Sandbox tourists to receive their test results, and lessen the workload of the medical staff conducting the tests, Mr Bhumikitti said.

"It's been 100 days since the opening of the country to accept foreign tourists according to the Phuket Sandbox plan," Mr Bhumikitti said.

The association expected



The announcement came at a Phuket Tourist Association event in Phuket Town last Saturday (Oct 9). Photo: PR Phuket

the number of foreign tourists to Phuket to rise dramatically in the coming months. After Dec 1, some 10,000 international tourists are expected to arrive in Phuket a day, he added.

"The government has

already reduced the Sandbox area quarantine period from 14 days to seven days, and now we have asked the government to change the COVID testing rules [for Sandbox tourists] to be ATK tests instead of RT-PCR tests

in order to make it more convenient for tourists and reduce costs. This is pending government approval, if possible," he said.

"This makes tourists more interested in traveling to Phuket and Thailand. At the

moment, there are on average 400 to 700 [Sandbox] tourists arriving per day in Phuket, so the association aims to increase the number of tourists to 10,000 per day. This is expected to begin on December 1," Mr Bhumikitti said.

Present at the event were key Phuket tourism leaders and PTA members Vice President Sarayuth Mallam; Nantida Atiset, Vice President of International Marketing; Thaneth Tantipiriyakij, Vice President of Meeting & Special Activities; Thanawat Ongcharoen, Treasurer; and Rangsiman Kingkaew, Vice President of Strategic Tourism.

At the event the PTA members urged business operators to have their staff – and their staff's family members – receive the COVID vaccine third-dose booster injection, which they said was vital for the safe full reopening of Phuket to tourism.

Mr Rangsiman noted that Phuket business leaders are now preparing to enter a bid for the rights to host the Specialized Expo 2028 to attract foreigners to travel for health and wellness tourism.

"If Phuket province is selected as the host, that could lead to investment of up to B4 billion, and with further economic benefits Thailand worth more than B45bn," he said.

Door opens for 'visa on arrival'

PHUKET OFFICIALS have announced that people wanting to enter Thailand under the Phuket Sandbox scheme may now do so under Visa on Arrival (VOA).

The announcement was posted online on Oct 4, but with no extra details released. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has yet to announce the move through its formal channels.

The notice posted online was titled, "Arrival Requirements for 'Phuket Sandbox' visitors who wish to apply for a 'Visa on Arrival' (VOA)".

The conditions and process of entering Thailand under the Phuket Sandbox scheme on a VOA was explained as follows:

1. Ensure that you have an approved 'Certificate of Entry' (COE) before flying to Thailand (printed version required). You can apply for the COE for Visa on Arrivals via <https://coethailand.mfa.go.th>

2. Download the mobile application on arrival (which app was not specified)

3. Be prepared to have



The notice posted by Phuket officials. Image: PR Phuket

documents checked at the 'Port Health and Quarantine' at Phuket International Airport

4. When applying for the 'Visa on Arrival' you will need to:

- Fill out the application form provided

- Ensure that your passport is valid for at least 30 days

- Have a confirmed return flight ticket

- Have 'SHABA' confirmation of a 'SHA Plus' hotel for a minimum of 7 days

- Show that you are carrying 10,000 baht (20,000 for a family) in any currency

- 2,000 baht for the 'Visa

Application Fee'

5. Clear the 'Immigration' process

6. Proceed to the baggage hall and collect luggages

7. Proceed to 'Customs'

8. Proceed outside the terminal to the compulsory 'RT-PCR' Covid-19 test station

9. Depart to your SHA Plus hotel with a 'SHA Plus' prebooked transportation (directly with no enroute stops)

Of special note, the notice was marked in red, "Please note that the VOA will be granted for only 15 days, and it cannot be extended."

The Phuket News

Travel subsidy campaigns resume

THE GOVERNMENT'S PROMOTIONAL campaigns for domestic travels officially resumed last Saturday (Oct 9), allowing eligible persons to book their hotel stays and tour packages at a subsidized rate. The government hopes these campaigns will help stimulate domestic travels towards the end of this year alongside the reopening of certain provinces, starting in November.

Thai citizens can now book their hotel stays at a subsidized rate with the We Travel Together campaign through to Jan 31, reported state news agency NNT.

Introduced in 2020, the We Travel Together campaign provides subsidies for bookings at participating hotels and accommodations, encouraging people to travel more within Thailand while paying less.

For the current Phase 3 of the campaign, the government will provide a 40% subsidy for nightly accommodation rates, with a maximum subsidized amount capped at B3,000 per room per night.

Each person is entitled to up to 15 rooms or 15 nights, with the eligible stay period starting from Oct 15 to Jan 31. All eligible bookings must be made by Oct 23.

People leveraging these benefits will also receive daily coupons at B600 for each night of stay, which can be used for food purchases and admission fees at tourism attractions.

People booking their stay at one of the designated tourism provinces will also be eligible for a 40% airfare refund, with the refund amount capped at B3,000. Each individual booking comes with the airfare benefits for two passengers per room, with a maximum cap of 30 passengers.

People who participated in the previous



Image: NNT

phases of this campaign can check for their remaining benefits and booking slots on the government's Pao Tang application. Those who have yet to participate before can register on the campaign's website.

The general public can also start booking their tour packages at a subsidized rate as part of the Tour Thai campaign until Jan 31. Bookings can be made directly with tour operators.

Tour bookings are limited to one package per person only. The government will be subsidizing 40% of the package price, or up to B5,000. Payments must be made by customers seven days in advance. The subsidy is only available for the first 1 million packages booked.

Government Spokesperson Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said the two campaigns would help stimulate domestic tourism towards the end of this year and early 2022, in line with the resumption of flights to more domestic routes.

The government is currently planning to open more provinces for tourism from Nov 1, in an attempt to draw in more cash flow for the tourism industry. Provinces now planned for the Nov 1 reopening include Bangkok, Prachuab Khiri Khan, Petchaburi, Chonburi and Chiang Mai. NNT

Thailand off UK 'red list' as travel restrictions eased

LONDON

Busaba Sivasomboon

Britain scrapped tough COVID-19 quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated travelers from 47 destinations including Thailand last Thursday (Oct 7).

Thailand was previously listed among countries with high infection levels that were put on a 'red list', requiring arrivals to spend 10 days in a government-provided quarantine hotel, with periodic PCR tests mandatory.

The cost of this process was more than £2,000 pounds (B92,000) for accommodation and tests. Many complained that the cost of the quarantine process was far more expensive than their airfare.

The UK's official travel advice website announced that from 4am on Monday (Oct 11), 47 countries would no longer be on the red list for entering England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Thailand will be considered ROW (Rest of the World). Thai travelers who have completed two shots of endorsed



The international arrivals hall at London's Heathrow airport. Photo: AFP

vaccines – Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, and Johnson & Johnson – will be exempted from quarantine.

Vaccine certificates are required upon arrival, while there is no need to have a pre-departure COVID test. They are however required to take a test on day two to check for coronavirus.

Those who are not fully vaccinated will be subjected to self-isolation in accommodations of their choices such as home for 10 days. They should present pre-departure COVID test at arrivals, and also undergo COVID tests

on days two and eight.

Though the UK government still warns British nationals against traveling to Thailand based on the country's current assessment of COVID-19 risks, the relaxation of quarantine measures is expected to attract more UK residents to visit Thailand and then fly back to the UK.

The British government added Thailand to the red list on Aug 30, meaning people from Thailand were banned from entering the UK and any British citizens returning from Thailand had to enter quarantine for 10 days.

Since then Thai officials have met with UK counterparts in an attempt to convince them to move the Kingdom back to the ROW list as they feared that restrictions might turn potential visitors away from the Phuket Sandbox program.

The most recent coronavirus outbreak in Thailand has gradually subsided and various policies have been launched to attract more travellers.

New cases reported daily have fallen from 20,000 in August to 10,000 or lower in October. Last Friday (Oct 8), the Public Health Ministry reported there were 11,140 new COVID-19 cases.

Being removed from the red list reflects the success of the Thai government in battling the coronavirus pandemic, according to Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana, a government spokesperson.

Holders of British/Irish passports, as well as 54 other nationalities entitled to a 30-day visa exemption, can travel to Thailand for tourism purposes for up to 30 days without a visa. *NNT*

WHO raises Thailand's jab standard standing

BANGKOK

THAILAND'S NATIONAL Regulatory Authority (NRA) for vaccines has reached Maturity Level 3 – the second-highest level in the World Health Organization's (WHO) regulatory systems classification system.

The news was announced by WHO's Assistant Director-general on Access to Medicines and Health Products, Marieangela Simao, at a virtual International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities (ICDRA), held from Sept 20 - 24.

The ranking was given after a WHO team used the organisation's Global Benchmarking Tool (GBT) to review the quality, safety and efficacy of vaccines produced in the country.

According to WHO, Level 3 countries have a stable, well-functioning and integrated regulatory system with regards to vaccine production.

Meanwhile, Level 4 states have an advanced regulatory system which shows evidence of continuous improvement.

Government spokesman Thanakorn Wang-



Photo: AFP

boonkongchana said on Sunday (Oct 10) Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha is delighted to hear the achievement.

He complimented all medical and healthcare officers for taking part in the development of the public health system, the spokesman added.

He said ongoing efforts will be made to improve Thailand's NRA in other fields.

Meanwhile, Thailand logged 60 new COVID-19 fatalities and 10,035 new cases during the previous 24 hours, the Public Health Ministry announced on Monday.

On Sunday, 10,590 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals after recovering from the coronavirus.

Since the pandemic started early last year, there have been 1,720,919 COVID-19 cases, with 1,592,9023 complete recoveries. The death toll stood at 17,751 since the start of the pandemic. *Bangkok Post*

Students face random testing

BANGKOK

RANDOM ANTIGEN TESTING WILL be carried out among school children before the new term begins next month, says deputy government spokeswoman Rachada Dhnadirek.

The tests will be conducted every two weeks among 10-15% of returning pupils as well as other youngsters aged 12-18, some of whom have been vaccinated.

Ms Rachada said the antigen test would boost the confidence of students and parents ahead of on-site classes resuming on Nov 1.

Since the launch of nationwide Pfizer inoculations for people aged 12-18 on Oct 7, 150,190 have received their first dose and 1,825 have had both injections.

There are around 5 million people aged 12-18. Of them, 3.8mn have been targeted for the vaccination.

Ms Rachada added the government was aware some young people were worried about their safety.

Moving to allay their fears, Ms Rachada insisted the vaccine met global standards of manufacturing and has been approved for use by the World Health Organisation as well as Thailand's Food and Drug Administration.

Although the Pfizer vaccine may cause some undesirable side effects such as muscle ache, tiredness and nausea, and possibly conditions including myocarditis, its benefits in warding off or reducing severe infections and hospitalisation outweighed



Students receive the Pfizer vaccine in Bangkok on Oct 6. Photo: Arnun Chonmahatrakool

the risks, she said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Health (DoH) has recommended schools conduct regular antigen testing after the new term starts and students return to class.

DoH deputy director-general Sarawut Boonsuk said 68 schools nationwide have piloted safety zones over the past two to three months, and that rigorous measures are creating a COVID-free environment in schools.

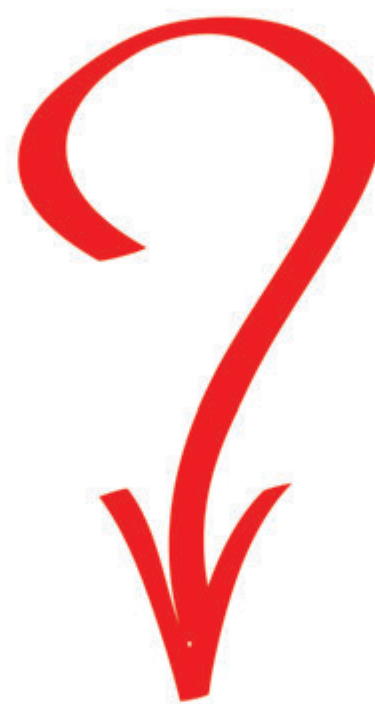
One measure was that businesses and shops located within 10 metres of a school fence must be evaluated for their COVID-19 risks.

Also, classes must be limited to no more than 25 students and at least 85% of teachers and non-teaching staff must be fully vaccinated.

According to the department, from June 14 to Sept 30, a total of 222,188 children up to the age of 9 were infected nationwide. Of them, 60,928 were 6 or under, 65,889 were between 7 and 12, and 95,371 were aged 13-19. *Bangkok Post*



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Photo: Natanael Melchor / Unsplash



Eric Dohlon at the ready in his office.

When insurance skips a beat

Bruce Stanley

It was one of those familiar phone calls that make me sad. “Can you help us? We’ve found our friend Jonathan unconscious in his room and don’t know what to do.”

“Where are you now?” I ask them.

“We put him in our truck and took him to the Vachira government hospital. But when he became conscious, he told us that he had medical insurance and to please take him to an international hospital.”

I then learned that no one knew where Jonathan had put his medical insurance card, ATM card or passport. Fortunately one of the international hospitals accepted him but asked for a B50,000 deposit for his initial care. His friends all donated enough to get him admitted.

Within a short time, a scan revealed that he had a growth on his liver and other complications that would require some extensive intervention. The hospital contacted his overseas health insurance company to be told they would not cover what they determined to be a pre-existing condition. Jonathan’s friends were asked to cover his medical bills that would eventually amount to many hundreds of thousands of baht. When there is no guarantee of payment, the patient is moved to the government hospital.

This disturbing story is not unusual. There are thousands of expats from around the world who stay both short and long term on Phuket with inadequate if no health insurance. Most say they will self-pay if they have a problem. That may have been feasible 20 or 30 years ago when the costs for medical care were more affordable, but due to rapidly rising hospital charges, only a fraction of Phuket visitors and residents can afford their medical bill.

When I came to Phuket almost 30 years ago to work at the newly developed Prince of Songkla University Phuket campus, I was given the job of working with the Tourism Authority of Thailand to help foreigners from all countries in distress. Much of my work was the often delicate negotiations between foreigners and the local police when there was an accident. The other part was helping to find medical care for an injured visitor. In those days, there were no international hospitals on the island. The choice then was Vachira or Mission hospitals and a few much smaller clinics, and none of them had much medical technology. I remember one Swiss fellow who got run over on his motorcycle by a 10-wheeled truck and had a leg broken in many places. He was advised to take a bus to a hospital in Bangkok if he wanted to save his limb.

We’ve come a long way since then and the island can now boast an international standard of care, but it comes with added costs that the sick and

injured are expected to pay – and that means an adequate insurance policy.

“At an international hospital, the patient must have a direct relationship with their insurer. We can help arrange and settle a claim, but the patient must make sure they have proper coverage to pay for their injury,” a very experienced claims officer tells me.

When the insurance company is based abroad, there can be problems with the insurer unfamiliar with the costs and medical procedures of an injury in Thailand. This is why the Thai government recommends using a Thai-based insurance company as the hospitals can more easily help the injured and distressed settle their bill.

On Phuket, Eric Dohlon, Managing Director of Bangkok Insurance Brokers (BIB), has been providing health and accident insurance for 20 years. He is an advocate for especially older expats who need an affordable policy that covers their medical care. He keeps himself informed about his clients’ condition in the hospitals and attends their social gatherings and funerals. He works in the best interest of his clients who can easily meet him to discuss their medical insurance needs.

“There is a wide variation in prices for what hospitals charge. Many are profit driven and they regularly raise their prices when they think an insurance company will pay. These higher charges then cause insurance premiums to escalate beyond what clients can afford,” explains Eric.

“I always advise my clients to shop around Thailand for non-essential medical care because the savings can be significant. They should also talk with their insurance company to determine exactly what they will cover. Otherwise the client will be responsible for any shortfall. Also it is wise to negotiate the final bill after a medical procedure as the hospital has flexibility particularly for patients without adequate medical coverage.”

There are often medical emergencies on Phuket such as Richard who was happily living at Patong Beach in retirement when he fell ill. Normally, a high dosage of paracetamol took care of his discomfort. But inevitably it didn’t and he was taken to Vachira Hospital to learn his kidneys had stopped working. He was put on dialysis and soon

had a large bill. When he advised the hospital to get funds from his bank, he discovered that his live-in girlfriend had emptied his retirement savings account and disappeared. Without dialysis he would die. He had no family back in his native England but was able to scratch together enough money for a one-way ticket to London. He returned to Heathrow airport in a wheelchair and into the care of the National Health Service (NHS).

“Health insurance is important but also an inexpensive accident insurance policy will allow easy admission to the hospital in case of vehicle, motorcycle or other unexpected injury,” Eric explains.

I recall an expat musician on the island who had a fall in his shower, hit his head and totally lost his memory and eventually had to be repatriated to his home country. And the young woman who had a tragic fall down some stairs at a Patong club whose brain was seriously damaged. While both had accident insurance, they unfortunately did not have repatriation coverage to their home countries.

Not so lucky was Greg, a semi-professional cyclist who was hit by a speeding truck in Rawai and left for dead on the side of the road before being rescued by a passing Thai family. They drove to several hospitals who asked to see proof of medical insurance before they would accept him.

Thailand is the second most dangerous country in the world just behind South Africa for traffic fatalities. It’s no secret that many local people as well as expats drive without training or under the influence of a staggering variety of mind altering substances. Many tourists think Phuket is the perfect place to learn to drive a motorcycle with no license or swim in the warm sea ignoring the warning red flags blowing in the wind. It’s all a perfect setting for disaster for those who are not careful.

Jonathan’s condition improved after two weeks in a virtual coma. He was eventually discharged from the international hospital with a medical bill of B1 million. He plans to pay it off monthly and hopefully find medical insurance that will cover any future relapse.

To consult with Eric Dohlon at Bangkok Insurance Brokers (BIB) visit Insurance-in-Thailand.com or call 076-612722 or 089-6493012.



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Easier than ever before to explore

ADVERTORIAL

By Joanna Matlub

With the new relaxation in rules for both Sandbox and Domestic guests, it is now easier than ever before to get out and explore more stunning destinations. For most island speedboat day trips from Phuket, you simply need your passport copy and vaccination certificate. Fear not though, if you are a Domestic unvaccinated guest in most cases a simple Antigen Test is all that is needed to visit the beautiful islands around us.

This month has also brought other positive differences with it. With the change in season comes calmer seas which means that more exotic destinations become accessible from October / November. 5 Star Marine will guide you through a range of exotic destinations available for both Sandbox and Domestic guests to enjoy:

1. Khai Islands

Three popular and family friendly islands offering shallow snorkelling only 15 minutes from the pier at Boat Lagoon. These islands are well suited to beginner snorkellers as you can go straight off the beach to experience a plethora of tropical fish, before enjoying a beach picnic.

2. Mai Ton & Coral Combination

5 Star Marine runs a respectful dolphin spotting programme at Mai Ton Island; around 30 minutes from Boat Lagoon, where you can snorkel before making your way to Coral Island to relax on the beach with good vibes on Banana Beach Club; which also offers activities, massages, lunch, drinks, etc.

3. Racha Islands

The two idyllic Racha Islands provide some of the best



Just one of the sights to be seen on the Phang Nga Bay tour.

snorkelling reefs in Thailand with quiet, tropical white powdery beaches and crystal-clear turquoise waters. Book your trip now for your chance to spot the manta rays and whale sharks that were spotted this time last year.

4. Phi Phi

With the change in season you can take advantage of some stunning locations all to yourself – literally you might just be the only boat out there. Enjoy Phi Phi Ley and Bamboo Island whilst they are still quiet.

5. Krabi Islands and Hong Krabi

Enjoy the turquoise waters of Hong Krabi Lagoon, then get your adrenaline going with a climb to the 360-degree viewpoint which has arguably one of the best seascape views of surrounding islands.

6. Phang Nga Bay

This is one of nature's spectacular works of art; where the vast karst rock scenery presents a visually stunning location. Tours here are about the seascapes, canoeing, caving and exploring versus snorkelling.

7. Koh Rok

The sea here becomes like a lake in high season, and offers stunning water clarity with a diverse range of

marine and coral life. In season, you can also regularly see whale sharks between here and Koh Ha, and this is an excellent snorkelling spot.

8. Koh Ha

Exquisite snorkelling, stunning soft sandy beaches and a quieter, less crowded vibe here. A little further to travel, but well worth every minute for the guaranteed natural beauty plus it provides a great stop spot on the way to Koh Lipe.

9. Koh Lipe

Bursting with things to see and do; enjoy a romantic time at Sunrise or Sunset Beach, explore the coral reefs snorkelling at Red Coral, head to Monkey Beach or Stonehenge Rock. A must visit destination that should be on everyone's list; and a favourite of ours here at 5 Star Marine.

10. Similan & Surin Islands

Two phenomenal destinations bursting with marine life, rich coral and sandy white beaches. The Similan Islands is a stunning archipelago which only opens yearly from October 15th to May 15th.

11. Phuket By The Sea Tour

This unique program is for beach club lovers and leaves from Boat Lagoon before travelling under the Sarasin bridge. You then make your way down to Banana Beach past Surin, Kamala and Patong among many other beaches. Stop off at a beach club or two and enjoy this experience to the maximum.

With the new relaxation in rules for Sandbox and Domestic day trips, there is so much to see and do. In most cases you only need a passport copy and vaccination certificate; or if you are an unvaccinated guest, a simple Antigen Test in most cases is all that is needed to visit some of these locations.

Contact Shaun at 5 Star Marine on 093 720 6221 to enquire and book.

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Reduced to 60 Million THB

POP QUIZ

1. Which ASEAN countries are run by communist governments?
2. Lewis Allan Reed was better known by which name?
3. Scotsman Alan MacMasters is famed for which invention?
4. Godzilla is an official citizen of which country?
5. A hybrid knife and fork is called a what?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

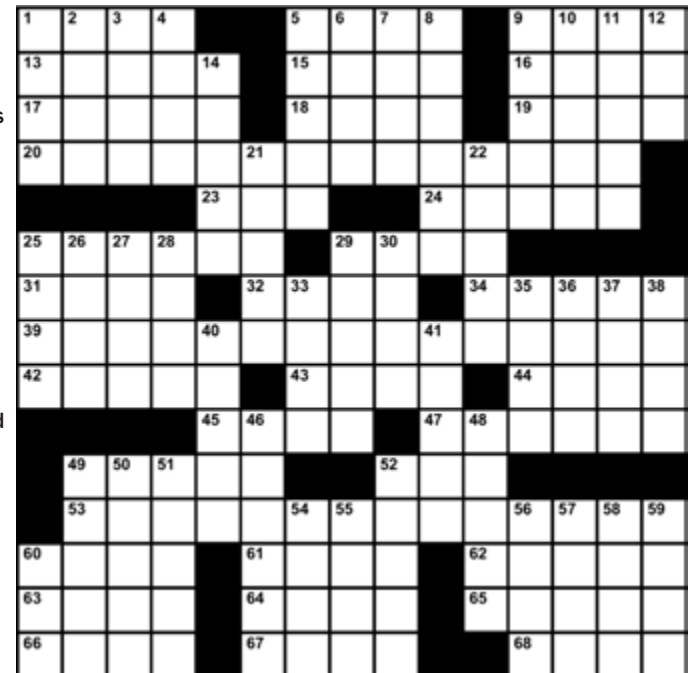
1. "Bye!"
5. Ballet, music, etc.
9. "Categorical imperative" philosopher
13. Desktop pictures
15. Novice
16. Length x width, for a rectangle
17. Pre-exam feeling, maybe
18. Dickens's Uriah
19. Toot
20. Huge dog
23. More, in Madrid
24. Set inside
25. Fido needing a cold drink?
29. Clash
31. "Curses!"
32. Biblical twin
34. Blood line
39. Canine group
42. Medical quantities
43. Foreboding
44. Right now! (acronym)
45. Lasting effect
47. Goof-offs
49. Bone: Prefix
52. Crew member
53. Deteriorating towards ruin

Down

60. Aerospace educator, DeVore
61. Catbird seat?
62. There's a dog for them!
63. Former Israeli P.M.
64. Advil target
65. More rational
66. Of the old Peruvian empire
67. Burn a bit
68. Brightly colored Australian parrot
1. Indian lodging (var)
2. Rent-___
3. "Un-Break My Heart" singer, first name
4. Spanish liqueur
5. Musketeer
6. Cambodian cash
7. Not kosher
8. Goddess of wisdom
9. Asian capital
10. Bowl
11. Clingy, in a way
12. Designate
14. Bonehead
21. Stake
22. Alternative to "in a bottle"

25. Grasp

26. Buckeye State
27. Blasters' materials
28. Lavish affection (on)
29. More prudent, say
30. Chrysalis
33. Comfy spot
35. Hyalite, e.g.
36. Angry reaction
37. Binge
38. Egyptian snakes
40. City in the Ruhr
41. "David Copperfield" character
46. French brandy
48. Add a little ranch to, say
49. Mount ____, Utah peak
50. Kind of boom
51. Crown
52. Cousin of a mink follower
55. Government safety org.
56. Lentil sauce
57. Prefix with -phile
58. Grandpa Walton portrayer
59. Agile
60. Former Brit. recording giant



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Vietnam and Lao PDR; 2) Lou Reed; 3) The first electric toaster (1893); 4) Japan; 5) A fork

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

6

-pack rings created by Saltwater Brewery in Florida are edible and feed, rather than kill, marine life if the rings end up in the ocean.

80

percent of Major League Baseball players over the past 25 years have fallen into the overweight or obese category.

95

percent of the world's population has health problems, with more than a third having more than five ailments.

5

million hairs the average human has on his or her body.

86

billion

neurons the average human brain contains, which can form trillions of synapses, which is why a computer is so much slower.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Sunset at Patong Beach. Photo by Ian McConnachie

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

This week in history

Oct 15, 1529

The Siege of Vienna ends as the Austrians rout the invading Turks, turning the tide against almost a century of unchecked conquest throughout eastern and central Europe by the Ottoman Empire.

Oct 16, 1968

United States athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos are kicked off the US team for participating in the 1968 Olympics Black Power salute.

Oct 17, 1091

A tornado of T8/F4 strength, with wind speeds of 330-418km/h, strikes the heart of London.

Oct 18, 1867

United States takes possession of Alaska after purchasing it from Russia for \$7.2 million. Celebrated annually in the state as Alaska Day.

Oct 19, 1453

The Hundred Years' War ends with the French recapture of



Photo: Angelo Cozzi

Bordeaux, leaving English control only of Calais.

Oct 20, 1720

Caribbean pirate Calico Jack

(John Rackham) is captured by the Royal Navy and later convicted of piracy and hanged at Port Royal. Jack's first mate, Karl Starling, designed the Jolly Roger flag, a skull with crossed swords.

Oct 21, 2005

Images of the dwarf planet Eris, initially described by NASA as the Solar System's 10th planet, are taken and subsequently used in documenting its discovery.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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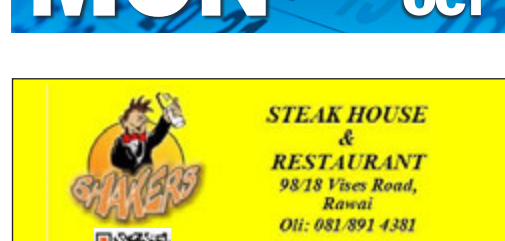
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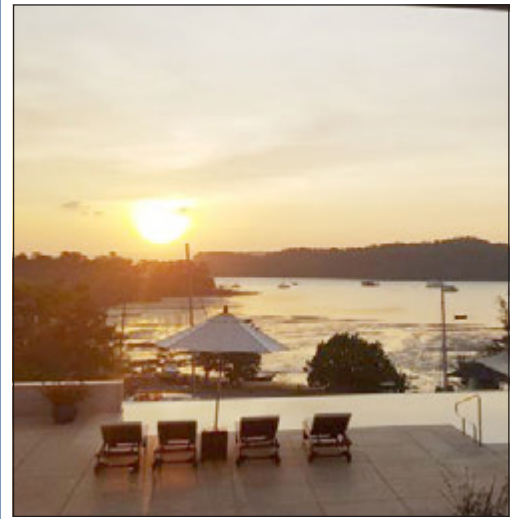


Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners hosted by AustCham

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, British Chamber of Commerce Thailand (BCCT), Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber of Commerce, CanCham Thailand, Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce (FTCC), German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (GTCC) and the Netherlands-Thai Chamber of Commerce (NTCC), is delighted to invite you to join us for "Phuket Sundowners" at Phuket Boat Lagoon, on Wednesday 20 October 2021. Price 500 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members. 900 THB for non-members. Please register in advance, as walk-ins are not allowed for this event. Phuket Boat Lagoon office@ austchamthailand.com



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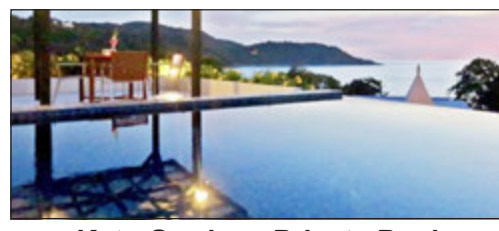
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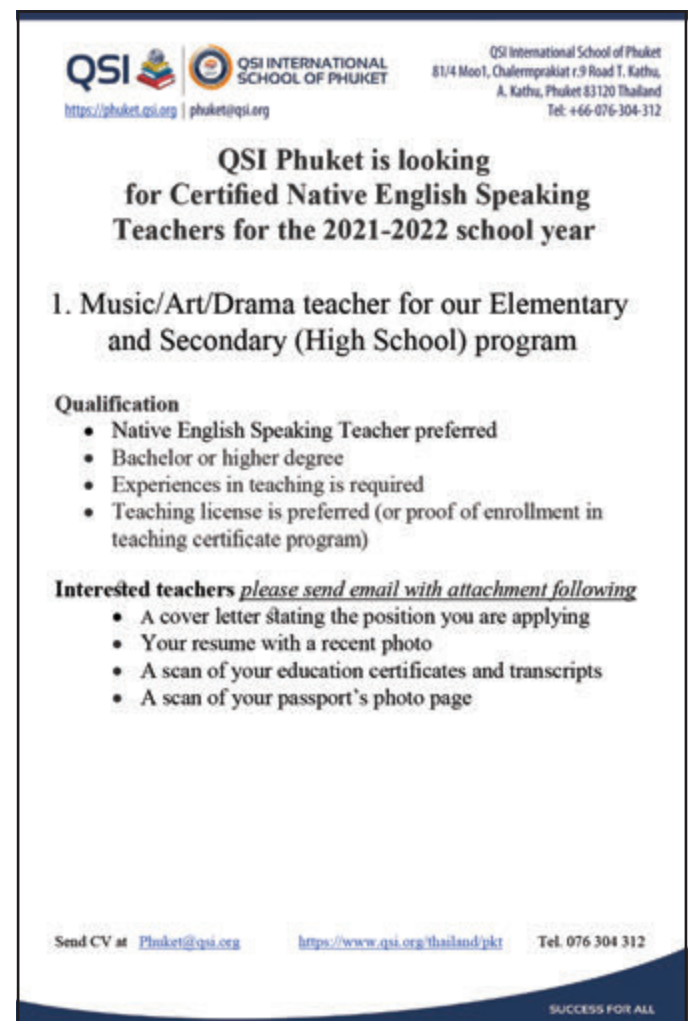


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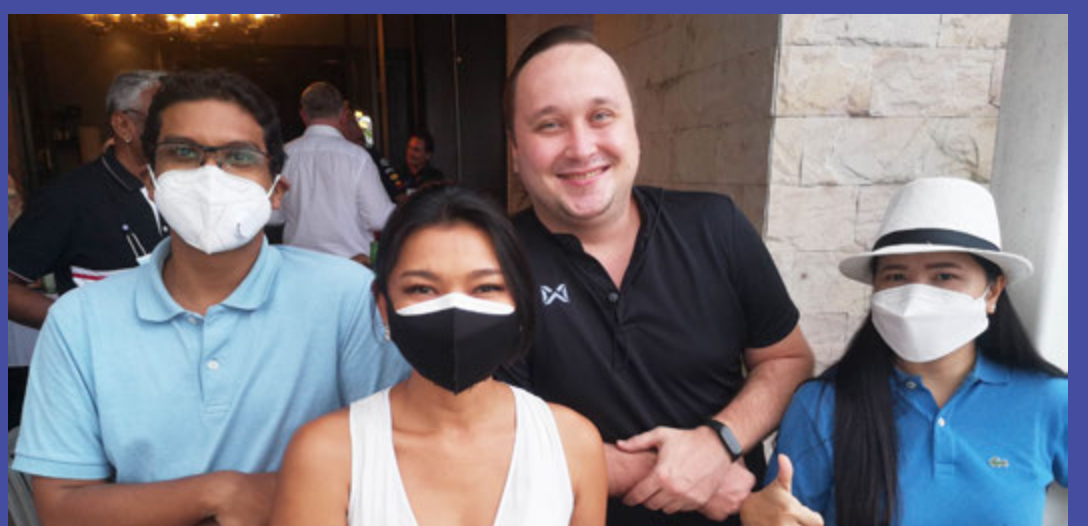
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GROW BOATING RETURNS

The first Grow Boating event in many months was held at Isola restaurant at Royal Phuket Marina last Friday (Oct 8). Drinks sponsor JAND Events, organisers of the Thailand International Boat Show, provided an update on what we can expect to see at the show in early January 2022.





Sadam with the trophy. Photo: Bangkok Post

Second Phuket win in a row for Sadom

GOLF

SADOM KAEWKANJANA stormed to a four-shot victory after firing a final-round 66 at the Singha Laguna Phuket Open 2021 last Sunday (Oct 10).

Taking a two-shot lead into the last day of the B3 million tournament, Sadom fired seven birdies against three bogeys on his way to a four-under 66 at the par-70 Laguna Golf Phuket. With a four-round total of 14 under, he won by four shots over amateur Ratchanon Chantanuwat (67).

Tirawat Kaewsiribandit, who suffered a double bogey at the 16th in his 69, finished third on eight under. Piya Sawangarunporn shot a 68 to finish fifth on seven under with Poosit Supupramai (70) a stroke behind.

It was a second consecutive win for Sadom, who won the Singha-SAT Phuket Classic 2021 on Oct 4. Sadom took home B450,000 for his third win on the All Thailand Golf Tour after victories at the Thongchai Jaidee Foundation 2019 and the Pattaya Open 2017. This title also earned him five world ranking points.

"I am over the moon to make it. Actually, I did not expect to win two weeks in a row. I just wanted to do my best. I am really proud of myself," said Sadom, who has moved up to the top of the ATGT money list with B897,100 after three events.

The 14-year-old Ratchanon successfully defended his low amateur title. It was also another impressive result after he shared fifth at last month's All Thailand Championship.

Bangkok Post

'Best of era' Fury hailed after classic Wilder bout

BOXING

AFP

Tyson Fury believes he is the greatest heavyweight of his era after producing a scintillating display to beat Deontay Wilder in a boxing classic last Saturday (Oct 9).

The 33-year-old undefeated Englishman recovered from two knockdowns against the hard-hitting Wilder before knocking out the American in the 11th round to retain his WBC crown.

"I know I'm the greatest heavyweight of my era, without doubt. Number one," Fury said following an epic battle at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas.

"I've fought the most devastating puncher in the history of our sport, not once, not twice, but three times."

At a towering 6ft 9in tall and weighing in at 277lbs, Fury is unarguably one of the biggest heavyweight champions of all time.

Icons of the heavyweight division like Muhammad Ali or Joe Frazier would be giving away massive advantages in height and weight in any theoretical match-up with the reigning champion.

Fury was initially reluctant on Saturday to rank his chances against past greats.

"I don't like competing with fighters from the past because it's fantasy, not



Tyson Fury lines up a punch in his epic fight against Deontay Wilder last Saturday (Oct 9). Photo: AFP

reality," he said. "I can only beat the best of my day. And I've done that. I'm the best fighter in my era."

'MAGNIFICENT'

Saturday's thriller meanwhile left many at ringside struggling to think of a better heavyweight contest in boxing history.

"Listen, I've been in this business 57 years promoting fights and I truly have to say I have never seen a heavyweight fight as magnificent as this," said Fury's US promoter Bob Arum, who promoted 27 of Muhammad Ali's fights including the 1975 classic "Thrilla in Manila" against Joe Frazier.

Frank Warren, Fury's veteran English promoter, said Saturday's bout was "boxing history".

"It's the best live heavyweight fight I've seen," Warren said. "It was just amaz-

ing. Two warriors and just so absorbing. Tyson is the standout heavyweight of his generation.

"I have seen him box better. But the heart and the bravery he showed tonight were just amazing. Boxing should be proud of what he did tonight."

Fury, who now plans to take a break from the sport before contemplating a potential unification fight with WBA, IBF and WBO champion Oleksandr Usyk, or British rival Anthony Joshua, insisted he had never felt in danger against Wilder.

"He caught me twice. But I was never like thinking 'Uh oh, this is over.' I thought 'Okay, good shot – but I will get you back in a minute, and I did,'" he said.

"He shook me and he put me down, but that's boxing. And that's life as well – no matter how many times you get put down, it's all about getting back up."

England name strong Ashes squad

CRICKET

ENGLAND WERE ABLE to name their strongest available squad for the Ashes tour to Australia last Sunday (Oct 10) as their stars committed to the trip after coronavirus quarantine fears.

The Ashes tour had been the subject of tense negotiations after England's players and their families expressed concerns over tough COVID quarantine restrictions in Australia.

England Test captain Joe Root and vice-captain Jos Buttler both hinted they might not travel if their fears were not eased.

But following a breakthrough in talks with Cricket Australia, the England and Wales Cricket Board said they had given "conditional approval" for the tour to go ahead.

"A tour of Australia is the pinnacle as an England Test cricketer. I'm delighted that all of our available players have committed to the tour," England head coach Chris Silverwood said.

Both Root and Buttler



Captain Joe Root will lead England's Ashes tour. Photo: AFP

were named in the 17-man squad for the tour and there were no COVID opt-outs, with Essex batsman Dan Lawrence the most eye-catching selection.

Veterans James Anderson and Stuart Broad head up the seam bowling for what may well be their Ashes swansongs, with support from fellow pacemen Chris Woakes, Mark Wood and Ollie Robinson.

England are without fast bowlers Jofra Archer and Olly Stone due injury and Ben Stokes was left out as the star all-rounder continues an indefinite break for mental health reasons.

Beaten in six of their last nine Tests, England's squad features 10 players who will be touring Australia in an Ashes series for the first time.

Australia are the current holders of the Ashes after retaining the urn following a 2-2 draw in England in 2019. They won the last series "Down Under" 4-0 in 2017/18.

The ECB said the tour is still subject to "several critical conditions" being met by Cricket Australia before the team travels in November.

England's 17-man Test Squad is as follows: Joe Root (captain), James Anderson, Jonathan Bairstow, Dom Bess, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Zak Crawley, Haseeb Hameed, Dan Lawrence, Jack Leach, Dawid Malan, Craig Overton, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood.

AFP

Turkish delight for Bottas

FORMULA ONE

VALTTERI BOTTAS BEAT Max Verstappen to an easy victory at the Turkish Grand Prix last Sunday (Oct 10) after Lewis Hamilton slumped to fifth in the wet.

Persistent drizzle kept the track wet throughout, but the inclement weather couldn't deter Valtteri Bottas from converting his 18th career pole into his first victory in more than a year.

The Finn got the perfect start to keep Verstappen in second place, and his Mercedes car was fast enough to keep the Dutchman at arm's length throughout.

Second was enough for Verstappen to retake the lead of the drivers standings with a six-point lead over title rival Lewis Hamilton, who was one of the drivers who got it wrong in the wet.

Hamilton ended his race fuming with the Mercedes strategist over team radio for a late pit stop that dropped him off the podium and down to fifth, shipping precious points to his championship foe.

The Briton had been trying to recover from a 10-place grid penalty for an engine



Valtteri Bottas leads the way in Istanbul. Photo: AFP

component change for reliability concerns, but his progress early in the race was slow.

The tension came at half-distance, when it became clear that track conditions weren't going to improve enough for dry tyres. Most of the field stopped for fresh rubber, but Hamilton convinced his team to try to make it to the finish on just a single set.

His pit wall entertained the idea, and in the process the Briton rose to third behind Bottas and Verstappen as the drivers around him made their stops. But the team wasn't convinced the tyres would make the distance, and the

Briton's pace began to drop dramatically with 10 laps to go, he was ordered in for fresh rubber to prevent a failure.

Hamilton agreed, but he didn't realise he was set to lose two places in the process, and he was furious to learn he had slipped to fifth behind Sergio Perez and Charles Leclerc.

The new wet-weather tyres refused to cooperate on the drying track, inflaming Hamilton's frustration as he coaxed the rubber up to temperature, eventually taking the flag more than 40 seconds behind his teammate.

Michael Lamonato

Toon dream big after takeover

Saudi human rights record overshadows deal

FOOTBALL

Stuart Graham

Newcastle United are dreaming of Premier League glory after the Saudi-led consortium behind the blockbuster takeover outlined their “ambitious” plans but Amnesty International branded the deal a “bitter blow for human rights defenders”.

Thousands of jubilant supporters swarmed to Newcastle’s St James’ Park stadium after the drawn-out £305 million (B14 billion) deal was agreed, chanting “we’ve got our club back”.

The takeover was rubber-stamped by the Premier League last Thursday (Oct 7) after it received legally binding assurances that Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund (PIF), which has an 80% stake in the club, was not acting on behalf of the kingdom’s government.

That is despite the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, being listed as the PIF’s chairman.

The takeover brings to an end the 14-year reign of the deeply unpopular sportswear tycoon Mike Ashley.

Fan Justin Cowan admitted there were concerns among supporters



Newcastle fans dressed in mock robes celebrate outside the ground after the sale of the club to a Saudi-led consortium was confirmed. Photo: AFP

over the new ownership but said most were buoyant.

“It’s great for the city,” he said. “It’s absolutely brilliant. They have got human rights issues. Everyone knows that, but we need this.”

“The club, the city, we’ve been put down loads of times. We’re a sleeping giant and it’s about time. It’s lovely for the club and for the region. Everyone’s happy.”

Newcastle’s new chairman Yasir Al-Rumayyan stoked the fans’ excitement in an open letter, promising to deliver a team they can be proud of.

“Most importantly, you can expect ambition. Like you, we want to create a consistently successful team. We’re here to build long-term success for the club,” he wrote.

“Owning this club is not a responsibility we have taken on lightly and we will never lose sight of what it means to be part of Newcastle United.”

SLEEPING GIANT

Newcastle, languishing second from bottom of the Premier League without a win in seven games,

are nevertheless one of the best-supported clubs in the English top-flight.

The “Toon Army” routinely fill St James’ Park to its 52,000 capacity, but Newcastle have not won a major trophy since 1969.

The club’s new owners will hope to follow the template established by reigning Premier League champions Manchester City, who have become serial trophy winners since a 2008 takeover by Sheikh Mansour, a member of the Abu Dhabi royal family.

New director Amanda Staveley, a driving force behind the takeover, vowed to transform the club into Premier League champions in the long-term.

“Of course we have the same ambitions as Manchester City and PSG in terms of trophies, absolutely, but that will take time,” Staveley told the *Daily Mail*.

“Do we want to win the Premier League within five to 10 years? Yes. We want to see trophies. But trophies need investment, time, patience and team work.”

Staveley said she had spoken to under-fire boss Steve Bruce and while she insisted no decisions had been made about the future of the manager, his departure seems likely.

Bruce said he wanted to continue but accepted he may be replaced.

But despite glee among the fans, the takeover deal was greeted with dismay by Amnesty, who described it as “an extremely bitter blow for human rights defenders”.

Sacha Deshmukh, Amnesty UK’s CEO, said: “We can understand that this will be seen as a great day by many Newcastle United fans, but it’s also a very worrying day for anyone who cares about the ownership of English football clubs and whether these great clubs are being used to sportswash human rights abuse.”

Saudi Arabia faced international condemnation following the brutal murder of Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom’s Istanbul consulate three years ago.

Hatice Cengiz, the fiancée of Khashoggi, said the Saudi-backed takeover was “heartbreaking”.

“I am very disappointed,” she told the BBC. “What I’ve been doing since his murder is seeking justice for Jamal every day, every chance that I found or every place I can go and ask more.”

“Then suddenly, I saw the news and people were talking about the takeover and I said ‘please, do not do that, please be respectful to yourself.’” AFP

France win the Nations League

FOOTBALL

KYLIAN MBAPPE FIRED France to Nations League glory last Sunday (Oct 10) after netting the winner to complete a comeback from a goal down to beat Spain 2-1 in Milan.

Mbappe struck with 10 minutes remaining to win the title for world champions France after Karim Benzema had levelled just two minutes after Mikel Oyarzabal put Spain into a 64th minute lead.

The win will ease some of the pain created by an early exit from Euro 2020 at the hands of Switzerland and highlighted just how powerful France are going forward.

As well as the two goals from their superstar attackers, France had other opportunities to score through Mbappe before a frantic finish in which Spain launched an assault on the French goal.

There was little in the way of goalmouth incident in the opening half as Spain held off France’s attacking by keeping a stranglehold on possession – 64% in



Mbappe scores the winner for France. Photo: AFP

the first half.

A niggly contest suddenly got going in the 63rd minute when a sweeping French passing move started by Benjamin Pavard ended with Theo Hernandez smashing a first-time finish against the crossbar.

Just seconds later Spain took the lead through Oyarzabal, who swept home a precision left-foot finish to the delight of the Spanish fans gathered behind that goal.

However no sooner had those supporters stopped celebrating than France were level through Benzema, who curled home an outstanding strike after being fed by Mbappe.

Mbappe then had two chances in quick succession to put France head, first chipping way over with Simon off his line in the 68th minute and then hitting a tame shot at the Athletic Bilbao goalkeeper after being set up by Benzema.

The Paris Saint-Germain forward had his goal with 10 minutes remaining though, outfoxing Simon with some deft footwork before slotting home after being set free by Theo Hernandez.

Spain responded by going all out for the equaliser, but Lloris first palmed away an Oyarzabal volley in the 90th minute and then got his hand to Pino’s strike to ensure the trophy went to Paris. AFP

Phuket News

English Premier League Predictions

thephuketnews.com/predictions.php

Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



Fury retains title in epic fight > p14



Jazz Janewattananond will compete in both Phuket-based events. Photo: AFP

GOLF

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Asian Tour announced last Tuesday (Oct 5) a series of season-ending tournaments based in Phuket to finish its 2020-21 schedule, ensuring that the Tour can complete its Order of Merit, and crown a Merit list champion.

The Tour, which stopped play in March last year because of the pandemic, will make its eagerly awaited return by staging back-to-back inaugural events at two of the

most renowned golf courses on Phuket, each with purses of US\$1 million (B33.8mn).

The Blue Canyon Championship will first take place at Blue Canyon Country Club from November 25-28, followed by the Laguna Phuket Championship, which will be held at the Laguna Phuket Resort from December 2-5.

In January, following the Christmas and New Year breaks, the Tour is planning to stage two more tournaments in Singapore over consecutive weeks. All four tournaments will be broadcast live on television with further details to be announced soon.

“After a difficult 18 months the Asian Tour is thrilled to announce that it is able to restart in Q4 of 2021, and most importantly expedite the return of our membership to elite competition,” said Cho Minn Thant, Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer, Asian Tour.

The sprint to the season’s finish line is expected to be more exciting than ever, as the top 30 players from the final Order of Merit will receive automatic entry into next year’s season-opening US\$5mn Saudi International powered by SoftBank Investment Advisers.

The four Asian Tour events played in early 2020 will be added to the blended 2020-21 schedule.

Australian Wade Ormsby has led the Order of Merit throughout the hiatus since winning the Hong Kong Open last January.

Jazz Janewattananond, the 2019 Order of Merit champion, has confirmed he will compete in the Phuket events – which will be backed by the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT).

Thai star Jazz, who is currently in fifth place on the Merit list, is vying to become the first player in the history of the Tour to clinch back-to-

back Merit crowns.

“It is great news to hear that the Asian Tour will be resuming competition soon. I know everyone has been really looking forward to getting out and playing again after a long break,” said Jazz, a six-time winner on the Asian Tour.

“The atmosphere at the Phuket events will be special. I am looking forward to seeing everyone again, and of course playing competitive golf on home soil.”

The Asian Tour last visited Phuket in 2019 when it staged the Singha Laguna Phuket Open at the Laguna Phuket Resort – an event on

its feeder circuit, the Asian Development Tour.

Blue Canyon Country Club has also featured on the Asian Tour previously with several marquee events being played at the iconic venue which has seen an illustrious list of champions including former world number ones Tiger Woods and Greg Norman.

All four tournaments will be played in tournament bubbles and will closely adhere to local government standard operating procedures. In addition, all players will need to be fully vaccinated in order to compete.

Phuket International Rugby 10s returns

RUGBY

FOLLOWING THE RECENT announcement by the Thai government that the borders are now open to international travelers, it has been announced that the Phuket International Rugby 10s will go ahead next year.

Whether participating or spectating, mark your calendar for the weekend of May 13-15, 2022 as that is when the festival of rugby returns to the island.

As many will be aware, The Phuket International Rugby 10s is very much a fixture on the Asian rugby calendar. Consequently, there is already strong interest from teams who are eager to get

back on the road and compete on the field. There were also a number of teams that were forced to pull out when this year’s tournament, initially scheduled for Nov 12-14, had to be cancelled due to uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 who will be raring to go. This was the second year that the event had to be scrapped due to the pandemic after the 2020 event fell victim too. The bottom line is, book early to avoid missing out!

The following are the categories and dates currently available:

May 13, 2022
Coffin Dodgers over 35s
One Foot in the Grave over 45s
May 14, 2022
Men’s Open
Women’s Open

May 15, 2022

Men’s Open Knockouts & Finals
Women’s Open Knockouts & Finals
Vets Finals

Teams can register and confirm their participation at <https://phuket10s.com/registration/>.

The Phuket International Rugby 10s, 2022 will once again be helping raise funds for the Asia Center Foundation who provide such fantastic support and education to underprivileged children.

The Asia Center Foundation has been hit hard in the last two years but has, thankfully, managed to stay afloat. It is hoped that this event can help contribute much needed financial assistance to their very worthy cause. Further information can be accessed at



Phuket Vagabonds at the 20th Aussie Bar Phuket International Rugby 10s, May 27, 2018. Photo: Naratip Golf Srisupab/SEALs Sports Images

asiacenterfoundation.org.

It has been an extremely testing past 18 months or so but it is hoped that events such as the Phuket International Rugby 10s can continue to help the island

and its residents edge towards some semblance of normality and also encourage other events. For further details please visit their Facebook page.

The Phuket News