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## TEST DRIVE



An officer checks documents of people driving onto Phuket. Photo: PR Phuket

### ARRIVALS FROM 34 PROVINCES MUST TEST NEGATIVE FOR COVID FOR ENTRY TO PHUKET

**The Phuket News**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket officials this week warned all people intending to travel to Phuket to prepare to be refused entry onto the island if they cannot satisfy the new entry requirements.

Phuket Governor Narong Woonchiew issued the new requirements through a provincial order last Sunday (July 11). The new requirements came into effect on Thursday (July 15) and will remain in effect until July 31.

The new requirements do not apply to children under 6 years old traveling with parents.

#### ARRIVALS FROM 'RED' OR 'DARK RED' ZONES

Under the order, all arrivals from

red or dark red-zones must be 'fully vaccinated' (or received one injection of the AstraZeneca vaccine) at least 14 days before arriving, or they must have been discharged from hospital after recovering from COVID-19 no more than 90 days before arriving.

However, starting yesterday (July 15), regardless of which of the other conditions they satisfy.

Arrivals from red or dark red zones must now also provide evidence that they tested negative for the virus through an RT-PCR test or a Rapid Antigen Test no more than seven days before travelling to Phuket.

There will be no exceptions, said Lt Col Kraisorn Chomchuen of the Wichit Police, who was on duty at the Phuket Check Point last Sunday (July 11) to oversee officers checking

arrivals. Of note, Wichit subdistrict has the highest number of local infections on the island, more than 100 infections since Apr 3.

The mandatory test requirement will apply to all people arriving from the 10 'dark red' "highest control and restricted" areas and the 24 'red' "highest control" provinces, listed in the provincial order as: Bangkok, Samut Prakan, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Nakhon Pathom, Samut Sakhon, Songkhla, Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Ayutthaya, Chachoengsao, Suphan Buri, Saraburi, Chainat, Nakhon Nayok, Nakhon Sawan, Ang Thong, Udon Thani, Prachinburi, Sing Buri, Lop Buri, Samut Songkhram, Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi, Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chon Buri, Rayong,

Nakhon Ratchasima, Tak, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Krabi and Ranong.

#### ARRIVALS FROM 'YELLOW' OR 'ORANGE' ZONES

For people who start their journey to Phuket from the remaining zones or provinces designated as 'yellow' or 'orange' COVID-control areas – including Phang Nga – the rules of entry remain unchanged.

As such, like arrivals from the red zones, all arrivals from yellow or orange zones must be 'fully vaccinated' (or received one injection of the AstraZeneca vaccine) at least 14 days before arriving, or they must have been discharged from hospital after recovering from COVID-19 no more than 90 days before arriving.

However, for arrivals from...

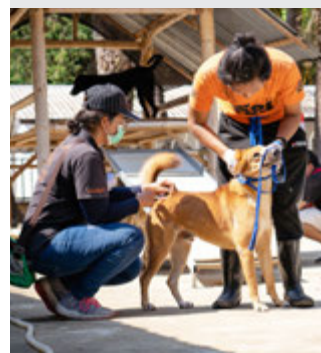
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# News



**Airport taxi fare probe stalls > p4**

## PPHO braces for infections

The Phuket News  
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Phuket officials are drawing up battle plans in anticipation of a spike in infections on the island after Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon confirmed that both the Delta and Beta variants of COVID-19 have now been found among infected people in Phuket.

The news was revealed at the Phuket Communicable Disease Control Committee meeting on July 9, chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Phichet Panapong.

Joining the meeting were fellow Vice Governor Vikrom Jakthee, Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO, or *OrBorJor*) President Rewat Areerob, Vachira Phuket Hospital Director Chalermpong Sukontapol and Col Sermphan Sirikong, Deputy Commander of Phuket Provincial Police.

Dr Kusak reported that 10 new cases of infection on the island were confirmed alone on July 9, which he noted was the highest number



PPHO Chief Dr Kusak (right) confirmed the Beta and Delta COVID variants were already on Phuket. Photo: PPHO

of cases over the preceding several days, which had remained in the single digits.

“As a result, the situation of the spread of COVID-19 in the area of Phuket is not very reliable. As new patients are now found outside of LQ [local quarantine venues] or not in quarantine, and most of them are Thai people who travelled from other areas,” he said.

“All those close to those confirmed infected have been quarantined,” he added.

However, Dr Kusak also noted,

“Now in Phuket one case of the Delta variant has been confirmed who has been receiving treatment for the past five days. Four more cases of the Beta variant have been confirmed, in addition to two previously confirmed.”

All Beta infections identified in Phuket were people who had travelled from four southern border provinces, Dr Kusak said.

“All those who have had close contact [with those infected with the Beta variant] and at high risk have been put into quarantine,” he added.

“Therefore, people are asked to strictly take precautions according to the measures prescribed by the government to prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus in the area,” Dr Kusak said.

Of note, while Dr Kusak was finally confirming that Delta variant was confirmed on Phuket five days ago, his announcement followed him on June 30 denouncing claims shared across social media that the Delta variant of the COVID virus had been found in Phuket as fake news.

In response to an anticipated rise in infections in Phuket, the committee last week reviewed a raft of options, including setting up a third field hospital at the 4000-seat Indoor Sports Stadium at Saphan Hin for critically ill patients requiring ventilators, and the approval of 70 more local quarantine rooms at a venue in Nai Yang.

Other measures considered were to increase allowing people to quarantine at home and accelerating vaccination of high-risk groups of people over 60 years old and those afflicted with the seven medical conditions

recognised by the Ministry of Public Health as posing higher risk.

Further measures under consideration included prohibiting travel across provinces, ordering risk locations to close and asking people to leave their homes only for essential reasons, and postponing the TAT event ‘Colourful Phuket’ indefinitely.

The committee noted they were waiting on further guidelines for adjusting public health and social measures, and were to wait for further announcements by the Centre of COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) before determining which actions are to be taken by provincial order.

The committee recognised that there still were not enough staff to enforce entry requirements to Phuket at the ports on the island, and considered ramping up enforcement of COVID-prevention measures by use of law, charging people who intentionally conceal travel information or provide false information to officers investigating sources of infections by charging them under the Communicable Diseases Act.

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## Arrivals from danger zones

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...yellow or orange zones presenting test results is not mandatory.

Instead, as allowed previously, they can choose to present evidence that they tested negative for the virus through an RT-PCR test or an Antigen Test no more than seven days before travelling to Phuket instead of proving they are vaccinated or recently recovered from COVID.

### COMPLY OR GO HOME

Lt Col Kraisor explained that there are about 2,000-3,000 vehicles coming through the Phuket Check Point onto the island every day.

“We have found some arrivals who did not meet the entry requirements [currently in effect], and we did not let them onto the island,” he said.

“We also needed to explain to them about the necessity to strictly follow the rules,” he added.

“We just had two women who came by bus who had received their vaccination injection less than 14 days before arriving,” he said, citing one example of people being refused onto Phuket.

“For arrivals who come by bus but do not meet the requirements, we have officers from the Phuket Land Transport Office [PLTO] to help them find any vehicle to return home,” Lt Col Kraisor noted.

“Please closely follow updates on the entry requirements and prepare yourselves before coming, otherwise you will not be allowed to enter the island,” he said.

An officer from the Phuket Public Health Office [PPHO] stationed at the checkpoint explained, “Please make sure that you take



an RT-PCR or Rapid Antigen test – not an antibody test – because we accept only the two testing methods.

“Some people presented their antibody test results and were denied entry to Phuket, and we needed to tell them to have a new test somewhere,” the officer said.

An officer from the PLTO noted, “Most of those who have been denied entry to Phuket are those who have received an vaccination injection of AstraZeneca less than 14 days before arriving.

“For bus passengers, we have told bus companies to inform and examine their customers before selling tickets. However, right now buses from Bangkok, Betong, Khon Kaen and Pattaya have already been suspended,” he added.



# Sandbox: Good idea, gone wrong

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

For Stefanie Korényi coming back to Thailand last week was the realisation of a dream years in coming and six months just in preparation. She arrived in Phuket on July 6 and 24 hours later she was forced to move from her booked hotel to an alternative local quarantine (ALQ) because someone else on her flight tested positive for COVID-19.

Before leaving her native Germany, Stefanie sold nearly everything she had to begin her new adventure in Thailand. Today she is staying in a “quarantine hotel” in Phuket she didn’t book, and paying B52,000 for the privilege.

“Once I arrive in Phuket, things continue to run super smoothly. My papers are checked 3 times, then I get my luggage, before I have the first PCR test done at the exit. The whole procedure takes less than an hour. My driver is already waiting outside the door to take me to my SHA+ hotel in Rawai Beach. Until the test result comes back, I have to wait in the room. But the room is beautiful, the bal-



Stefanie Korényi is stuck in an ‘alternative local quarantine’ hotel in Phuket even though she tested negative for COVID-19 after arriving, and after a week in quarantine. Photo: Stefanie Korényi / Facebook

cony overlooks the pool, the minibar is well stocked and after the long journey I am tired anyway,” she explained.

“The next morning my test result is ready (about 18 hours later): negative. My vacation can begin! With my rented scooter I first go to Nai

Harn Beach and Windmill Viewpoint. In the afternoon I relax at the pool and have a delicious Chang beer with two Israelis at the swim-up bar. I am just about to get ready for dinner, when my phone rings... At the other end is the lady from the reception.

I am a High Risk Contact of a passenger who tested positive on flight EK378 from Dubai to Phuket, landing on July 6 at 12:30. My dinner is cancelled, instead I am being told to transfer to an ALQ hotel. At my own expense, of course! The problem is that most

hotels in Phuket have stopped their quarantine operations and switched to the sandbox model. Accordingly, there is very little choice,” she added.

Stefanie explained that the ALQ she chose was the cheapest option: B52,000, not including the extra COVID tests she will need to undergo. She later confirmed that she will be refunded the B15,00 she had paid for her SHA+ booking, and after officials visited her that her COVID test costs would be covered.

What didn’t help at the time she was informed of her forced quarantine was the seeming lack of official support to make the process smoother, and understandable.

“Actually, I would have expected someone from the health authority, the CCSA, to be waiting for me at the reception. But no such thing. I was practically left to my own devices. The instruction to go to an ALQ only went to my hotel. No help from the authorities whatsoever! Null. Zero. Rien. The German Embassy and the Honorary Consulate in Phuket also remain silent,” she said.

After Stefanie’s experience became known around

the world, watching to see if the Phuket sandbox proves to be a success, Stefanie was contacted by German embassy officials, staff from the Phuket office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, the Phuket Tourist Association.

By Monday, while still maintaining a very positive attitude over her experience as the “test subject” for a Sandbox holiday in Phuket gone wrong, Stefanie drafted a list of suggestions that would prove useful for tourism and health authorities to follow.

“I still think the Sandbox is a great way to visit Thailand, even if I was unlucky to sit next to a person tested positive and have to spend the first 14 nights in quarantine. Thailand – especially the local people – needs tourists. And the tourists will see the island in a way that has not been possible for the last 10 or more years!” she said.

“So, I hope that my experiences will help to sort out some teething problems and will finally make the Sandbox more attractive to other travellers; giving them peace of mind in the unlikely event that they get in close contact with someone tested positive,” Stefanie added.

## Sandbox infections were ‘expected’

PHUKET SANDBOX TOURISTS TESTING positive for COVID-19 was expected and the infections will not stop after opening 12 days so far, Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon has said.

“The Sandbox tourists who have tested positive [so far] include one from the UAE, three from Myanmar, one from South Africa, and one from Switzerland. They have been fully vaccinated with various brands, such as Pfizer, Moderna, Sinopharm and others,” Dr Kusak told a press conference held at the EOC Command Center on Monday (July 12).

“For now, none of the high-risk contacts [associated with the Sandbox infected] have tested positive,” he said.

“The infected cases among Phuket Sandbox tourists were expected under the plan made before opening the island, and the infections will not be able to stop the Phuket Sandbox scheme for sure,” he added.

“I think we have the strictest measures for screening tourists. We are opening only for tourists from selected countries. The tourists must be swab tested before coming and on arrival, and undergo two more tests during the 14-day stay. I think this is the strictest. The only way to be stricter is to require them to stay in their hotels,” Dr Kusak said.

“Our medical and public health staff can work in a timely manner. We have disease investigation staff in all areas, so they can work very quickly,” he said.

“Finding infected cases [among Sandbox tourists] demonstrates that vaccinations cannot 100% protect you from the virus, so every person needs to strictly follow the DMHTTA measures. Do not underestimate the virus,” he said.



Sandbox tourists being infected with COVID-19 will not stop the Phuket Sandbox scheme, said PPHO Chief Kusak Kukiattikoon. Photo: PR Phuket

“Meanwhile, you can see that our disease control measures work effectively, and they will boost confidence among tourists and local people,” Dr Kusak assured.

“For today [July 12], we found only one new infected case on the island, bringing the total number of infected cases to 788.

“We have six cases infected from other provinces, two cases infected from foreign countries, and six cases who are Phuket Sandbox tourists,” he said.

“So far, 721 cases have been discharged from the hospital, 72 cases are still receiving treatment, and nine cases have died from the infection,” he added.

While touting that Phuket recorded only one local infection on Monday, Dr Kusak made no mention of the COVID death that was marked in the same report for that day.

The death marked on Monday was the ninth fatality in Phuket attributed to COVID-19 since Apr 3, and followed another death reported just one day earlier, last Sunday (July 11).

The Phuket News

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 4 m/s

SUN JUL 18

High: +30°  
Low: +26°

Wind 7 m/s

MON JUL 19

High: +30°  
Low: +26°

Wind 18 m/s

TUE JUL 20

High: +30°  
Low: +27°

Wind 18 m/s

WED JUL 21

High: +30°  
Low: +26°

Wind 18 m/s

THU JUL 22

High: +30°  
Low: +26°

Wind 11 m/s

## Airport taxi fare probe goes nowhere

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Tanee Suebrerk, Deputy-Director of the Department of Land Transport, arrived in Phuket from Bangkok last week to preside over a meeting with airport taxi operators to investigate and discuss issues regarding taxi fares charged while the COVID economic crisis continues.

The visit came just days after Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew on July 5 ordered an investigation into the fares charged by taxi drivers operating out of Phuket International Airport following posts online by foreign tourists highlight significant disparities charged by airport taxi drivers, including many in excess of the maximums reported by the Phuket Tourist Police.

"There have been many criticisms affecting the image of Phuket, especially the problem of taxi fares and the



Tanee Suebrerk, Deputy-Director of the Department of Land Transport, arrived in Phuket last week to discuss airport taxi fare issues. Photo: PR Phuket

'Phuket Sandbox' plan, which opened on July 1," Governor Narong noted.

At the meeting chaired by Mr Tanee last week, held at Phuket Vocational College on July 7, airport taxi operators "agreed" to charging "20% off" fares as long as the crisis continues, said a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

Present at the meeting were Phuket Vice Governor Vikrom Jakthee, Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) Chief Banyat Kantha, along with other officials and representatives of local taxi companies.

Also present were representatives from Phuket Mai Khao Sakhu Co Ltd (PMK) and Phuket Limousine and Business Services Cooperative (PBC), the two companies that

have rights to operate taxis at Phuket International Airport under a concession with Airports of Thailand (AoT).

Representatives of the two companies confirmed that the companies had been giving 20% discounts off taxi fares since the effects of the global pandemic started being felt in Phuket, and they asked for "cooperation" from the Phuket Provincial Government, said the report.

The representatives explained that the fare from the airport to Patong, a distance of "about" 38.9 kilometres, used to be B800, but right now they were charging only B640, the report added.

Giving another example, the representatives said taxi drivers used to charge B1,000 for travelling from the airport to Kata, a distance they said was "about 46km", but their drivers were now charging only B800, the report noted.

"At these prices, they may not be able to cover the cost

[of operating a taxi] because we need to handle many costs, including insurance, petrol and the concession," said one of the representatives, not named by the PR Phuket report.

"However, we will charge these rates as long as the pandemic continues and Phuket does not have the number of tourists like it did before the pandemic," the representative said.

"We will discuss again about when we will return to charging the normal rate," he concluded.

It was not explained whether AoT, the Thai public company that resulted from the privatisation of the state-owned Airports Authority of Thailand (AAT), would offer any relief in the concessions to be paid for operating taxis at the airport.

AoT reported gross income of just B7.7 billion for fiscal year 2020 (October-September), compared with B28.26bn for 2017.

## Short circuit blamed for house fire in Pa Khlok

POLICE BELIEVE that a fire that caused extensive damage to a house in Pa Khlok on Monday (July 12) was started by sparks from a circuit breaker in the house.

Lt Pattarakorn Phongphaiboon of the Thalang Police was informed of the fire, in Baan Pak Cheet, Moo 1 Pa Khlok, at 11:50am.

He in turn called the Pa Khlok Municipality Fire Department, which dispatched two firetrucks. Firefighters soon arrived at the scene and had the blaze under control.

However, by that time the fire had caused extensive damage to the house. The value of the damage caused has yet to be estimated.

No people were reported as injured by the fire.

The house owner, Supanee Soonthorntip, told police that she heard a loud bang from her bedroom. She ran to the room and saw a lot of smoke. Ms Supanee quickly escorted her mother out of the house and called her brother to call the police.

Lt Pattarakorn noted that police at this stage believe that the cause of the fire was an electrical short circuit. However, police were still investigating the cause of the fire, he added.

Eakkapop Thongtub



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

## All Bangkok-Phuket buses cancelled

ALL INTERPROVINCIAL bus services between Phuket and Bangkok have been suspended, as all bus services between Bangkok and Southern Thailand have been cancelled in response to the COVID restrictions issued in the capital.

The cancellation of bus services came into effect on July 10 after an announcement by Sanylak Panyawatthanakit, President of the Transport Co Ltd (BorKorSor), the public company that oversees all interprovincial bus services.

Mr Sanylak said the cancellation follows the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) announcement designating Bangkok, Nakhon Pathom, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Samut Prakan, Samut Sakhon, Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla as dark-red "highest control" provinces.

As such, all travel within the hours of 9pm to 4am in those provinces is now restricted, Mr Sanylak said.

Hence the cancellation of bus services between Bangkok and anywhere in Southern Thailand came in accordance with instructions from Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob for the relevant agencies to



Image: BorKorSor

adjust the public bus schedule accordingly and inform the public.

As such, with immediate effect, from July 10 until further notice, all southern route bus services are to stop.

Only three bus services from Bangkok to Northern Thailand are to be provided, each providing only one round-trip service a day: Bangkok - Khlong Lan, Bangkok - Lom Sak and Bangkok-Uttaradit.

Northeastern and Eastern routes are open for service on 10 routes: Bangkok - Nong Bua Lamphu; Bangkok - Nakhon Phanom; Bangkok - Loei - Chiang Khan; Bangkok - Surin; Bangkok - Buriram; Bangkok - Ubon Ratchathani; Bangkok - Mukdahan; Bangkok - Rattanaaburi; Bangkok - Trat (round-trip); and Bangkok-Saraburi, five round-trips per day.

Bus passengers who booked tickets in advance for travel between July 10-25 and do not wish to travel during that period can contact the BorKorSor to postpone their trip or obtain a full refund at no fee at the ticket office of the bus station of departure at least 3 hours before the departure time, Mr Sanylak said.

Passengers who have used their state welfare card to buy bus tickets will not be granted a refund, but can postpone their trip. Such passengers must inform the relevant BorKorSor office at least three hours before the bus is to depart, he added.

Passengers affected by the cancellation of bus services were advised to call the 1490 hotline or the relevant BorKorSor bus station. The Phuket News



# Moderna rush crashes system

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Expats in Phuket have vented an outpouring of frustration online after being unable to register their reservation of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccination being offered by Bangkok Hospital Phuket and Bangkok Hospital Siriroj on July 7.

Registrations were made online through a web portal set up to receive reservations, and opened at 9am.

However, by 10:45am Bangkok Hospital Phuket posted a notice announcing that stocks had already sold out.

More than 67,000 people attempted to book their vaccinations for the Moderna vaccine, the hospital group later revealed.

The Moderna vaccine is to be provided through Bangkok Hospital Phuket and Bangkok Hospital Siriroj at B1,650 per dose, Bangkok Hospital Phuket said when announcing it was to open to receive reservations online.

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine requires two injections for the recipient to be considered as having received



Images: Bangkok Hospital Phuket

the full vaccination.

Vaccinations are expected to take place from October 2021 through January 2022, Bangkok Hospital Phuket explained.

Of note, so far only the Sinovac and AstraZeneca vaccines have been provided to people receiving state-provided vaccinations

“Due to high demand from hospital clients, our current stock runs out and our next reservations will be scheduled

once the vaccine becomes available again,” the hospital later announced.

In a statement issued to *The Phuket News* on July 8, the Bangkok Hospital group said, “To everyone that faced problems registering for alternative vaccine Moderna yesterday, Bangkok Hospital Phuket & Siriroj would like to sincerely apologize for the technical difficulties and disappointment experienced.

“The response was over-

whelming with more than 67,000 people trying to register at 9am and unfortunately our IT systems were not able to cope with such a large demand,” the statement read.

“If you were not successful at this time we will hopefully have more vaccine availability in the near future.

“For those whose reservations for alternative vaccine Moderna seemed to have been successful but did not receive a payment link we will keep

your record in our system so that you do not have to re-register when the vaccine becomes available again.

“Once again we are very sorry for the disappointment and difficulties experienced and thank you for your kind understanding,” the statement concluded.

The volume of expats unable to register through the web portal due to what has now been confirmed as service disruptions saw an outpouring of comments online harshly criticising the hospital for its efforts.

One expat wrote, “Bangkok Hospital Phuket since 8:45 I refreshed the page every minute. How it can be closed now if it’s never opened for me to register ?!”

Another said, “That was a waste of waiting online 4 hrs not to mention the waiting on phone calls to be answered.”

One went at length to explain, “Since 9 am until 11:53 am I’ve tried to register with your application every minute. At 09:32 am you sent an email: ‘Unfortunately we are experiencing a system failure...’

“At 09:51 am you sent another email: ‘We expect the Moderna vaccine registration

to be back up and running at 10:30 am...”

“At 11:30 am you sent another email: ‘We regret to inform you that due to high demand, our current stock of Moderna has run out...’

“How is that possible when your application for registration didn’t work at all???? Remember that I tried to register every single minute for 2 hours and 53 minutes!!! Please explain – well appreciated!”

Comments online speculated as to how many vaccine doses were available. One person wrote “1800 doses they had they just told me on the phone...” while another wrote, “Received a message for the heart clinic at the hospital, the were allocated 4000 doses. I can’t see anyone who was able to apply online.”

However, one expat confirmed, “It was hard to get through. But, my wife managed to do it by continuing to click the link nonstop for an hour and a half. That’s what happens when a lot of people want the same thing. I’ve had the same experience trying to buy concert tickets. I am sorry if you were not one of the lucky ones who made it through.”

## Vaccination of expats is continuing, assures Phuket Must Win chief

DESPITE FOREIGNERS in Phuket reporting varied success in being vaccinated through the ongoing government mass-vaccination campaign, Pracha Asawateera, the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA) Area Manager for all of Southern Thailand, has assured that the vaccination of foreigners in Phuket is still going and will continue as long as vaccine doses continue to be supplied to the province.

As the DEPA chief for Southern Thailand, Mr Pracha oversees the Phuket-MustWin [www.ภูเก็ตต้องชนะ.com] online registration portal. By provincial policy, all people in Phuket, Thai or foreign, to be vaccinated through the government campaign must be registered through PhuketMustWin.

Asked why some foreigners have had their registration approved, then cancelled, Mr Pracha said, “Those who have had their vaccination registration cancelled must check with Phuket Immigration Office and the Phuket Employment



Vaccinations of expats in Phuket will continue, DEPA chief for Southern Thailand assured. Photo: The Phuket News / file

Office because all foreigners [who register to be vaccinated] must be checked and approved by the relevant officials.

“Those who have work permits must be approved by both officials, while those who hold other types of visas must be approved by immigration,” he said.

“After the two offices have given their approval, the system will allow foreigners to select their queue [location to receive a vaccination injection]. The two-step process is to make sure that the foreigners are living in Phuket, not from somewhere else,” Mr Pracha said.

“Right now, in total 59,352 foreigners have been

registered and 38,512 have received their first injection while 19,946 have fully been vaccinated with two doses. A further 894 are in line to receive their vaccination,” he added.

Mr Pracha confirmed that foreigners in Phuket can still register to be vaccinated, but delays were likely as vaccination appointments will be allocated only after the required vaccine doses arrive from Bangkok.

“When the vaccines come, the foreigners who have already been approved will be allowed to book their queue. However, it depends on the Phuket Public Health Office [PPHO] to manage and allocate which vaccine doses are for which groups of people,” he said.

Asked how many vaccine doses of which vaccines were still available in Phuket, Mr Pracha said, “I have no idea. You must ask the PPHO.”

“The vaccination of foreigners will keep going as long as we still receive the vaccines,” Mr Pracha assured. *The Phuket News*

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OIC secretary-general Suthiphon Thaveechaiyagarn. Photo: OIC

## COVID insurance claims rise to over B1.77bn

THE NATIONAL OFFICE OF the Insurance Commission (OIC) has reported that total claims on COVID-19 insurance policies ballooned to over B1.77 billion in the first half of this year.

OIC secretary-general Suthiphon Thaveechaiyagarn said the increase in insurance claims was in line with records for daily new infections and emerging clusters.

He said the insurance industry has enough reserves to handle even the direst scenario, in which the pandemic and new variants are not controlled this year, with vaccines being successfully developed and distributed in 2022 and 2023.

Mr Suthiphon added that the OIC has requested cooperation from non-life insurance companies by being cautious in making dividend payments this year.

At the end of March, the capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of the life insurance industry was 329%, similar to its 320% mark at the end of 2020. The CAR of non-life insurance was 320%, down from 324% at the end of last year. *NNT*

# Airlines scramble over travel restriction cancellations

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Four major domestic airlines – Nok Air, Vietjet, Bangkok Air and Thai Smile – have announced emergency measures for passengers needing to reschedule flights due to the restrictions now imposed in Bangkok and its surrounding five provinces.

The announcements follow the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) imposing travel restrictions on those living in the greater Bangkok area, which came into effect on July 10.

Bangkok and the surrounding five provinces have been designated “dark red” zones, as have four southern border provinces.

All people in dark red zones are “asked” to refrain from travel. They are also asked to stay at home from 9pm to 4am each night, leaving their residence only for essential reasons.

Interprovincial travel is to be restricted to minimise the movement of people, the CCSA announced.

The scramble to allow passengers to reschedule flights also follows the announcement that AirAsia has suspended all domestic flights from July 10 through to July 31.

“Adhering to the Government’s COVID-19 prevention measures, Thai Air Asia will temporarily suspend operations on all domestic flights (FD Flights) from 10 July to 31 July 2021,” the notice said.

“We hope to resume operations



Four major domestic airlines have announced options to reschedule flights for travellers affected by the travel restrictions. Photo: Vietjet

from 1 August 2021 onward,” it added.

Guests who have booked flights during the above period will be contacted by AirAsia, the airline noted.

“We will reach out to you via SMS or email, to discuss your flight recovery options, per our Terms and Conditions,” the notice explained.

“We apologise for any inconvenience caused and we thank you for your continued support,” the notice concluded.

Nok Air in their announcement “Nok Air understands” said, “For passengers whose travel schedule is between 10 - 24 July 2021, there is a policy of assistance as follows.

Able to change the travel date without a change fee 1 time.

- If the ticket price of the new flight is higher than the original flight passengers must pay the dif-

ference in ticket price.

- The new travel date must be within December 31, 2021 and must be on the original itinerary only.

- The flight change must not be less than 12 hours before the original scheduled departure.

- Can use an Open Ticket until December 31, 2021

- If the ticket price of the new flight is higher than the original flight passengers must pay the difference in ticket price.

- The new travel date must be within December 31, 2021 and must be on the original itinerary only.

- The flight change must not be less than 12 hours before the original scheduled departure.

- Can be stored as “Credit Shell” until March 31, 2022.

- If the ticket price of the new flight is higher than the original

flight passengers must pay the difference in ticket price.

- The new travel date must be within March 31, 2022.

Vietjet, Bangkok Airways and Thai Smile all also issued similar notices, and urged passengers affected by the travel restrictions to contact their offices.

The flurry of announcements by the domestic airlines explaining the options to reschedule flights follows the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) last year being forced to issue a reminder for all domestic airlines to uphold terms and conditions for refunds and rescheduled flights due to COVID measures after the industry was flooded with reports of vouchers being issued without any means of foreseeable redemption in the wake of the lockdown last year.

## Local fishermen request rule expansion as competition booms

A GROUP OF AROUND 100 LOCAL fishermen have filed a formal request to the Phuket Governor seeking permission to expand the scope of their allocated fishing area, stating increased competition due to COVID-19 has hindered their catch numbers.

The current law states local fishermen are not permitted to operate beyond a 1.5 nautical mile radius from Phuket’s shoreline, something members of the local fishing industry claim needs to be revised.

The group, led by Phuket Fishery Association head Somsak Promkaew, gathered at Queen Sirikit Park in Phuket Town on July 7 to air their grievances and present their formal request to Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong.

Several of the group also had placards and signs containing slogans such as “Phuket fishermen do not have sufficient area to work in”, “Be kind to us”, and “We want our 3 nautical miles back”.



Photo: PR Dept

“As a result of the COVID-19 economic crisis, an increasing number of people have turned

to fishing in order to generate an income,” Mr Somsak commented.

“Before the pandemic there were around only 1,200 boats registered with the Phuket office of the Fishery Department – that figure has grown considerably in the last 12 months.

“That is why we are asking authorities to seriously consider our request to increase the catchment area to three nautical miles in order to reduce the congestion.

“We always adhere to the standards of sustainable fishing with a focus on protecting and maintaining natural resources. We do not operate in an irresponsible way and always follow the law by fishing away from the coral reef where tourists go diving,” he added.

V/Gov Pichet told the fisherman that he will discuss this request with relevant officers and inform them of the outcome accordingly.

*The Phuket News*

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## When do I change my transmission oil?

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transmissions and many different transmission oils you can buy. It is crucial to use transmission oil that is correct for your car and approved by the manufacturer.

It is common to drain out half of the old oil and top it up

with new oil. This provides a very low-quality solution as the dirt stays inside the transmission and the old oil lowers the quality of the new oil.

A better way to service your transmission is with an innovative tool called Geartronic from Germany. Geartronic will clean and pump out all old oil and dirt deposits before filling in the new oil. Geartronic is available at MyCarRepair (T: 076-600069) opposite Thai Watsadu at the Heroines Monument.



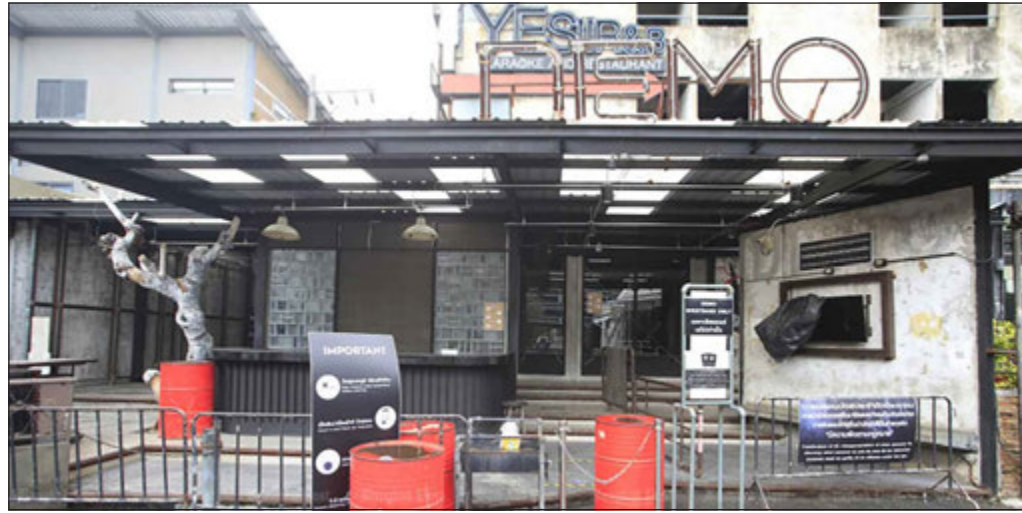
# Government lambasted for wasting early success

Bangkok Post

The government has mismanaged the COVID-19 pandemic and supply of vaccines, which has plunged the country into a crisis and stifled opportunities to recover, according to new research by the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI).

The institute has also called for the setting up of an independent committee to study the mishandling of the pandemic with the aim of drawing up a blueprint to prevent similar mistakes occurring in the future as it evaluates the government's performance after two years in office.

According to the report, Thailand succeeded in containing the first wave of the pandemic thanks to hard work from the medical and public health community and public cooperation, albeit at the expense of the economy. The country's tourism-dependent economy saw a sharp 6.1% contraction in 2020, its worst in 22 years.



The third wave of the pandemic, which started in late March, was linked to entertainment venues in Bangkok's Thong Lor-Ekkamai area. Photo: Pornprom Satrabhaya

However, although that initial success gave the government a chance to prepare for a second wave and hasten the reopening of the country, flawed policy squandered the early boost and also played a part in triggering the second wave, it added.

That second wave began in December last year at a shrimp market in Samut Sakhon, where ensuing events shed light on lax border controls where migrant labour is concerned.

The third wave, which

started in late March was linked to entertainment venues in Bangkok's Thong Lor-Ekkamai area, and a clear sign of the government's poor preparations, the report concluded.

The government was slow to spend the B45 billion healthcare budget, drawn from the B1 trillion borrowing, to strengthen the public health system. By early June, only B11.6bn, or 26.1%, had been disbursed.

According to the TDRI, the public health system is now

under considerable strain and many hospitals have had to ask the public to donate essential medical equipment.

Total infections up to the end of March this year stood at 28,000, but then rose sharply to 317,000 by July 9. Deaths also surged from 94 to 2,500 during the same period.

"People must be held responsible and there should be an independent committee to gather facts and study the situation to prevent the same mistakes in the future," said the report.



Health Minister Anutin. Photo: NNT

## Stance on Sinovac shifted

THE PUBLIC HEALTH Ministry has decided to start administering AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine as a second dose to those who had received a Sinovac jab for their first shot, in what is seen as a major shift in the government's vaccination policy.

The AstraZeneca jab will be administered three to four weeks after the first Sinovac injection, Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said on Monday (July 12), adding a combination of the jabs will confer greater immunity against the Delta variant of the coronavirus.

That said, Mr Anutin stopped short of explaining what those who have had two shots of the Sinovac vaccine should do once the change in policy comes into force, or how it would affect people who are waiting for their first or second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The move came amid

growing questions about the efficacy of the Sinovac and AstraZeneca jabs against the Delta strain.

A source at the Public Health Ministry said from now on, a combination of the vaccines will be administered in the national inoculation campaign.

"We won't administer Sinovac jabs as the first, second or booster shot anymore. According to research, a shot of Sinovac, followed up by an AstraZeneca shot, can trigger an immune response that is almost equal to two shots of AstraZeneca's," the source said.

Anutin also announced the booster shot drive would launch before the end of the month for frontline medical workers who had received two shots of COVID-19 vaccine. The third shot, he said, would be administered three to four weeks after the second shot.

Bangkok Post

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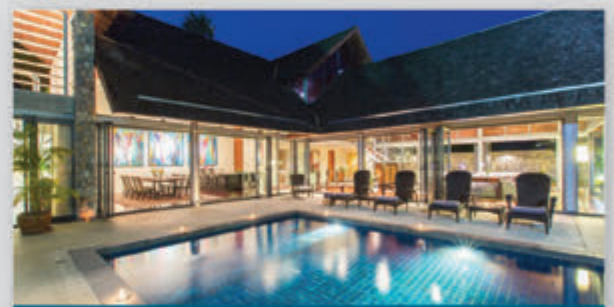
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# When three become one

## PHUKET MUSIC SCENE

Andy Tong Dee

Having covered quite a lot of music venues in my articles for this column, now seems a good time to tell you about an exciting new band I have seen playing that has come out of the COVID crisis.

In March 2020, on the eve of the COVID outbreak reaching Thailand, 25-year-old virtuoso guitarist 'Nine' from Ubon Ratchathani met bassist Kaely from Phatthalung and drummer Roger from Surat Thani at Moody's Bar in Patong. It was there they jammed together with Moody, a well-known rock guitarist from Myanmar, before his departure. While other musicians were to return home to their respective provinces, the three of them remained in Phuket, practicing together and giving birth to the Blues Rock trio Gypsy Sun. Before the COVID crisis hit Phuket, you may have heard them playing in Michelangelo's Bar in Phuket Town, the Ice Bar in Kathu and Coconut Live, Rawai.

I first met Nine a few years ago while I was running a series of open mic nights in the Pastel Bar in Phuket Town. Nine kindly played several times for me, and has done so once with Roger and Kaely. A natural entertainer, Nine likes to show off a little, playing with his teeth Hendrix-style on occasions. It was great fun singing and blowing some harmonica with him. I still do occasionally when I go to see them play, but I am reluctant to do so these days as their music is so much tighter and slicker now. They may have all had a tough year with COVID, but they are on a roll now after all their time practicing.



Gypsy Sun at Lean on Me Fest.

Nine first picked up a guitar at 15 in order to impress the girls, as so many young men have done in the past. He is self-taught, picking up guitar licks by listening to songs from the greats such as Eric Clapton, BB King and Jimi Hendrix. Kaely, the band's 32-year-old bass player, was taught guitar at music school, but switched to bass when he discovered an opening. Roger the drummer is the senior member of the band at 45. Heavily influenced by Steve Gadd, Roger started drumming after watching a neighbour playing while just 15.

They chose the name Gypsy Sun in homage to Jimi Hendrix's final band, Gypsy Sun and Rainbows, the band playing all of his most famous songs. However, they also play many songs from The Rolling Stones, Cream, The Police, Pink Floyd, The Doors and The Allman Brothers.

So why do I consider them to be a great up and coming band? It comes down to three things.

Firstly, they only play music they like, and you can see this in the joyful exuberance of their performances. Let's face it, it's pretty damn soul-destroying knocking out certain tired old classics every night for the tourists just because you feel you have to. So they just don't!

Secondly, they are tight, and I mean really tight. All the time spent practicing last year while bars were shut or no gigs were coming in was not wasted. Lately, I have noticed the quality of their singing has leapt forward, with some neat harmonies developing. Nine sings the more bluesy songs with a baritone, raspy voice reminiscent of Howling Wolf. Kealy picks up those in a higher key or needing greater clarity. It's a system that works well.

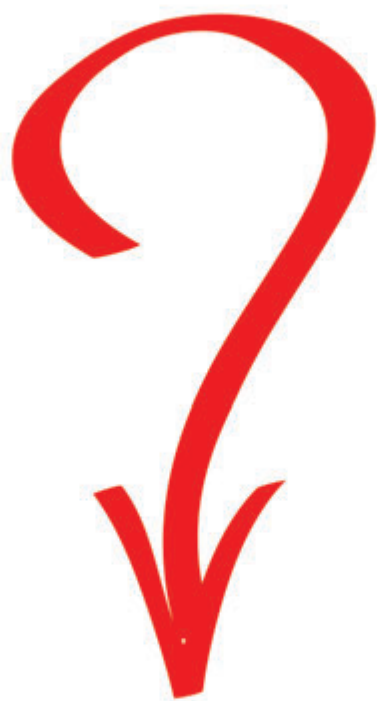
Finally, Gypsy Sun has that unique dynamic that comes from being a trio which I call the 'Power of Three'. There's just so much clutter in life, and we yearn sometimes for something simpler and purer. Just think of that lead guitarist who plays with far too much reverb and distortion, running up and down scales as fast as he can and boring the hell out of us in the process. Then go and hear Nine playing his battered Stratocaster oh so melodically Clapton-style with only a wah wah pedal, a cheap 15-watt tube amp and just his two mates backing him up. Trios like Gypsy Sun can show us you don't need all the effects, that horn section, the backing vocalists, the keyboard player or an extra guitarist. More is not always better, less can be more.

Just think of the great Rock trios of the past: Cream, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Green Day, Motorhead, The Police, ZZ Top and Nirvana. Playing in a trio is hard work and requires a high level of competency, but it can lead to a pleasant, more minimalist style of music, more personal, with songs stripped down to their basic structure of rhythm, riff, melody and lyrics. For me, this is the way music can and should always be: simple and direct.

*Expat Andy Tong Dee is a live music enthusiast and musician living in Phuket. Follow him on his Facebook page Phuket Music Scene.*



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# Soi Dog joins plea to help stray shelter

Soi Dog Foundation

**S**oi Dog Foundation has come out in support of volunteers at the Phuket Stray Dog Shelter in Thalang who filed an official complaint to Governor Narong Woonciew earlier this month concerning their ongoing ban from helping at the shelter.

With their previous complaints to the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office (PPLO) ignored, and their concerns for the welfare of the dogs at the Phuket Stray Dog Shelter in Thalang rising, volunteers at the shelter took the matter to Phuket Provincial Hall.

The volunteers on July 2 filed an official complaint addressed to Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew.

"The livestock officers must know full well that there are only six staff at the shelter who are responsible for taking care of almost 1,000 dogs and who operate on an insufficient budget," the volunteers said in their written request for urgent action.

"You must know that the dogs in the shelter do not have freedom and have to fight for food in order to survive. We volunteers have helped by working in the shelter for the last five years when there were only originally around 300 dogs. Today there are around 1,000 dogs and urgent help is needed.

"We regularly clean all areas for the dogs, shower and clean them and separate any sick dogs from the others. We have also managed to successfully find people who are willing to adopt a dog. As the shelter did not have sufficient

budget, we have found ways of generating some funds to help," they added.

Soi Dog shares their concerns and is strongly urging Governor Narong to take action. Like the volunteers, Soi Dog has been banned from helping at the Phuket Stray Dog Shelter – also known as the government dog pound – since January this year.

The foundation was notified of the decision in writing by the Phuket Provincial Office of the Department of Livestock Development (DLD). The letter stated that, while responsibility for the shelter was being transferred from the OrBorTor (tambon administration organisation) to the OrBorJor (Phuket Provincial Administration organisation, or PPAO), external assistance would not be permitted.

The letter also advised that Soi Dog would be contacted should any dogs require emergency treatment; however, no such contact has been made.

Soi Dog has assisted the Phuket Stray Dog Shelter for many years. Their veterinary team, community outreach team and animal rescue officers work together to ensure that all dogs housed there are neutered, vaccinated, dewormed, protected and against ticks and fleas and treated for any other health issues. Last year alone, they administered over 4,600 treatments on-site and admitted over 250 dogs to their own shelter in Mai Khao for further care – all at Soi Dog's expense.

With no help from Soi Dog or local volunteers at the understaffed and underfunded shelter, concerns are growing daily for the welfare of the 1,000+ dogs who live there.

In March, Soi Dog raised the issue with the DLD in Bangkok who subsequently granted them permission to visit the shelter to vaccinate the dogs, as they do in March every year. However, the Phuket Provincial Office of the DLD has continued to refuse Soi Dog staff entry on the grounds of COVID-19, despite the visit complying with all disease control requirements, the local population being largely vaccinated and the Phuket Sandbox scheme now underway. The dogs' vaccinations are now many months overdue, putting them at real risk of contracting deadly infectious diseases such as parvovirus and distemper.



Soi Dog is calling on Governor Narong to uphold his duty of care and stop the potential suffering of the dogs at the shelter by taking the simple step of reopening the shelter and accepting the assistance being freely offered.



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## POP QUIZ

- What's the name of the largest military installation in the world?
- PEZ candy is named after which German word?
- What is famous actor Will Smith's real first name?
- What is the circumference of the Earth around the Equator (to the nearest thousand)?
- What does the 'WH' stand for in the name of the book store franchise chain WHSmith?

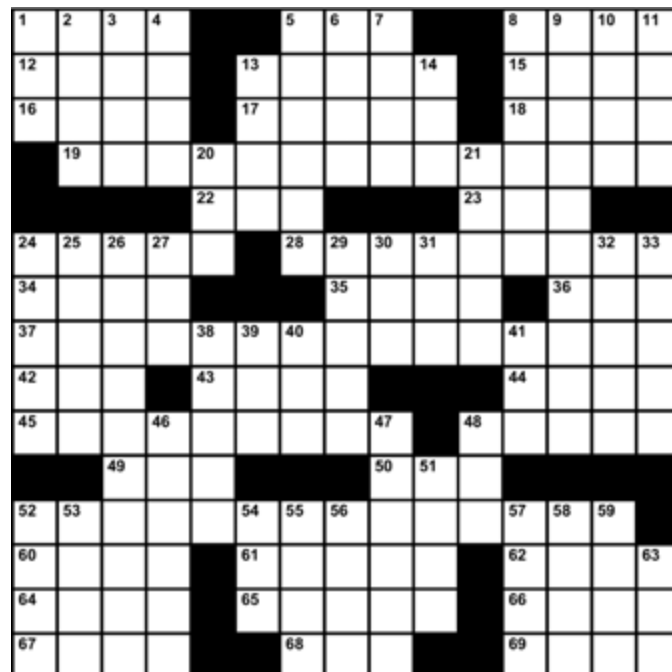
Answers below, centre

### Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**

  - Morning beads
  - 2nd letter addendum
  - Org. with eligibility rules
  - Emergency door sign
  - Pickpocket
  - Lummo's exclamation
  - Salad cheese
  - Seeped
  - Jacuzzis
  - Fruity dessert
  - Prefix for cycle or verse
  - NHL great
  - Treaties
  - Restrained from indulging
  - Raison d' \_\_\_\_
  - Indian queen
  - Vane direction
  - Fruity dessert
  - Sis, e.g.
  - Linear
  - Big name in oil
  - Whatever happened
  - Main ideas
  - Legislative figure
  - Sighting in the sky, for short
  - Fruity desserts
  - Strategem
  - Trap at a ski lodge, say
- Down**

  - Phone trio
  - Subjects of many Taylor Swift songs
  - 1984-88 skating gold medalist
  - Commendation
  - Fear
  - Tailor's concern
  - Adviser
  - Crime syndicate, with "Cosa"
  - Business associates
  - On \_\_\_\_ with
  - Mgr.'s aide
  - Kind of hall
  - New Deal ints.
  - Hung. neighbor
  - School of Hindu philosophy
  - Big name in pop
  - Had home cooking
  - Base for some jellies
  - P.I., e.g.
- Slender nails
  - Noted New York photographer Goldin
  - Terminus
  - Portray
  - Audition tapes
  - Authority in card games
  - Letter accompanier: abbr.
  - Yellow, for one
  - Aishwarya of Bollywood
  - Phrase of emphasis
  - One of the Kennedys
  - Government dot
  - Source
  - One way off base
  - Mexican pineapple
  - Anchor
  - Sch. where Bill Walton played
  - Stagger
  - Prominent features for Spock
  - Stat start
  - Penn. of films
  - Stat of fuel efficiency



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

## SUDOKU

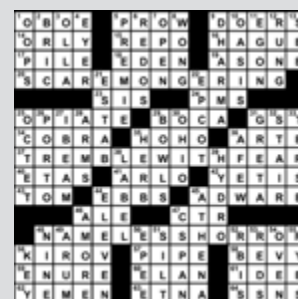
Easy

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

### Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

- Fort Bragg (pop est 260,000); 2) Pfefferminze (peppermint); 3) Willard; 4) 40,075km / 24,901 miles; 5) William Henry

### Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

**9**  
milligrammes is roughly how much cocaine each glass of Coca-Cola used to contain until 1903.

**30**  
years old were Marilyn Monroe and Queen Elizabeth II when they first met each other. They were both born in 1926.

**20,000**  
one-litre bottles of air every day is how much humans need to breathe.

**160,000**  
US dollars is the value of the diamond Arizona man Walter Earl Morrison stole and then traded for \$20 worth of marijuana.

**1 billion**  
US dollars is the offer ABBA turned down to reunite in 2000.  
Source: *Uberfacts*

## ISLAND VIEW

Once upon a time in Phuket Town. Photo by Greg Dillen

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

**July 16, 1941**  
Joe DiMaggio hits safely for the 56<sup>th</sup> consecutive game, a streak that still stands as a Major League Baseball (MLB) record.

**July 17, 1402**  
Zhu Di, better known by his era name as the Yongle Emperor, assumes the throne over the Ming dynasty of China. He later builds the Forbidden City and orders Admiral Zheng He to undergo

major sea voyages across the South Pacific and Indian Oceans.

**July 18, 1992**  
A picture of Les Horribles Cernettes becomes the first photo posted to the World Wide Web.

**July 19, 1947**  
Prime Minister of the shadow Burmese government, Bogyoke Aung San and eight others are assassinated.

**July 20, 1960**  
Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) elects Sirimavo Bandaranaike Prime Minister, the world's first elected female head of government.

**July 21, 1983**  
The world's lowest temperature in an inhabited location is recorded at Vostok Station, Antarctica, at -89.2°C (-128.6°F).

**July 22, 1706**  
The Acts of Union 1707 are agreed upon by commissioners from the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland, leading to the creation of the Kingdom of Great Britain.  
Source: *Wikipedia*

Les Horribles Cernettes, the first picture posted on the Internet.



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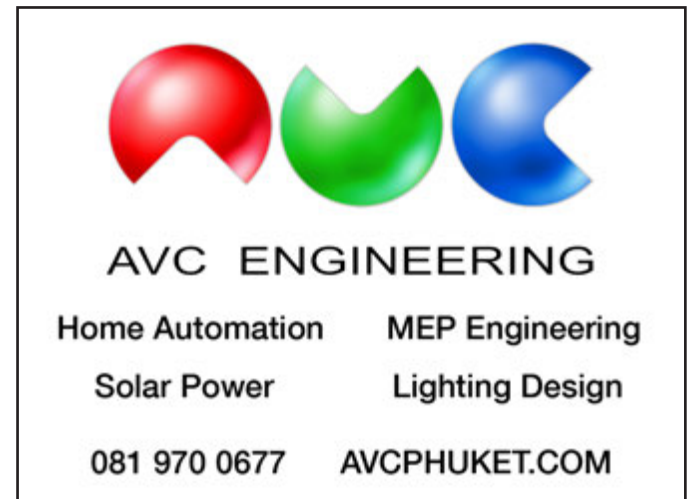
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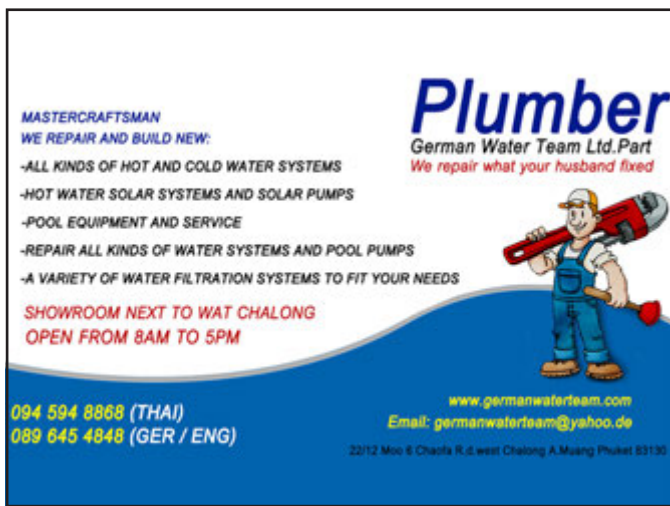


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## COVID knockout blow for Fury-Wilder fight

### BOXING

TYSON FURY'S HEAVY-weight title defence against Deontay Wilder has been postponed after the champion and members of his camp contracted COVID-19, the World Boxing Council confirmed last Friday (July 9).

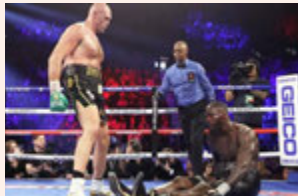
In a brief post on Twitter, the WBC confirmed the July 24 bout had been postponed but did not say when the trilogy fight would be rescheduled.

"Fury vs Wilder III will be postponed," the WBC said. "We wish Tyson Fury's team and him speedy recovery from COVID."

Multiple reports in the US and Britain have said Fury and several members of his team had tested positive for COVID-19 at their Las Vegas training base.

ESPN reported that the fight at Las Vegas's T-Mobile Arena had been tentatively rescheduled for October 9.

The positive test was the latest twist to what has been



The July 24 Fury-Wilder bout has been postponed due to COVID. Photo: AFP

a tortuous year for Fury.

The undefeated "Gypsy King" had been set to face a money-spinning heavy-weight unification fight against fellow Briton Anthony Joshua.

However, that fight was scuppered after an arbitrator ruled that Fury was legally obligated to face Wilder in a third fight.

Fury handed Wilder a brutal beating in seven one-sided rounds in their second fight in February 2020.

Their first fight, in December 2018, ended in a controversial split-decision draw in which Fury was knocked down twice.

Neither Wilder, 35, nor Fury, has fought since their bout in Las Vegas last year.

AFP

## Disappointed athletes brace for fan-free Games

### OLYMPICS

AFP

With just one week to go before the opening of the biggest sports tournament since the pandemic began, organisers have been forced to yield to a surging domestic virus caseload and bar spectators from the majority of Olympic events.

The decision, confirmed on July 8, means the Tokyo Games will be the first to take place largely behind closed doors – a blow to disappointed athletes who will now compete in front of largely empty stadiums.

For some the news proved a final straw, with Australia's tennis star Nick Kyrgios saying he would withdraw.

"The thought of playing in front of empty stadiums just doesn't sit right with me. It never has," he said on social media. "I wouldn't want to take the opportunity away from a healthy Aussie athlete ready to represent the country."

French decathlete Kevin Mayer said he would miss the roar of crowds, saying organisers were "taking away a joyful part of sport."

Others admitted that a crowd-free stadium was far from what they had imagined when first dreaming of Olympic glory.

"When we think of the Games, we think of the audience, the atmosphere, the



Australian tennis star Nick Kyrgios has taken the decision to withdraw from the upcoming Tokyo Games due to lack of fans. Photo: AFP

supporters. It was what I wanted when I was little. It will certainly be a strange atmosphere," said French cyclist Guillaume Martin, who is set to compete in the men's individual road race in Tokyo.

And Philippine rower Cris Nievarez, who will be competing in the men's single sculls, said he would miss the thrill of having family and fans cheer him on.

"I think all athletes who will compete in the Olympics really want to be in the company of family or my fans who will watch," he told AFP.

### 'THE WORLD IS STILL COMING TOGETHER'

But for many taking part after over a year of COVID restrictions, empty stadiums will be nothing new and a lack of adoring crowds no obstacle to smashing records. "Our athletes have generally prepared

with no spectators in mind, it was a specific part of their process around these Olympic Games," said New Zealand Olympic Committee team psychologist Kylie Wilson.

"We've seen athletes recording (personal bests) without spectators and learning not to rely on the crowd to deliver their best performance."

US swimming stars even said colleagues should look on the bright side and take advantage of the significantly different flavour of the games.

"Even though we're not having fans this summer the world is still coming together," said freestyle great Katie Ledecky, a five-time Olympic gold medallist.

"And I still think that's a really beautiful thing. I know this is going to be kind of a made-for-TV Olympics. I hope that everyone around the world tunes in."

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## SEA Games postponed to 2022

### SEA GAMES

THE 31<sup>ST</sup> EDITION OF the Southeast Asian Games, originally scheduled to take place at the end of this year in Hanoi, Vietnam, has been postponed.

The announcement was made to the media by Chaipak Siriwat, COO of the Bangkok-based SEA Games Federation, on July 8.

After an online meeting, Chaipak revealed that the decision was taken by 10 members of the federation, keeping in view the latest wave of COVID-19 pandemic sweeping through the Southeast Asian region.

The Games were scheduled to take place from Nov 21 to Dec 2 this year.

A foreign media report added that Vietnam was likely to host the biennial tournament in April or May next year, as suggested by the SEAGF members.

Chaipak added that the Vietnam's representative sought another 10 days to confirm his country's ability to host the Games on the scheduled dates.



Participants from Vietnam at the closing ceremony of the SEA Games on Dec 11, 2019 in Manila. Photo: AFP

However, a vote was called and all 10 nations, with the exception of the host country, voted in favour of postponing the event to next year.

Last month, Vietnam had proposed to the federation to delay the Games as the country grappled with a new virus outbreak. Authorities then confirmed that 9 million people in Ho Chi Minh City were to go into lockdown for two weeks in the early hours of last Friday (July 9).

The regional edition of Olympics were due to be held in Hanoi and 11 other locations – some of them being the epicentre of the fresh COVID-19 wave.

Some of the SEA Games events were due to take place in badly affected provinces

including Bac Ninh and Bac Giang in the country's northeast.

The badminton venue in Bac Giang has been turned into a field hospital, reports said.

Vietnam previously hosted the multisport competition in 2003. It has allocated a budget of around US\$69 million (B2.2 billion) for the Games.

The SEA Games are expected to attract nearly 20,000 participants, including about 7,000 athletes, from 11 countries, according to state media.

As well as Olympic disciplines, sports are likely to include billiards and snooker, bodybuilding, chess, bowling and kurash, an ancient form of Uzbek wrestling.

Bangkok Post



# Djokovic wins sixth Wimbledon

## Grand Slam number 20 for Serb as Barty wins women's title

### TENNIS

AFP

Novak Djokovic won a record-equalling 20<sup>th</sup> Grand Slam title and sixth Wimbledon last Sunday (July 11) with a four-set victory over Italian slugger Matteo Berrettini.

The Serbian world number one triumphed 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 to move level on 20 majors with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

His win also put him three-quarters of the way to the first calendar Grand Slam of all four majors since 1969.

"I could definitely envisage that happening and I hope I will give it a shot. I'm in great form and played well and having my best form at Grand Slams is my number one priority," said Djokovic.

A sixth victory at the All England Club for Djokovic, who was playing in his 30<sup>th</sup> final at the Slams, added to his nine Australian Opens, two Roland Garros titles as well as three at the US Open.

Should he win a fourth title



Novak Djokovic celebrates winning against Italy's Matteo Berrettini. Photo: AFP

in New York in September, he will become just the third man in history after Don Budge (1938) and Rod Laver (1962 and 1969) to complete the calendar Grand Slam.

Djokovic also now has 85 career titles while he has become the first man to break

the \$150 million (B4.9 billion) prize money barrier.

A gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics could give him the first ever Golden Grand Slam by a male player.

### BARTY TIME

In the women's final played

last Saturday (July 10) Ashleigh Barty won her first Wimbledon title beating Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3.

It was the first women's Wimbledon final to go to three sets since 2012 when Serena Williams beat Poland's

Agnieszka Radwanska. Barty is also the first top seed to win the women's title since Williams in 2016.

Barty had looked like cruising to victory after soaring into a 4-0 lead over her opponent. However, 29-year-old Pliskova steadied herself

while Barty faltered when she served for the match at 6-5 in the second set.

The Czech broke and then swept the tiebreaker to take the final into a decider.

Barty got the break for 2-0 in the final set and despite one or two wobbles she got herself over the line sinking to her knees, her hands over her face in disbelief.

She wiped a couple of tears away before climbing up to the player's box, just like her compatriot Pat Cash did when he won the Wimbledon men's title in 1987.

Elsewhere, Taiwan's Hsieh Su-wei and Belgian partner Elise Mertens defeated Russia's Elena Vesnina and Veronika Kudermetova to win the women's doubles finals.

Croatia's Nikola Pietrangeli and Mate Pavic won the men's doubles title against Marcel Granollers of Spain and Horacio Zeballos of Argentina.

Brit Neal Skupski and American partner Desirae Krawczyk beat British duo Harriet Dart and Joe Salisbury in the mixed doubles final.

## F1 set for Silverstone shake-up

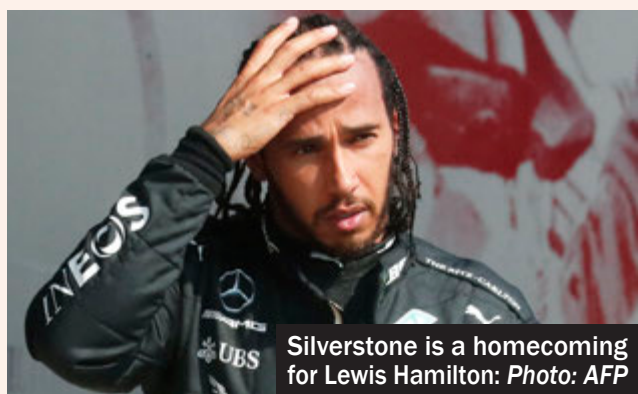
### FORMULA ONE

SILVERSTONE MIGHT be Lewis Hamilton's last stronghold on the 2021 championship trail, but his homecoming this weekend (July 16-18) is set to feature a twist in proceedings.

A shake-up of the weekend format, designed to enliven the grand prix weekend and present more competitive action for fans, will be trialled at the historic English track, but scepticism of the need to tweak the formula remains strong.

The substantive change is the introduction of a 100-kilometre, 30-minute race on Saturday to set the grid for Sunday's grand prix, replacing the traditional one-hour knockout qualifying session, which will move to Friday evening after first practice.

The familiar qualifying format will be used to set the grid for 'sprint qualifying', as the Saturday session will be known, the winner of which will score three points and be declared the pole-getter for Sunday's main event. The drivers finishing in second



Silverstone is a homecoming for Lewis Hamilton. Photo: AFP

and third place on Saturday will also score two and one points respectively.

No pit stops will be required, and without strategy, in theory it will be a pure racing spectacle.

Sprint races have been long mooted but have struggled for traction, in particular because they've often taken the form of gimmicky reverse-grid or reverse-championship races to induce artificial action. Such concepts are anathema to purists and were unsurprisingly howled down by the teams most likely to have been most disadvantaged.

However, not everyone is convinced the format will be conducive to action. For one, modern F1 tyres

and aerodynamics make it difficult to race at close quarters for 30 minutes, a potential issue to the idea of a full 100 kilometre of no-holds-barred action.

Silverstone is expected to suit Mercedes well – the German marque has won all but two races here since 2013, seven of which have belonged to Hamilton – and is bringing its last upgrade of the year to the track to bolster its flagging form.

Whoever wins F1's first sprint qualifying race will earn themselves a minor note in the history books, but the winner of the British Grand Prix will take a bigger step towards claiming the 2021 title.

Michael Lamonato



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# Sport



**Barty time at Wimbledon for Ashleigh > p15**

Italy captain Giorgio Chiellini raises the European Championship trophy after Italy won the Euro 2020 final last Sunday (July 11). Photo: Michael Regan/AFP



## FOOTBALL

AFP

Italy's players have been feted as heroes after their team beat England in a dramatic penalty shootout to win Euro 2020 at Wembley last Sunday (July 11).

The team had landed back in Rome early on Monday morning, with captain Giorgio Chiellini and coach Roberto Mancini lifting the gleaming trophy aloft as they stepped off the plane.

Both Italy's prime minister Mario Draghi and president

Sergio Mattarella hosted ceremonies for the Azzurri back in Rome before the team boarded a bus and made a triumphant journey through jubilant crowds waving the tricolour flag.

It capped off an emotional 24 hours that began with a night of drama at Wembley on Sunday night, when Italy recovered from the shock of conceding the quickest goal ever in a European Championship final to equalise and then claim a 3-2 shootout victory.

It is the second time the Italians have been crowned European champions and their win marks a remarkable turna-

round under coach Roberto Mancini after the team failed to even qualify for the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Gareth Southgate's team were ahead in just the second minute when defender Luke Shaw finished coolly at the back post after an inviting cross from Kieran Trippier, stunning the crowd of more than 67,000.

In steady rain, the crowd provided a relentless wall of noise as the home side repelled Italy's attacks and threatened to increase their lead.

But with 30 minutes to go Leonardo Bonucci scrambled

the ball into the net from close range after England's defence failed to clear.

Normal time finished goalless despite a flurry of substitutions and the sides were still locked at 1-1 after extra time.

England's Jordan Pickford saved spot-kicks from Andrea Belotti and Jorginho but Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka all failed to find the net. Cue despair for the hosts and wild celebrations for the Italians.

### 'RENAISSANCE'

"It's a renaissance for Italian football," said an emotional

Bonucci after the match.

"We are happy to have given joy and hope to the Italians after such a difficult period," Mancini told reporters.

"We have an exceptional group, we love each other, we know where we come from," said goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, decisive in London and named best player of the tournament.

Italy had been arguably the team of the tournament heading into the final, sweeping through the group stage with a perfect record before knocking out Austria, top-ranked Belgium and Spain

to reach the final.

Revitalised since Mancini took over, the Azzurri were on a remarkable 33-match unbeaten run going into the final.

The four-time world champions' lone European Championship triumph came in 1968. They were beaten finalists in 2000 and 2012.

By contrast England's failure from the penalty spot extended their dismal record in shoot-outs and left them still desperately waiting for another major trophy after the 1966 World Cup they won on home soil.

## Social media giants to tackle racial abuse of players

### FOOTBALL

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER said on Monday (July 12) they were scrambling to take down racially abusive comments directed at members of the England football team following the heartbreaking loss in Sunday's Euro 2020 final.

The US social media giants said they were taking down racist and hateful content which had prompted condemnation from British political leaders and the royal family.

The actions came after a stream of abusive messages on Twitter and Facebook-owned Instagram directed at Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka, the three players who missed England's penalties.

"The abhorrent racist abuse directed at England players last night has absolutely no place on Twitter," said a spokesperson for the San Francisco-based short messaging service.

"In the past 24 hours, through a combination of machine learning based automation and human

review, we have swiftly removed over 1,000 Tweets and permanently suspended a number of accounts for violating our rules – the vast majority of which we detected ourselves proactively using technology."

Facebook said earlier in a statement it had "quickly removed comments and accounts directing abuse at England's footballers last night and we'll continue to take action against those that break our rules".

"No one thing will fix this challenge overnight, but we're

committed to keeping our community safe from abuse," it said.

Prince William, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other leaders expressed dismay over the online abuse. England national team manager Gareth Southgate labelled it "unforgivable".

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden tweeted, "I share the anger at appalling racist abuse of our heroic players" while warning online services.

"Social media companies need to up their game in addressing it



**A distraught Bukayo Saka is consoled by manager Gareth Southgate and team mate Kalvin Phillips after his missed penalty proved decisive. Photo: AFP**

and, if they fail to, our new Online Safety Bill will hold them to account with fines of up to 10% of global revenue," he wrote. AFP