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# OPEN TO DEFIANCE

Bars on Bangla Rd have re-opened as 'restaurants'. Photo: The Phuket News

## PATONG BARS DEFY NATIONAL ORDER TO RE-OPEN AS RESTAURANTS

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Bars along Patong's famed Bangla Rd have re-opened as restaurants, with some venues selling alcohol, in order to serve some customers and make a living in open defiance of a national order for all pubs, bars and other "entertainment venues" to remain closed as a COVID-19 prevention measure.

The move comes after the venues owners were last ordered closed by Phuket officials in April, followed by a nationwide ban brought into effect by the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) in Bangkok that is still in effect.

With the order to remain closed, the Phuket Sandbox scheme has brought no relief to bar staff and other workers, and venue operators in Phuket have not received any assistance from the national government, Weerawit

Kreuasombat, President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA) told *The Phuket News*.

"Right now, Patong is still silent because everything is still the same. The provincial government still orders all entertainment venues to remain closed and bans the sale and consumption of alcohol at all restaurants," he said.

"While the CCSA still bans all entertainment venues from re-opening while allowing restaurants to open

without serving alcohol, bar operators must adapt and have opened their bars as restaurants," he admitted.

"There are no officials giving help to them. They still have to live their lives and support their families, so I encourage them to open their bars as restaurants," he said defiantly.

"I know it is illegal because they do not have a restaurant license. However, the officers from the local municipality and the police help them by allowing them to do so,...

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Sea gypsies in Rawai under lockdown



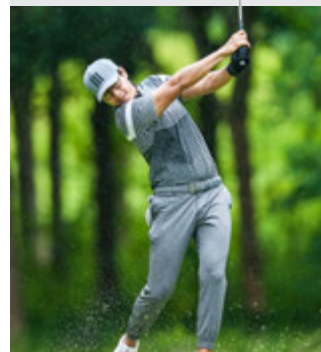
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Local startup's sustainable food of the future



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Phuket pro golf bonanza to boost tourism



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## News



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# Deputy PM promises everything

The Phuket News  
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Phuket was graced by visits from two deputy prime ministers within four days over the past week, with Supattanapong Punmeechaow in Phuket last Friday (Sept 10) and Jurin Laksanawisit, who also serves as the Commerce Minister, on the island on Monday (Sept 13).

Mr Jurin was in Phuket to receive a general update of the COVID situation on the island from Phuket officials, trotting out the usual regular figures, including the number of Sandbox arrivals and the officially reported infection and vaccination rates.

However, the main purpose of his visit appeared to be to announce and promote the 'Gem and Jewellery Fest in Phuket' event scheduled to be held at Central Phuket on Dec 8-12.

"The purpose of the event is to create a good image and boost sales for the jewellery industry, so they can get through this economic crisis. We will invite buyers and investors from around the world to come and hold business negotiations at the event," he said.

"I expected that about 200 Thai operators and about 4,000 tourists, local people and international traders will join the event, which is expected to generate about B100 million," he added.

More importantly, Deputy Prime Minister Supattanapong Punmeechaow in Phuket last Friday (Sept 10) promised Phuket officials would receive everything they need



Deputy Prime Minister Supattanapong Punmeechaow at the meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall last Friday (Sept 10). Photo: PR Phuket

to combat the spate of COVID-19 infections across the island "to bring peace of mind to local residents and build confidence among tourists".

"The government is ready to [provide] support with medicines, vaccines and ATK test kits, as requested by Phuket Province [the provincial government]," Mr Supattanapong told a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall.

"Especially the materials and equipment that will be used in the operation to increase the number of hospital beds for red-coded patients, yellow-coded patients and to build more field hospitals to give people peace of mind and confidence in the readiness of medical personnel and the public health system of Phuket," he said.

"The important thing that the government hopes is that the Phuket Sandbox project must bring smiles to the people of Phuket because the charm of Phuket, besides having beautiful attractions, also means the charm of the Phuket people in being a good host. It's good to welcome tourists as well," he added.

Mr Supattanapong continued, "The important thing in implementing the Phuket Sandbox project is that it must benefit the people in the area. Disease prevention and control guidelines must ensure that people in the area are not worried, but must have peace of mind and people are alert. participate in revitalizing the economy and tourism, coupled with effective disease prevention and control [measures].

"The main goal is to reduce the number of deaths from COVID-19," Mr Supattanapong said, on the same day that Phuket marked its worst number of fatalities since the pandemic began. At that time Phuket had suffered 17 deaths attributed to COVID-19 over the previous seven days.

Also present in Phuket for the meeting last Friday was Itthipol Khunpluem, Minister of Culture. "After this, the number of infected people will be tracked by the reporting of details in each district," he said.

The tracking of infections will help "to plan for disease prevention and control by the government's plan to open the area for tourism, focusing on creating a balance of

economic and public health at the same time," Mr Itthipol added.

In reporting the COVID situation on the island, Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Kusak Kukiattikoon said that Phuket was experiencing infections in all three districts across the island (Muang, Kathu and Thalang).

He also reported a cluster of infections identified at a large shopping mall, previously not reported by Phuket officials.

Dr Kusak reported that hospital bed availability for all types of patients had fallen to 18.89%, but that the provincial officials had increased the number of "Community Isolation" and "Hospital" quarantine venues, where 'green-coded patients', suffering little to no signs of infection are monitored after testing positive for COVID-19.

Dr Kusak continued by explaining that the third-dose vaccine 'booster shots' were being administered to the higher at-risk groups of people, and cited all the measures currently in force to help prevent the spread of infections across Phuket.

Of note, Dr Kusak pointed out that 'Bubble and Seal' operations were in effect at workers camps and workplaces deemed to be at-risk although no infections had been found.

In addition to enforcing screening measures for people entering Phuket and measures to reduce risk activities across the island, officials were considering "closing slum areas where outbreaks are found and there is the chance for infections to spread quickly".

## Tired of scraping by without income, Bangla bars open as 'restaurants'

Continued from page 1

...so they can continue their business in that way," he said.

"I do not understand why local officials do not have measures to help entertainment venue operators. I do not want to blame them for ordering them closed, but they must give us some help," Mr Weerawit said.

"We have proposed them to allow us to reopen a long time ago [see page 6]. I feel so fed up and I can feel the insincerity of Phuket officers who have their normal salary each month and do not know how much we have been suffering," he added.

"Some restaurants [sic]

are crowded and serve alcoholic beverages. I have to accept that they really exist," Mr Weerawit admitted.

"However, they are not different from bars that are open-air venues. For pubs, I understand that they should not be open right now because they can become crowded and use air conditioners," he continued.

"I do not understand why they do not allow bars which have similar characteristics with restaurants to re-open. They do not allow us to reopen without any help. I think it is unfair for us," he said.

Mr Weerawit challenged provincial officials over their effectiveness in handling the impact of the current



Photo: The Phuket News

outbreak on the island.

"I would like to tell the officers who join the daily meeting at Provincial Hall with the Phuket Governor, who is not elected by our people, right now you all are floating [ignoring the other

people's problems]. You have only orders to close venues, but no orders to help or fix anything," he said.

"For example, the people confirmed as infected who want to receive medical treatment in hospitals are being

denied and told to stay home because of insufficient beds. From my point of view, it is not the right way to manage [the situation].

"What about those who are not infected in the same house? Do you think the infected people will stay only in their house?" he posed.

"Right now, the management of people in Phuket infected [with COVID-19] is very poor. Not only me, but every person can feel that. The number of infected people keeps increasing, but you tell infected people to stay home. Why don't they open hotels for those infected people?" he added.

"I think at this stage, Phuket must have about 300-

400 new infected cases per day, if the health officers are not trying to hide anything from us. I think they are hiding because they are afraid that the Sandbox scheme will be cancelled," Mr Weerawit said.

"I want the media to stimulate the officers. They have the meeting every day, but there is nothing new from them. For example, staff at the SuperCheap store have been infected for a long time, but they only just recently ordered it to close," he noted.

"They are supporting capitalists so much that they are forgetting us and the grassroots economy," Mr Weerawit concluded.



# Community Isolation ramped up

The Phuket News  
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Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew has announced that provincial officials will expand the number of 'Community Isolation' centres on the island to help cope with the rising number of people being kept in quarantine on the island.

Speaking at the Phuket Sandbox Operations Center last Friday (Sept 10), Governor Narong said that the move was to accelerate the establishment of Community Isolation centres to support 'Green' patients, those who have tested positive for COVID-19 but are suffering light symptoms of infection.

According to the Ministry of Public Health head office in Bangkok, a 'Green' patient is recognised as suffering mild symptoms of a sore throat; anosmia (loss of taste/smell); cough; runny nose; rashes; diarrhea; red eyes; and a body temperature over 37.5°C.

Joining the Governor were Vice Governors Pichet Panaphong and Piyapong Choowong, as well as Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO,



Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) at the inspection of the 'Aunjai Clinic' site in Phuket Town on Monday (Sept 14). Photo: PR Phuket

or OrBorJor).

Once the centres have been set up, all those involved are asked to report problems and obstacles in their operations, Governor Narong said.

The PPAO is to provide transport shuttle buses for the movement of personnel and patients at the centres, he said.

"The departments under the Ministry of Public Health, Vachira Phuket Hospital and the hospitals in Phuket together are to create a drug kit to deliver to those who test positive who come to receive treatment in the waiting area," he said.

"On this occasion, all sectors were instructed to visit the community to closely take care of 'Group 608' patients [at greater risk of serious infection]. If they are found to be sick or at risk, they must be taken into treatment immediately," Governor Narong said.

Wuttichai Bamrungrat, a local official at the meeting, explained that 10 new venues will open as Community Isolation centres across Phuket, as follows:

Thalang District – Splash Hotel, Mai Khao (48 rooms); The Impress Resort, Thepkasattri; Nai Yang Beach resort,

Sakhu (60 rooms); Wat Cherng Talay (200 beds).

Muang District – Access Resort & Villa Hotel, Karon (130 rooms); Baan Phu Chalong Place, Chalong (40 rooms); De Blue & Spa Rawai Hotel, Rawai (59 rooms); Bhukitta Hotel, Phuket Town (38 rooms).

Kathu District – Patong Resort Hotel (80 rooms); Di Pantai resort, Patong (60 rooms).

The move to expand the number of "Community Isolation" centres on the island followed the number of people

being held in quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19 by an antigen test kit (ATK) over the previous week easily exceeding 1,000.

People are held in the quarantine detention centres until they either test negative for COVID-19 by RT-PCR test, or develop more serious symptoms of infection and are moved to a field hospital or a regular hospital for medical care and supervision.

However, the move also follows Phuket health officials on Sept 6 announcing that 'Green'-coded patients will be asked to observe quarantine at home.

On Monday (Sept 13), Governor Narong inspected the opening of an "Aunjai Clinic", located on Komaraphat Rd near Vachira Phuket Hospital, where people who test positive for COVID-19 by using their own ATKs can seek medical consultation about their symptoms and decide whether or not they should be admitted into isolation or medical care.

Joining the governor for the inspection were Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Kusak Kukiattakoon and Vachira Phuket

Hospital Director Chalermpong Sukonthaphon.

The move was to alleviate the burden on the Community Isolation centres and on the number of hospital beds available for COVID patients.

According to the PPHO COVID situation report for Monday, 3,300 people were under medical care or supervision.

The report recorded zero new cases of people suspected of being infected with COVID-19 after testing positive by antigen test kits (ATKs), and the total number of people reported as currently being held at 'COVID-19 Care Centers' stood at 1,184.

The PPHO daily COVID situation report also marked that Phuket currently has in total 2,542 beds available for COVID patients, with 2,230, or 87.73% of those occupied by patients.

The island had just 312 patient beds still available, said the report.

However, the report also marked that of the COVID patients in care only 34 were designated as 'Red patients'; 339 were designated 'Yellow' patients and 696 were 'Green' patients.

## SuperCheap ordered closed Rawai sea gypsy village under lockdown

THE MAIN SUPERCHEAP SHOPPING complex in Rassada, north of Phuket Town, has been ordered closed for seven days as a measure to prevent COVID-19 infections from spreading after at least 23 staff there were confirmed infected.

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew announced the closure last Saturday (Sept 11), which he pointed out was agreed by the Phuket Communicable Disease Control Committee.

An order enforcing the closure was published later that night, showing that the closure was from Sept 12-18, days after officials realised that the shopping centre had become the epicentre of a cluster.

Governor Narong last Saturday explained that he had dispatched a team of officers from the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) and from the Muang District Office to the main SuperCheap complex last Friday (Sept 10).

It was reported back to him that 111 staff were tested. "Among the staff, 20 staff working in the warehouse section and three sales staff tested positive," he said.

Governor Narong gave no explanation as to why he dispatched officers to investigate the site for COVID-19, despite PPHO Chief Kusak Kukiattakoon explaining to Deputy Prime Minister Supattana Pongmaneechaow at a meeting held in the same conference chamber at Phuket Provincial Hall just one day earlier that a cluster of infections had been identified at a "large shopping mall".

Dr Kusak revealed no other details about the new cluster, just as Governor Narong avoided confirming when officials learned about the new infections at the SuperCheap main store.



The main SuperCheap store and shopping complex north of Phuket Town has been ordered closed for seven days. Photo: Eakkapong Thongtub

Of note, while reporting that 111 workers at the complex were reported as tested, it was not confirmed how many people actually work at the usually busy shopping complex, which pre-COVID had about 1,700 employees and features many individual vendors operating small stores at the complex.

Asked why the closure was for only seven days, Governor Narong replied, "For people who may be concerned about why we ordered to close [the SuperCheap complex] for only seven days, we have learned from the Bansan market [Phuket Town Fresh Market 1] that we [first] close it for seven days and then test people in the area. If the situation in the area meets our criteria, then they can reopen."

"An officer at the meeting reminded us to think about the effect of the closure on our people, we have thoroughly and carefully considered and agreed to close the store," he said.

Asked about the small SuperCheap branches across the island, Governor Narong would only answer, "We will discuss that later."

Eakkapong Thongtub

THE SEA GYPSY VILLAGE in Rawai has been placed under 14-day lockdown, Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos has announced late last Thursday afternoon (Sept 9).

At the time, an officer at Rawai Municipality, who asked not to be named, said that Mayor Aroon and all other high-ranking officials at Rawai Municipality were unavailable as they were in a meeting about the lockdown.

As of Monday (Sept 13), no details of the lockdown or the number of people infected in the village had been revealed.



Sea gypsies at the village were mass tested for COVID-19 last weekend. Photo: Rawai Municipality

The officer declined to answer any questions as to why the lockdown was brought into effect on Sept 9, since mass testing of sea gypsies in the village was conducted

on Aug 31 and health workers conducted a mass sanitising of homes and public areas in the village on Sept 5.

The mass testing on Aug 31 saw 465 villagers tested for COVID-19 by staff from Chalong Hospital using antigen test kits (ATKs).

However, Phuket health chief Dr Kusak Kukiattakoon on Sept 1 reported that, in comparison, of the 248 sea gypsies tested in Baan Sapam, Rassada, during the 'proactive screening' of sea gypsies in Phuket, 100 of those tested positive. *The Phuket News*

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## COVID delays trial of Bangla shooter cop

**The Phuket News**  
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Witness testimonies in the trial of Pornthep Channarong, the corporal with the Phuket Provincial Police who was drunk off-duty when he shot 25-year-old noodle vendor Aroon Thongplab in the stomach on Bangla Rd in Patong in February, has been deferred.

The deferment follows the first court session of the trial starting on Aug 23. Pornthep has been charged with attempted murder, carrying a firearm in a public area without necessary reason, and firing a weapon in a public area.

An officer at Phuket Provincial Court told Kulthida Chananan, Mr Aroon's wife, that the reason given for the deferment was the current COVID-19 situation in Phuket.

The lawyer representing Pornthep said that it was not convenient for witnesses to come to the court to give their testimonies on that day, Ms Kulthida told *The Phuket News* on Sept 8.

Asked whether Pornthep was still in remand, Ms Kulthida said "I think he's still in prison and has not been released on bail."



Mr Aroon in this picture taken in June is seen enjoying being with his now 9-month-old son. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub / file

"We had a court appointment to hear witness testimonies and examine evidence on August 23, but the lawyer of the policeman [Pornthep] filed a request to postpone the testimonies. No one informed me before that day," Ms Kulthida said.

"On that day, I went to the court to be told that the testimony was postponed. Luckily, Lawyer Kerdphol did not come to Phuket on that day," she said.

Bangkok-based lawyer Kerdphol Kaewkerd, popular

for taking up cases of gross injustice to protect the rights of those unable to afford legal representation, has volunteered to represent Mr Aroon and Ms Kulthida in court, with assistance from lawyer Phakin Jantira, based in Phuket Town.

"Today, I am still waiting for a letter from the court about what date the testimony will be," Ms Kulthida told *The Phuket News*.

Her husband, Mr Aroon, left paralysed from the waist down after the bullet fired by Pornthep hit his spine, is well,

but still recovering from recent surgery to clear an obstructed intestine, Ms Kulthida said.

"His condition is still stable. He went through surgery on his intestines in hospital last month and was just discharged last week," she said.

"Doctors told me that because he cannot make any movements like us, his organs in digestive system do not work well, leading to the intestinal obstruction," she explained.

"Doctors had to cut about 45cm of his intestines out and

left a big scar on his stomach. Right now, he needs to lay down all the time. He cannot sit up. We need to raise up the bed, so that we can give him food," Ms Kulthida added.

"He had to stop physical therapy after being discharged from the hospital. For his lower parts are still the same. He is still unable to walk and feel anything from his waist down," she said.

"He can speak, but not like normal people because he still has a tube and hole on his neck," she added.

Ms Kulthida expressed her thanks to all the people who have provided support for her and Mr Aroon, helping them with medical bills and getting by without any income while raising two young children.

"I received money donated from expats on the island, and I have spent that money on buying a patient bed and air mattress for Aroon," she said, noting the valuable contribution that has made in caring for her husband.

Ms Kulthida offered *The Phuket News* to talk with Mr Aroon.

Asked how he was feeling at the time, he said shortly, "I feel a little bit better, but I feel exhausted."

## Phuket readies for OrBorTor elections

THE PHUKET OFFICE OF THE Election Commission of Thailand (PEC) has been told to prepare to hold Tambon Administration Organisation (OrBorTor) elections, which have been tentatively set for Nov 28.

The local municipal elections will be the first held on the island, and throughout the country, since the National Council for Peace Order (NCPO), headed by Army General Prayut Chan-o-cha, now the prime minister, took control of the country in May 2014.

The news follows the Cabinet on Sept 7 passing a resolution allowing OrBorTor elections to be held at all levels nationwide following a proposal by the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT), with polling tentatively scheduled for Nov 28.

The PEC has announced on its official Facebook page that it will draft its plan for holding elections across the island. The details will be announced on Oct 1, the PEC said.

The PEC also explained that it will open for candidate registration for five days, from Oct 11 to 15.

Phuket is home to five subdistricts



that are administered by Tambon Administration Organisations (OrBorTor): Koh Kaew, Kamala, Cherno Talay, Mai Khao and Sakhu.

Of note, Cherno Talay is the one area on the island that has an OrBorTor and a municipality. Cherno Talay OrBorTor, headed by MaAnn Samran, oversees the beach areas, while Cherno Talay Municipality, led by Mayor Suniran Rachatapruek, oversees the inland areas of Cherno Talay.

With elections currently tentatively set for Nov 28, under election law a ban on the sale of alcohol will be in effect in the five OrBorTor areas from 6pm the night before the election day through to 6pm the night of the election.

The penalty for breach of the alcohol ban is a fine up to B10,000 or up to six months in prison, or both.

*The Phuket News*

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# Croc sighting unnerves local

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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Officers at Sirinat National Park on Phuket's west coast are still keeping watch for a crocodile in their area despite a fruitless search last week following a reported sighting of a crocodile seen plunging into the water from a beach on Koh Kata, just offshore from the northern end of Layan Beach.

Officers from the park were joined by a team from the Phuket Fisheries Office to conduct a search for a crocodile reported seen at Koh Kata, at the northern end of Layan Beach on Sept 7.

Joining the search were Watcharin Rattanachoo, Chief of the Phuket Fisheries Office; Niyom Dechophanang, Head of Sirinat National Park Station 4 (Layan beach); and Cherng Talay Moo 6 village chief (Phu Yai Baan) Suchart Yuyen.

The team searched the area from 2:30pm to 4pm, and found no sign of any crocodiles, Mr Watcharin reported.

The team checked with lifeguards and local fishermen, who all reported not seeing any signs of crocodiles in the area, he added.



Officials are on the lookout for any crocodiles in the Layan Beach, Cherng Talay area. Photo: Phuket Fisheries Office

However, several monitor lizards one to two metres long had been seen in the area, feeding off scraps from local fishermen, he said.

"We have not been able to find any crocodiles like the one reported," Mr Watcharin noted.

"It is now believed that the man may have seen a monitor lizard on the sand on the island [Koh Kata], and understood that it was a crocodile," he said.

"To build confidence, we have coordinated with lifeguards and the head of the

park protection unit to keep watch [for any crocodiles in the area]. This is standard procedure to ensure the safety of tourists and local people," Mr Watcharin concluded.

The alarm was raised by local resident Somchai Choomrak, 55, who reported the sighting to the 191 police emergency hotline after arriving at the northern end of Layan beach to go fishing near the mouth of the canal at about 2:30pm.

Mr Somchai said he had walked out into the water to cast a net in the canal when

he saw the crocodile on the beach near the rocks on Koh Kata, located some 50 metres offshore.

The crocodile was about one metre long and its body was dark black, he said.

"At first I didn't think it was a crocodile, but as I walked closer the crocodile turned and plunged into the water. The sound was so loud that it could be heard clearly in the canal," he added.

Mr Somchai pointed out that two crocodiles had been caught at Koh Kata in recent years.

In addition to calling the police, Mr Somchai also informed local officers at Sirinat National Park.

"I would like the responsible officers to come and find the crocodile as soon as possible in order to prevent them from attacking tourists in this area," Mr Somchai said.

"There are tourists taking small children for a walk during low tide and if no one knows that in this canal there are crocodiles, they might go swimming and be bitten by a crocodile, or maybe lose someone they love for the rest of their lives," he added.

Mr Somchai said that while he was informing park officers he met a person who said that he saw something in the water that looked like a crocodile while windsurfing offshore.

## A RETURN OF PHUKET CROCODILES

In March this year, a two-metre-long crocodile was spotted in the Chalong Pier marina area off Phuket's south-east coast.

After weeks of searching, the 'Kraithong Lumnamtapi' expert croc catchers from the Department of Fisheries in Surat Thani failed to find

the reptile, and the search was called off.

At last report the crocodile was believed to have rounded the southern end of Phuket and was making its way up the west coast.

The 'Kraithong Lumnamtapi' team were the lead hunters in catching two crocodiles in Phuket: Yanui in 2018 and Leypan in 2017.

The team were also called in to help catch a crocodile seen at Saphan Hin last September. That croc was never caught.

Unlike in the hunt in 2018 for the female crocodile now named 'Yanui', no beaches were closed earlier this year while the search continued for Phuket's latest crocodile at large.

Yanui took just days to make her way up the west coast to where she was caught off Layan Beach a week after she was spotted at the southern end of the island, stopping off at Kata Noi and passing Patong en route.

After an extensive 11-day hunt, Yanui was finally caught at Leypan Beach, right next to Layan and Bang Tao Beaches, in Cherng Talay, halfway up Phuket's west coast.

## Russians wanted for B50mn Pattaya art theft arrested

OFFICERS FROM PHUKET IMMIGRATION arrested three Russians, two men and one woman, in Koh Kaew last week for fleeing bail in Pattaya, where they are wanted to face charges for assault and theft of paintings reportedly worth B50 million.

The three were wanted on an arrest warrant issued by the Pattaya Court in Chonburi, Maj Gen Phanthana Nuchnarot, head of the Immigration Bureau's national Investigation Division, announced at the Phuket Immigration office in Phuket Town on Sept 8.

The arrests earlier that day were the result of a joint investigation by national immigration investigation officers and Phuket Immigration, Maj Gen Phanthana said.

Joining Maj Gen Phanthana in making the announcement was Phuket Immigration deputy chief Lt Col Naruewat Puttawiro.

Officers arrested Olek Tarakhnov, 51, and Alena Zakharova, 33, at a house in Grace Gardens housing estate in Soi Koh Kaew 13, and Maxim Sukharev, 33, at a house in Habitown housing estate in Koh Kaew, Maj Gen Phanthana explained.

Officers checked "the biometrics system" and found that the fourth suspect, named as Alexei Kusikin, 19, (named in the arrest report as "Alek Sie"), had already fled the country, he added.

Maj Gen Phanthana explained that the four suspects together in November last year assaulted a Swiss national and stole paintings valued at about B50mn.

"They were arrested in Chonburi and released on bail. Then they moved to stay



The three Russians at Phuket Immigration. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

in Phuket before they were arrested again today," he said.

However, Maj Gen Phanthana did not explain when the warrant was issued for the four fugitives for jumping bail.

He also did not explain when the three fugitives arrested in Phuket had moved to the island, and did not explain when Alexei Kusikin left the country through formal channels.

"After spending about three weeks of investigation, we filed a request to the Phuket Provincial Court to issue a search warrant yesterday [Sept 7]. We received the warrant today and went to the house where the suspects were staying," Maj Gen Phanthana said.

"We will take them back to Chonburi so they can face further charges," he added.

Asked who had painted the works of art that were deemed so valuable, Maj Gen Phanthana said, "I don't know."

Eakkapop Thongtub

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# Tourism barriers hit agenda

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Boutique hotels being forced to close, the effect of the alcohol ban in restaurants and the ongoing suffering of Patong entertainment venue operators were just three of the issues raised with advisors to Deputy Prime Minister Supattanapong Punmeechaow visiting Phuket last week.

ACM Eakchanat Rattanabon, Pawin Chamniprasat and Dr Korn Pongchittham, all advisors to Deputy Prime Minister Supattanapong, chaired a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall Thursday afternoon last week (Sept 9) to be brought up to speed on key issues affecting Phuket's tourism industry, and affecting the Phuket Sandbox scheme.

The three advisors are to return to and report the key issues central government figures in Bangkok, noted a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

Joining the meeting were Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong, Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon and



Photo: PR Phuket

Vachira Phuket Hospital Director Dr Chalermpong Sukontapol.

Also present were Phuket Chamber of Commerce President Thanusak Phungdet, Thai Hotels Association Southern Chapter President Kongsak Khoopongsakorn and Phuket Tourism Council President Thanet Tantipiriyakit.

The five issues raised were: the COVID outbreak situation in Phuket; the need for and rollout of the third-dose 'booster' vaccinations; small boutique hotels being forced

to close following the hotel-compliance amnesty expiring; the effect of the alcohol ban in restaurants; and the ongoing problems faced by Patong entertainment venue operators.

Dr Kusak explained that the new infections across the island were people living in Phuket, and that officers were finding about 200 new cases every day.

"About 85% of the people infected do not have any symptoms," he said.

"For the Phuket Sandbox,

we have had over 29,600 arrivals through the scheme, and 88 of those arrivals have been confirmed infected after arriving on the island, which is considered very low, so I want to reduce the number of tests for Sandbox arrivals from three to only two times," Dr Kusak said.

Currently Sandbox arrivals are tested on arrival at Phuket airport, and again on Day 6/7 of their stay, and a third time on Day 12/13 of their stay.

According to the latest 'Phuket Sandbox Daily Re-

port' issued by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) on Tuesday (Sept 14), so far 31,721 people have landed in Phuket under the Sandbox scheme.

Of those, 33 tested positive for COVID-19 on landing, while 28 tested positive during their second test, and six tested positive during their third test. A further 24 Sandbox arrivals are still waiting for confirmation of test results, the report said.

"Additionally, I also want responsible officers to adjust the method of counting high-risk arrivals on the plane because they must go into a quarantine venue, instead of traveling," Dr Kusak said.

"Their insurance policies do not cover their quarantine and other expenses for being considered high-risk people [and not confirmed as infected with COVID-19]," he added.

At the meeting, small hotel operators explained how they are now unable to welcome Sandbox arrivals following the amnesty allowing small hotels - mainly guesthouses - to continue operating without complying with the Hotel Act expiring on Aug 18.

Further, being unable to

open but still considered viable businesses allowed to trade meant they were not allowed to access any of the relief funds provided by the national government to other businesses forced to close due to COVID prevention measures.

The operators asked again for relevant officials to extend to hotel amnesty for more than three years. The Phuket Boutique Accommodation Consortium (BAC) had submitted a formal request on Aug 18 asking for the amnesty to be extended. No formal response has been received.

Phuket business figures also asked the national government to lift the ban on alcohol being sold or consumed in restaurants, and asked for entertainment venues to be allowed to open.

The visiting top-level advisors explained that the issues and details presented will be presented to Deputy Prime Minister Supattanapong, so he could present them to the Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha and the national-level committees currently drafting and deciding policy regarding COVID-19 prevention measures.

## Hotel operators consider closing amid weak demand

AMID TEPID TOURIST demand, 52% of hotel operators are considering closing temporarily, while 9% want to shut down permanently if the COVID-19 pandemic lasts longer than expected.

A joint survey by the Bank of Thailand and Thai Hotels Association (THA) found that 62% of hotel operators planned to reduce labour costs in order to deal with the financial effects of the pandemic, reports the *Bangkok Post*.

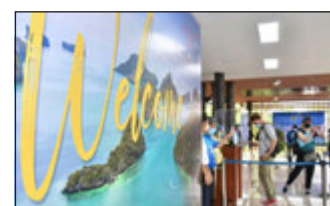
Meanwhile, 61% said they planned to cut other expenses.

Between Aug 13-28 the central bank and THA conducted a poll of 234 respondents, of which 14 were alternative state quarantines and five were hospitals.

A total of 38% of Phuket Sandbox respondents said foreign tourist arrivals were lower than their expectations, but 35% said the numbers were as expected.

On average, the occupancy rate was steady at 15%.

However, 52% of hotel respondents in Surat Thani, the host of the Samui Plus model, said they were receiving fewer travellers than expected, with



Tourists arrive on Koh samui under the Samui Plus travel plan. Photo: Bangkok Post

the average occupancy rate at 4%.

Most hotel operators were experiencing low incomes, with 58% of hotels reporting income of less than 10% of pre-COVID levels, while 17% earned 11-30% of their pre-outbreak income.

Marisa Sukosol Nunbhakdi, president of THA, said hotels in August had an occupancy rate of 10.6% nationwide, which was only slightly higher than the previous month's 9.6%.

A total of 65% of hotel operators said they had only enough liquidity to survive for less than three months.

Mrs Marisa said that while 17% of them remained closed, the number of active hotels increased from 40.1% in July to 48.4% in August, mainly driven by hotels in Bangkok, which turned to the long-stay market,

and in Phuket, which has its quarantine-free programme for inoculated tourists.

Lower confidence on Koh Samui recently prompted tourism operators to call for a relaxation of the Samui Plus model, which still requires inbound tourists to stay at quarantine facilities for three days after arrival.

Mrs Marisa said the quarantine-free approach should be applied to other destinations to stimulate more demand, which could help save hotels during the tough financial crisis.

As of Sept 6, Samui had received only 621 tourists via the pilot programme, while the number of tourists that completed the programme in Phuket and then travelled to Samui stood at over 400.

After starting the programme on July 15, tourists spent 7,136 room nights in Samui Plus destinations, while another 8,335 room nights have been reserved in advance.

The numbers are still a far cry from Phuket, which saw 176,128 and 125,434 room nights booked in August and September, respectively.

*Bangkok Post*

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# Jabs crucial for on-site education to re-open

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Schools will resume on-site learning in November, provided that sufficient vaccines are made available for students next month, the Education Ministry has said.

Education Minister Treenuch Thienthong said on Monday (Sept 13) the decision to re-open on-site classrooms in November came from lessons learned from conducting online and on-air studies during the pandemic.

Ms Treenuch said the ministry consulted with the public health and the interior ministries before setting the Nov 1 target for school re-opening. However, a return to class depends on the vaccine rollout, said Ms Treenuch who added that Pfizer vaccine jabs will be offered next month to students aged 12-17.

The Pfizer vaccine will be offered to 4.5 million students generally from Mathayom 4-6 (grades 10 to 12). The jabs will also be offered to those study-



The Education Ministry has set Nov 1 as the target date for schools to reopen. Photo: Bangkok Post

ing in *PorWorChor* (vocational certificate) and *PorWorSor* (high vocational certificate) programmes at vocational institutes, which are both state and privately run.

Also eligible for the vaccine are students enrolled in religious, science and border police schools and educational establishments not run by the Education Ministry.

Students 18 years and older will also be eligible for vaccination.

The Education Ministry said the inoculations will be provided only if parents give their consent and Ms Treenuch said the goal was to roll out the

first doses to students within the next month.

The jabs will be distributed first to students in the dark-red zones hardest hit by the pandemic, including Bangkok. Altogether there are 15,465 schools and educational institutes in the 29 dark-red zone provinces.

"Vaccination will need to proceed quickly," the education minister said.

"The Public Health Ministry will map out a vaccination plan while the Education Ministry will pass information about the necessity and possible side effects of the inoculation to parents."

Familiarising parents about young people and immunisation will hopefully convince them to sign their children up for vaccination. Consent forms will be offered to parents which should be returned before the end of this month, Ms Treenuch said.

"We will be living with COVID-19 and it must be done in a way that does not cause further chaos to our students' education," she said.

However, the minister admitted not all schools will be ready for on-site re-opening come the targeted date of Nov 1. The resumption of classes must take into consideration the readiness of schools, parents and the infection situation in communities.

Amporn Pinasa, secretary-general of the Office of the Basic Education Commission, said unvaccinated students can attend on-site classes although they will be subject to a more rigorous health screening process than vaccinated students.

So far, 70% of teachers nationwide have received a vaccine jab. All employees at schools will also be vaccinated, said officials.

## Digital Health Pass to be required for domestic flights

### BANGKOK

THE PUBLIC HEALTH Ministry has confirmed the introduction of a Digital Health Pass for use by passengers on domestic flights.

The ministry confirmed last Wednesday (Sept 8) that it has signed a three-year agreement with the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) and the Airlines Association of Thailand (AAT) for the use of the app on flights with seven airlines so far.

The seven airlines are Bangkok Airways, Thai Smile, Air Asia, Air Asia X, Nok Airways, Lion Airways and Vietjet Air.

The Digital Health Pass is an electronic health certificate that will receive and store information from the Health Ministry on an individual's vaccine status which will be incorporated into the existing Mor Prom app.

Citizens will receive a Digital Health Pass when they have successfully been administered two



Image: Phuket Info Center

COVID-19 vaccinations or have successfully undergone COVID-19 testing at a hospital designated by the ministry.

At this stage, the Digital Health Pass will be used for domestic flights only and is expected to become operational soon. However, it may well be utilised for service in shops, restaurants and venues where customers are required to provide proof of their vaccine status at a later stage.

Those who have been vaccinated but do not receive the Digital Health Pass on its release are advised the check with the hospital where they were vaccinated.

The Phuket News

## Sinovac-AZ main formula now, says official

### BANGKOK

FORGET ABOUT GETTING two AstraZeneca shots. The main COVID-19 vaccine regimen for Thailand from now on is Sinovac-AstraZeneca, says a senior health official.

The change has not been formally announced, but was discovered accidentally when a government hospital opened registrations for the wrong regimen and had to cancel them.

Siriraj Hospital announced its monthly vaccination schedule on Facebook last Thursday (Sept 9). It said it would administer AstraZeneca to people aged 18 or over who had not yet received any COVID vaccine from Sept 25 to Oct 3. Bookings were to be made through its Siriraj Connect mobile application from Sept 10-20.

As people prepared to tap in, the state hospital issued another announcement the next day, apologising for the "inconsistencies". It said it had to cancel the previous announcement because the



Vaccine cocktails are the way forward, say officials. Photo: NNT

policy of the Ministry of Public Health was to give Sinovac as the first shot and AstraZeneca as the second. It promised to open registrations again when it gets hold of the vaccines it needs.

The about-turn has raised questions about what the policy on free vaccinations is now.

Opas Karnkawinpong, director-general of the ministry's Disease Control Department, clarified on Saturday (Sept 11) that the main regimen was now Sinovac as the first shot and AstraZeneca as the second, effective immediately.

The main reason behind the change, he said, is to speed up vaccinations.

The AstraZeneca-AstraZeneca formula requires triple the waiting time between shots, at 12 weeks, compared to four weeks for the Sinovac-AstraZeneca cocktail, he said.

As authorities want to fully vaccinate as many people as soon as possible in order to slow down the spread of the Delta variant, the change is appropriate, Dr Opas added.

Discussing efficacy, he assured the public that both regimens offered comparable levels of immunity. Besides, unlike other brands, the Chinese vaccine is readily available and can be shipped promptly, government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said.

Dr Opas also reiterated that 24mn doses of COVID vaccines would be available: 6million Sinovac, 10mn AstraZeneca and 8mn Pfizer-BioNtech.

In addition, the Chulabhorn Royal Academy will import another 6mn shots of Sinopharm, an alternative vaccine not on the government's free programme.

Bangkok Post

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# Superfoods of the future



## SUSTAINABLY YOURS

Palmer Owyong

In the last decade, the term ‘superfood’ has become ubiquitous in food marketing. It is used to denote nutritionally dense foods, and they have slapped the label on acai and Goji berries, hemp and chia seeds, wheatgrass, blueberries, and kale, among others. However, there is no clear definition of what a superfood is.

Most nutritionists will tell you that while some foods have more nutrients than others, a healthy diet is balanced

that includes a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes and a minimal amount of meat and dairy. This is more important than trying to single out a certain food.

Another recent trend has been switching to a plant-based diet. Many studies show that it is one of the healthiest diets, which can help prevent cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and even moderate-to-severe COVID-19. It is also one of the most environmentally friendly diets and can reduce your CO<sub>2</sub> footprint, while also reducing land and water usage. The production of meat and dairy create approximately 16% of greenhouse gases and are leading causes of deforestation and ocean dead zones.

Even though eating plant-based is one of the healthiest diets, you may still be on the fence because you are concerned about getting enough protein and other nutrients like B12. By adding these two ‘superfoods’ to your menu, you can ensure that your diet is balanced.

### Wolffia globosa

Introducing Wolffia globosa, also known as duckweed, and water lentils. Not only is it one of the world’s fastest-growing plants, but it is also one of the most nutrient-dense foods on the planet. For the same amount of calories it contains twice the protein of soy beans and includes all the essential amino acids. It has more zinc and iron than spinach or kale and is high in antioxidants, including lutein, which is thought to treat and prevent macular degeneration. It has magnesium, which is lacking in most diets and is essential for 600 functions in your body. Wolffia is also a bioavailable source of plant-based B12 that is lacking in a vegan diet and is important for the formation of healthy red blood cells.

Since it has a very mild neutral smell and taste, it is easy to integrate Wolffia into your diet and you can use it for smoothies, sauces, desserts and baked goods. Asians have used it in cooking for centuries, especially in northern Thailand, where they call it *khai naam*, or “water egg”.

Despite all of its benefits, Wolffia is still not widely available. So Metha Meetam, a plant nutrition specialist from Mahidol University, founded the Advanced Greenfarm in 2019 with the mission of cultivating the healthiest Wolffia in the world. Located just outside of Bangkok, the startup is being funded by Space-F, a food tech incubator whose goal is to build a more nutritious and sustainable global food supply chain.

### Spirulina

GFood is a collection of brands started by Daniele Bassi and his partner Giancarlo Menghetti around spirulina, a nutritionally dense blue-green microalgae. Similar to Wolffia in nutritional profile, it has more beta-carotene than a carrot, more calcium than milk, more protein than beef and more antioxidants than blueberries. It is also rich in B-vitamins and minerals and reduces inflammation.

When it is fresh, the flavour is like a lightly salted seaweed, but in pill or powder form, which is how Spiru4 (one of the GFood brands) sells it, it is



Fresh Wolffia dish.

flavourless. You can add the powder to water and you can use it in smoothies, baked goods, desserts and sauces. SpiruUP, is a sister brand that adds spirulina to a variety of pasta including fettuccine, spaghetti and penne, which are sold at stores around Phuket. Then there is the SpiruProject, a charity program that teaches the children of Thailand about good nutrition, culinary skills and sustainable eating practices.

Bassi and Menghetti, both from Switzerland, formerly worked in information technology for the banking industry for 20 years. After a brief stint with a biotech, which was consulting with a spirulina farm in Italy, the two men took a sabbatical and came to Phuket in search of work that was more meaningful. They found the island has a perfect climate for growing spirulina all year long, so in 2017 GFood was born. The farm is in Pa Khlok in a mangrove nature reserve, which is protected by the government and that they are not allowed to disturb. So their farming operation produces very little waste.

As we enter our 19<sup>th</sup> month of a global pandemic, one thing is clear, we need to change our relationship with nature. While you don’t have to go vegan, eating lower on the food chain is one of the best things you can do to help fight climate change, and prevent the loss of biodiversity.

Adding Wolffia and/or spirulina to your diet can ensure that your body is getting all of its necessary nutrients. This is good for you, but it’s also good for the planet because both grow quickly, require little water or land, require no pesticides or herbicides, are minimal to grow and both sequester CO<sub>2</sub> and clean the air. It’s no coincidence that the best food for our bodies are also the healthiest for the planet, because like it or not, we are inextricably connected to the natural world.

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

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# Geisha Sayuki visits Phuket

Bruce Stanley

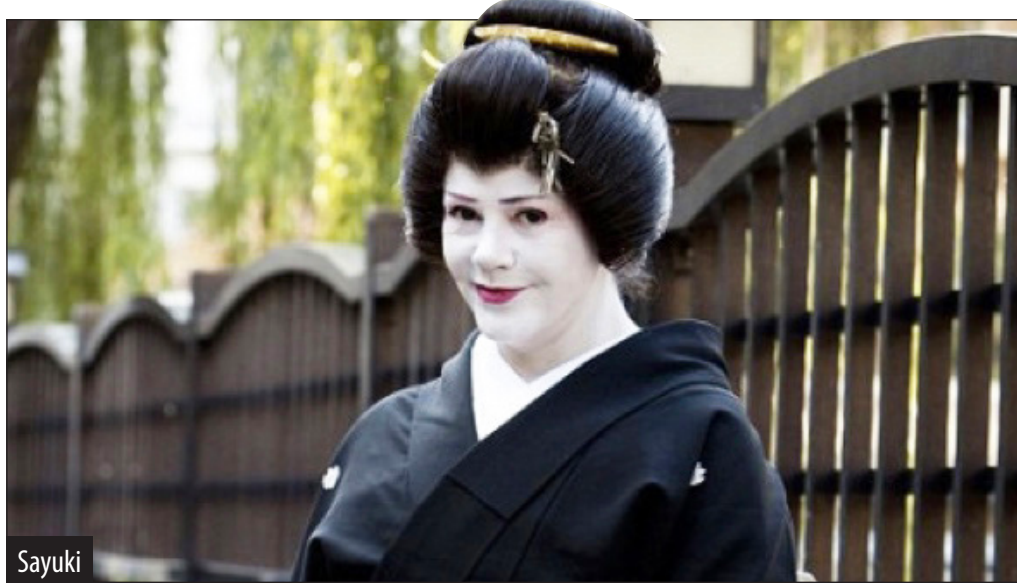
Thanks to the Phuket Sandbox, the island is receiving thousands of visitors from around the world as the rest of Asia remains in lockdown for the unforeseen future. These visitors have braved numerous hurdles to get here, including mandatory hotel stays, numerous COVID tests, mandatory insurance, visas and air flights known to cancel with very little notice.

Included in these determined travelers to Phuket are media and tourism officials from around the world invited by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to explore the cleaner beaches and other natural attractions reminiscent of past decades before the invasion of mass tourism.

Recently, the TAT invited a delegation from Japan to explore the island and report back to the Japanese media the obvious local charms for those nearly desperate to have a holiday. Included in the delegation was a remarkable classically trained geisha, Sayuki of the Fukagawa geisha district in Tokyo. Of particular interest is that she was born Fiona Graham in Melbourne, Australia, of Western parents and today is the only non-Japanese woman to have her own geisha house in Japan.

Sayuki first lived in Japan as a young student.

"When I was just 15, I wanted to go



Sayuki

abroad and saw a notice board that advertised an exchange student program to Japan and I was accepted," she explains.

Later she attended Oriel College at Oxford University where she studied social anthropology and wrote her doctoral thesis on Japanese management. She then made a variety of documentaries for the BBC, *National Geographic* and NHK before deciding to do a documentary on the real life of the geisha in Japan.

"I was intrigued about the role of the geisha in modern society and found that the institution that supported geisha culture was under threat. I had to go through 11 months of training and become a Japanese permanent resident

to become a geisha myself. It's a very highly ritualized tradition. For my debut, I wore a kimono of my geisha mother that cost 10,000 dollars."

Not content to just perform as a geisha with her acquired skills in the Japanese flute and three-stringed lute, Sayuki decided to open her own geisha house in the Fukagawa geisha district, the oldest geisha district in Japan.

"All geisha houses are in geisha districts. There are only about 50 districts in all of Japan. The houses are where the geishas live and they go out to perform in the finest tea houses, restaurants and for prestigious events. This normally includes an elegant performance of dance and music. Japanese dance is a kind of pantomime where the

dancer tells a story using the dance fan to illustrate the story," Sayuki explains.

Sayuki also lectures on geisha culture at various universities in her belief that the geisha tradition that reached its peak 100 years ago should be supported and enjoyed. She often travels with her geisha troupe abroad. In 2019, she performed in nine countries including in the Middle East as well as in Hungary, Norway and Italy.

"I am delighted to be back in Phuket, one of my favourite holiday destinations. We have not been able to leave Japan for a year and a half so the Phuket Sandbox was a welcome opportunity. I think many countries are looking to Thailand hoping this programme is successful as it may be the path for gradual international travel in this region once again," she says.

Sayuki has brought from Japan 45 kilos of silk pieces from kimonos no longer in use to be fashioned into silk purses and obi belts by the local Good Shepherd charity.

"It's wonderful to be able to help these women create some revenue in these difficult times by recycling these elegant Japanese silks," she says.

Sayuki will extend her visit to Phuket so she can focus on getting even more fit and healthy. She's enrolled at Revolution Muay Thai for training and when she's completed her Sandbox stay of a mandatory 14 days, she will travel to Koh Pha-ngan to ULU Yoga for a more spiritual retreat.

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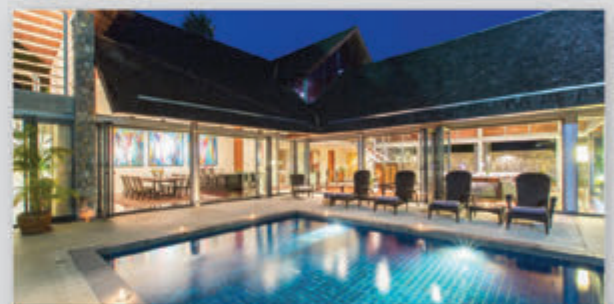
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## POP QUIZ

- Which NFL team did Dwayne Johnson play for before he became a WWF wrestling star?
- Theodor Seuss 'Ted' Geisel, better known as 'Doctor Seuss', was of which nationality?
- What are the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse?
- Which month is named after the Roman goddess of love and marriage?
- What day of the week was New Year's Day, 2021?

Answers below, centre

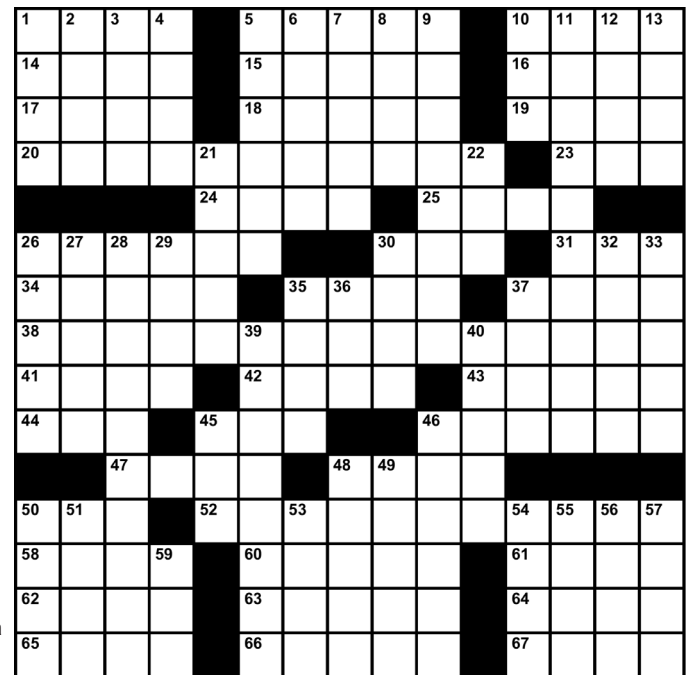
## SUDOKU

Easy

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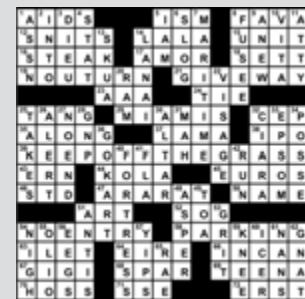
## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
- Animal's home
  - Comet's path
  - Chef's measure
  - Eight: Prefix
  - "Walk the Line" actress, Witherspoon
  - With the bow, in music
  - Came down to earth
  - "Moll Flanders" novelist
  - Concrete
  - Forced one's way
  - Bodybuilder's pride
  - "\_\_\_ of Eden"
  - Central Russian city
  - Imp
  - "Avatar" extras
  - Decline
  - Gastric woe
  - "Oh, Lady Be Good!" singer Fitzgerald
  - Welfare, with "the"
  - Control to get through obstacles to a goal
  - Conclusion starter
  - Actor Roger of "Cheers"
  - Listlessness
  - Barney on "The Simpsons," for one
  - "\_\_\_ the ramparts ..."
  - Contractions
  - "Ghostbusters" director Reitman
  - Government lending
- Down**
- Rich soil
  - Censorship-fighting org.
  - "How sweet \_\_\_!"
  - Campus military org.
  - Big test
  - Marsh growth
  - Suit
  - "Help \_\_\_ the way!"
  - Abstain completely
  - Driveway material
  - NFL plays that fall apart
  - Beginning of healing, sometimes
  - Campaigners, for short
  - Discover
  - Mantra syllables
  - Corrodes
- 27. Despite, poetically**
- 28. Examine in detail**
- 29. Boardroom V.I.P.'s**
- 30. Architectural additions, sometimes**
- 32. Small intestine division**
- 33. Beautiful fairies of Persian myth**
- 35. America's Cup, e.g.**
- 36. "Hips Don't \_\_\_" Shakira**
- 37. Corleone's wife**
- 39. French skiing city**
- 40. For 2005 holding top position in CSD share position in C stores**
- 45. Big galoot**
- 46. Least risky**
- 48. Narrow racing boat**
- 49. Ending to Ara or Isa**
- 50. Member of the arum family**
- 51. Kind of account**
- 53. Good vantage point**
- 54. "Baseball Tonight" channel**
- 55. Sainted pope called "the Great"**
- 56. Paint**
- 57. Some cameras, for short**
- 59. Brain scan, for short**



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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

4

times only in their lives, on average, do Europeans move residence.

45

Ironman triathlons has Sister Madonna 'Iron Nun' Buder completed. She ran her first Ironman at the age of 65.

71.4

years is the average global life expectancy of someone born in 2015.

433

pills per resident is how many prescription opiates drug firms shipped to the US state of West Virginia alone from 2007-2012.

189,819

letters the longest word in the world contains and takes about 3.5 hours to say.

30.9 trillion

kilometres is one parsec.

Source: Uberfacts



Chalong Temple. Photo by Michael Rafael

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

Sept 17, 1983

Vanessa Williams becomes the first black Miss America.

Sept 18, 1988

End of pro-democracy uprisings in Myanmar after a bloody military coup by the State Law and Order Restoration Council. Thousands, mostly monks and civilians (primarily students), are killed by the Tatmadaw.

Sept 19, 2010

The leaking oil well in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill is sealed

after discharging an estimated 4.9 million barrels (about 794.93mn litres) of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

Sept 20, 1498

The 1498 Nankai earthquake generates a tsunami that washes away the building housing the statue of the Great Buddha at Kōtoku-in in Kamakura, Kanagawa, Japan; since then the Buddha has sat in the open air.

Sept 21, 1934

The classic novel *The Hobbit* by J.



Bob Marley in concert, 1980.

R. R. Tolkien, the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, is published. The initial print run of 1,500 copies sells out by December.

Sept 22, 1979

A bright double-flash, resembling the detonation of a nuclear weapon, is observed near the Prince Edward Islands by a satellite overhead. The cause of the double-flash is never determined.

Sept 23, 1980

Bob Marley plays what would be the last concert of his life in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Diagnosed with acral lentiginous melanoma in 1977, he dies on May 11, 1981 in Miami at age 36.

Source: Wikipedia



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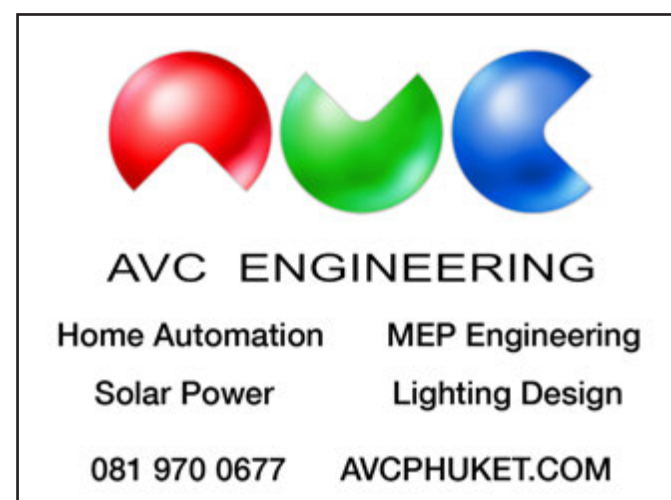
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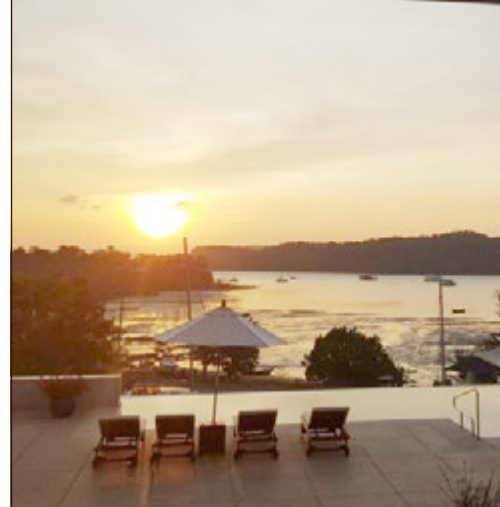
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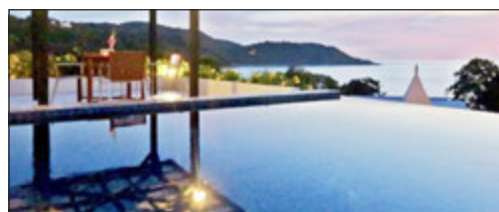
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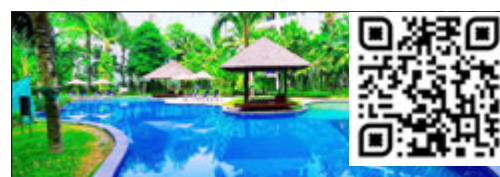
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# Ricciardo's redemption day

## FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato  
michael@boxofneutrals.com

A fresh twist in the tense title tussle wasn't enough to overshadow a drought-breaking win for Daniel Ricciardo and McLaren on a memorably afternoon in Monza last Sunday (Sept 12).

It's not often Daniel Ricciardo is lost for words, but for a moment in Monza the gravity of the situation grabbed the 32-year-old Australian.

Basking in afternoon Lombardian sun and soaked in champagne, the meaningfulness of his unlikely Italian Grand Prix victory began to sink in.

Only the staunchest McLaren fans would have bet on their team winning a grand prix in regular conditions this season, and only the most wildly optimistic among them would have put their money on a one-two finish.

Before the chequered flag fell in Italy McLaren hadn't won a race in almost nine years, and its last victory in one-two formation was more than 11 seasons ago, when Lewis Hamilton led Jenson Button to the flag in Canada in 2010.

In the interim the iconic team has endured the nadir of its 55-year history. It plummeted to second-last



Ricciardo celebrates with his team after winning the Italian Grand Prix at Monza last Sunday (Sept 12). Photo: AFP

in the title standings twice in three seasons after the sweeping regulation changes of 2014, and only after an internal cleanout and restructuring could it recover to a distant third in the standings last year.

### DARE TO DREAM

Yet in Italy it wound back the clock. The low-downforce, high-traction circuit demands brought the car closer to the front, and Ricciardo and teammate Lando Norris made the most of the Saturday sprint

race to position themselves behind only Max Verstappen on the grand prix grid.

McLaren was daring to dream.

Though even those McLaren fans who could see a route to victory were unlikely to have picked Ricciardo as the standard bearer. The star signing had been thoroughly outclassed by 21-year-old Norris, and though he'd been showing signs of recovery since returning from the August break, his struggles to adjust to his new machinery would

surely cost him in the race.

But it was Ricciardo who was starting on the front row, and a rocketing start got him into the lead.

He held Verstappen at bay for the first half of the race, and a perfectly timed pit stop was set to keep him ahead for a fight to the finish – until a slow tyre change put the Dutchman on a collision course with Lewis Hamilton, taking them both out of the race in a turn-one smash.

Managing the safety restart and the gap to Norris behind him

was the story of the second half of the race, and a bonus point for the fastest lap on the final tour put an exclamation point on his mastery of Monza.

His primal scream over team radio in celebration was instinctive, but so too was his emotion after the podium – joyous but pensive as he absorbed the significance of his first win in three years for himself and for his new team.

"I don't think it's actually sunk in yet," he said on his official website. "It's probably the first time I've been overwhelmed by winning. It's pretty rare for me to be lost for words – maybe this is the first time!"

"It's been over three years, and no-one would have predicted this to happen, particularly after the first half of this year and how things have gone for me.

"It's been at times the most challenging year for me. I've not shied away from that – if anything I've enjoyed the adversity and the feeling I've had internally because it's kind of made me understand who I am a bit more as a person and as a competitor."

There will be time to dissect the meaning of the Italian Grand Prix for the accelerating title fight, but for now the week belongs to Daniel Ricciardo, for whom the sport will hope his eighth win is the first of many in his renaissance.

Phuket News

## English Premier League Predictions

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

## Queen leads congratulations for Raducanu

### TENNIS

EMMA RADUCANU'S extraordinary US Open triumph last Saturday (Sept 11) led to an explosion of joy in Britain, with Queen Elizabeth II leading the celebrations as the 18-year-old qualifier made tennis history in New York.

Raducanu beat 19-year-old Canadian Leylah Fernandez 6-4 6-3 to become Britain's first women's Grand Slam singles champion since Virginia Wade at Wimbledon in 1977, and the first player to win a major after coming through a qualifying tournament.

"I send my congratulations to you on your success," the Queen said. "It is a remarkable achievement at such a young age, and is testament to your hard work and dedication."

The Queen's letter gave the teenager an indication just how widespread the acclaim for her incredible triumph has been in Britain.

Admitting she was honoured to receive contact from the Queen, Raducanu told the



Emma Raducanu became the first qualifier to win a major when she won the US Open. Photo: AFP

BBC: "It meant everything to get a message from Her Majesty. I can't believe it. I'm maybe going to frame that letter."

Social media caught fire after Raducanu sealed the win with an ace with tennis great Martina Navratilova Prime Minister Boris Johnson, F1 star Lewis Hamilton footballer Marcus Rashford among many sending congratulations.

Former England footballer Gary Lineker broke off from presenting the Premier League highlights programme "Match of the Day" on BBC TV to post: "First time in my life I've ever tweeted whilst on air but my goodness what a perfor-

mance, what a triumph, what an amazing young woman."

Australian Grand Slam winner Pat Cash told BBC radio that a qualifier winning a major is "something I never could have believed would happen. It's mind boggling."

In China, Tencent published an article with pictures of Raducanu visiting China as a child.

"An ethnic Chinese won the US Open" it trumpeted. "She claimed that her motivation (or power) comes from her Chinese mother!"

Raducanu's only previous Slam appearance, at Wimbledon in July, ended when she pulled out of her fourth-round match with breathing difficulties. AFP



# Ronaldo proves his class on triumphant Utd return

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Cristiano Ronaldo admitted his “unbelievable” return to Manchester United had exceeded his expectations as the Portugal star shrugged off his nerves to score twice in last Saturday’s (Sept 11) 4-1 win against Newcastle.

Ronaldo returned to United in a blockbuster move from Juventus last month, 12 years after leaving Old Trafford to join Real Madrid.

The 36-year-old marked his second United debut in style with a goal in each half in front of 76,000 adoring fans.

Ronaldo's double was followed by goals from Bruno Fernandes and Jesse Lingard as United moved to the top of the Premier League.

It was an even better return than Ronaldo imagined during his anxious wait to pull on the famous United number seven shirt again.

“I didn’t expect to score two goals. I expect one but not two. I have to appreciate



Ronaldo scores his and United's second goal in the 4-1 win against Newcastle last Saturday (Sept 11). Photo: AFP

the fans and what they did to me today. I feel so proud for that,” he told BBC Sport.

“Of course I am happy to score goals, I am not going to deny that but the most important thing is the team and the team played good.

“It is unbelievable. When I started the game I was so nervous, I swear. I was thinking last night that I wanted to play good and show I was still capable of helping the team. I did not expect that they would

sing my name all game. The reception is incredible but I am here to win games and help the team.

Away from United for over a decade as he established himself as one of the all-time greats during his spells with Real Madrid and Juventus, Ronaldo said he always retained a kinship with English football.

“This club is unbelievable and I am so proud. I am going to give everything to make

them proud of me,” he said.

“Everyone knows the football in England is different than in any part of the world and to be honest it is the most special one. I arrived here at 18 and they treated me unbelievably and that is why I am back.”

The five-time Ballon d’Or winner lifted three Premier League titles and one Champions League during his six years with United in the Alex Ferguson era.

Now playing for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer – his former United colleague – Ronaldo believes his team can challenge for their first English title since 2013.

Solskjaer revealed Ronaldo gave a speech to his new teammates on the eve of the game and the Portugal striker said: “Everyone has to do his job. We have a fantastic team, a young team, with a fantastic coach but we have to build up confidence.

“The team needs to be mature if we want to win the league and the Champions League but we are in a good way and I am here to help the team.”



Image: Phuket Yacht Club

## PYC launches new sailing event

### SAILING

THE PHUKET YACHT CLUB (PYC) has confirmed a new event on the annual PYC sailing calendar to honour their previous commodore Mark Horwood.

The inaugural ‘Mark Horwood Classic Rally’ is being held in Marks’ memory on Sept 26, starting at 12 noon from Chalong Bay with an invitation extended to all yachts and power vessels to participate.

A gentleman’s sail and power-boat charity rally, the race will start adjacent to PYC then head around Koh Bon to port and return. Pending weather conditions a shortened course option may be selected to a buoy laid adjacent to Mark’s old Latitude 8 workshop. Details will be confirmed on the day.

The occasion is in partnership with the charity organisation One Phuket who have

been providing assistance to those in need across the island during the COVID-19 pandemic by delivering food parcels and essential items. One Phuket have supported several sports-orientated fund raising events on the island recently such as Mark Gillett’s one-day marathon run from Promthep Cape to Sarasin Bridge and John Bennett’s recent Tour de Phuket.

There will be a complimentary BBQ supper for participants, supported by the team at ‘The Really Good Deli’. There will also be a complimentary carton of beer for the first three boat owners or crew presenting their PYC membership card on Sunday morning at the restaurant.

PYC will match each entry fee received, all of which will be donated to One Phuket.

Boat entry is B500. To register for the event visit the PYC website [phuketyachtclub.com](http://phuketyachtclub.com).

The Phuket News

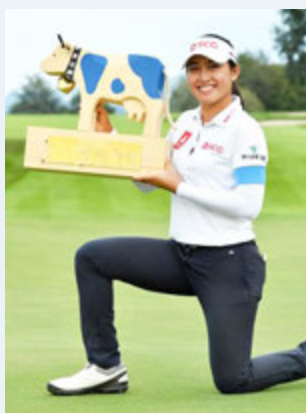
## Atthaya’s profile continues to rise

### GOLF

Continued from page 16

Donaldson birdied the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> to complete a 66 and join Kiradech in top spot before Horschel birdied the last to edge in front.

Canter was unable to find a birdie on the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> to force a play-off, the 31-year-old thinning a chip from just short of the green on the 17<sup>th</sup> and narrowly missing from 15 feet on the last.



Atthaya Thitikul poses with the trophy after winning the Swiss Ladies Open. Photo: Bangkok Post

**TEENAGE KICKS** Meanwhile, Atthaya claimed her second victory of the 2021 LET season after a thrilling final round at Golfpark Holzhausern in Switzerland, netting €30,000 (approx B1.16mn) in prize money in the process.

The Ratchaburi native shot a successive six-under-par 66 on the third and final round for 16-under 200 to beat Norway’s Marianne Skarpnord, who hit a 68, by one stroke.

The 18-year-old, who won the Czech Ladies Open in June, sat four strokes off the lead after the second

round but made an excellent start to her final round.

Four birdies on the front nine propelled Atthaya to the summit of the leaderboard, as she made the turn in 31.

The Thai star was playing alongside Skarpnord, who pushed the teenager all the way with the duo tied for the lead after 15 holes.

But it was back-to-back birdies on 16 and 17 that ensured Atthaya set the clubhouse lead of 16-under 200, and no one was able to catch her as she secured her fourth LET title.

“I hit pretty good shots out there and I gave myself

a lot of chances to make birdies. I rolled the putts really well today and was making a lot of them,” said the 2021 Race to Costa del Sol leader.

“I worked really hard last year with my coach, and I think all the results tell me that it is paying off. I’m so happy to get another win.”

In July, Atthaya finished fifth at the Evian Championship for her best ever result at a major event.

She finished second at the LPGA Thailand in May and was joint second at the Women’s Scottish Open last month.

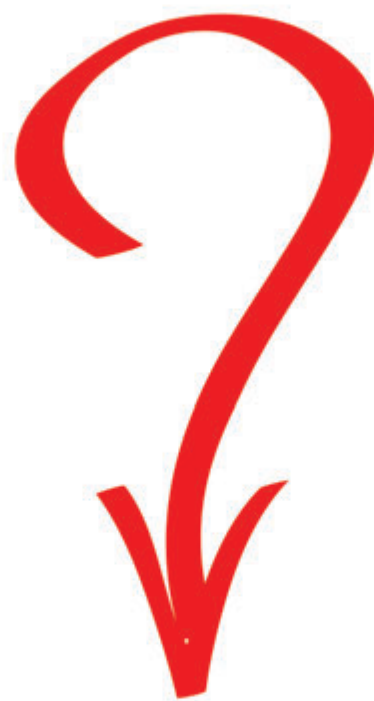
In the 2021 Race to Costa del Sol, Atthaya’s second win of the season means she extends her advantage at the top of standings, and now has 2,887.46 points from 13 tournaments.

Australia’s Stephanie Kyriacou is second (1,394.35) while Finland’s Sanna Nuutinen is third (1,377.27), while Skarpnord moved up to fourth (1,145.86) after her runner-up finish.

The Phuket News  
(Additional reporting by the Bangkok Post)



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# Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



Two goal Ron announces his return > p15



The Thailand PGA Tour event started on Monday (Sept 13). Photo: Thailand PGA

## GOLF

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket is to host eight major pro golf tournament events, including installments of the Thailand PGA Tour and the Singha All Thailand Championship 2021, with prize money totalling more than B12 million.

The events will be played over four weeks under the 'Sandbox Swing' project to help boost tourism to the island, Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn explained at a press launch for the project held at the Blue Canyon Country Club in Phuket last Friday (Sept 10).

The pro golf tournament bonanza will comprise eight

major golf events, with the main four comprising two Thailand PGA Tour events and a tour round of the Singha All Thailand Championship.

The first of the four major tournaments is the Thailand PGA Tour event where B3.25mn of prize money will be contested. Play began on Monday (Sept 13) at the Blue Canyon Country Club Lake Course and is scheduled to conclude on Sunday (Sept 19).

The second will be the All Thailand Golf Tour of the Singha All Thailand Championship to be played on the Blue Canyon Country Club Canyon Course on Sept 20-26 for a total prize money of B3mn.

The third major event will be the second Thailand PGA Tour event to be played in Phuket over the four weeks,

played on the Blue Canyon Country Club Lake Course on Sept 27 – Oct 3 for a total prize money of B3.25mn

The fourth major event, the All Thailand Golf Tour as part of the Singha Laguna Phuket Open 2021, will be played on the Laguna Golf Phuket course on Oct 4-10 for prize money totaling B3mn.

Already confirmed to play at the major events are leading Thai golfers Kwanchai Tan-nil (Champion, Singha All Thailand Championship 2019), Rawat Kaewsiribundit (Singha All Thailand Championship 2017), Pawin Ingkhapradit (Champion, Singha Laguna Phuket Open 2020), Chana-chok Dechpiratanamongkol (Champion, Singha Laguna Phuket Open 2017), Waran Rattanapaiboonkit (Champion,

Singha Laguna Phuket Open 2018) along with Panupon Pit-tayarat and Phum Saksansilp.

Other smaller events with B1mn total prize money will also be played at the courses over the four weeks, including the Singha- SAT Phuket Classic 2021 and the Singha-SAT Blue Canyon Championship 2021, both offering total prize money of B2mn.

"The tournament events will be played at the Blue Canyon Country Club and Laguna Golf Phuket, with the hope to stimulate the economy and build confidence in attracting tourists to the country this September," Mr Phiphat said.

Joining Mr Phiphat at the high-powered press launch were Professional Golf Association of Thailand President Methee Suthat Na Ayutthaya,

Governor of the Sports Authority of Thailand Kongsak Yodmanee; Supranee Guptasa of the National Sports Development Fund and Thanet Petchsuwan, Deputy Governor for Marketing Communication Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

Also present were Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong; Paul Wilson, Senior Vice President and Group Director of Laguna Phuket; Praphan Asava-aree, Chairman of the Board Blue Canyon Country Club; along with Methee Suthat Na Ayutthaya, President of the Professional Golf Association of Thailand; Chakphong Thongyai, Executive Chairman of the All Thailand Golf Tour and its Tournament Director Chitisak Tamprasert.

Vice Governor Pichet noted that the slew of major tournaments was in line with the national strategy to develop "sports potential" throughout the country, and to make people aware of the benefits of sports and sporting activities.

"Increasing opportunities for everyone to play sports, including by holding major sporting events in the region, provides another way to stimulate the province's economy," Vice Governor Pichet said.

"This concept is in line with Phuket's mission to promote, support and create trends for people in terms of exercising, playing sports and participating in various sports activities, especially golf, which has an impact on the economy very much," he added.

## Double delight for Thai golfers in Europe

### GOLF

LAST WEEKEND WAS ONE of double delight for Thailand as Kiradech Aphibarnrat and Atthaya Thitikul both performed admirably at their respective European tournaments.

Atthaya won her fourth Ladies European Tour (LET) title at the VP Bank Swiss Ladies Open on Saturday (Sept 11) and Kiradech finished joint second at the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth,

England on Sunday (Sept 12).

Despite being one of the lowest-ranked participants, Kiradech withstood the pressure of a tense final day to register a superb closing score of 64 and finish on -18 to tie for second place. His performance lifted his world ranking from 516 to 197 and secured him a purse of €492,898 (B19 million).

"Thank you for all your support," Kiradech said on his Facebook page after the tournament. "I tried my best to do everything that should be done and even if I

ended up missing hole 17 I have no regrets at all. I am very satisfied with my form right now and look forward to future opportunities. Thank you again to everyone who cheered for me!"

Kiradech, who tied with Welshman Jamie Donaldson and England's Laurie Canter for second place, had been the first to set the clubhouse target after covering his first 16 holes in nine under par, only to bogey the 17<sup>th</sup> after almost hitting his second shot out of bounds.

Billy Horschel won the tournament, becoming only the second American after Arnold Palmer to lift the trophy.

Horschel hit seven birdies to finish 19 under par, putting him one shot ahead of Canter, Donaldson and Kiradech on the final leaderboard.

The 34-year-old follows the legendary Palmer as an American winner of the European Tour's flagship event, with his compatriot claiming the silverware at Royal St George's in 1975.

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Kiradech Aphibarnrat on the 18<sup>th</sup> green during Day 4 of the PGA Championship at Wentworth last Sunday (Sept 12). Photo: AFP