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## ARE WE READY?



A lone lifeguard keeps watch over an empty Patong Beach. Photo: Patong Surf Life Saving

## LOCAL TOURISM FIGURES CONFIDENT PHUKET READY TO WELCOME FOREIGN TOURISTS

**The Phuket News**  
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Leading local tourism figures are confident that Phuket's tourism industry is ready to welcome what few tourists will start arriving after the Phuket Tourism Sandbox model launches on July 1, allowing vaccinated foreign tourists onto Phuket without observing any mandatory quarantine other than having to remain on the island.

Following reports that Phuket will not be ready to reopen on July 1, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha went online last Sunday (June 13) and posted confirmation on his own Facebook page that July 1 will go ahead.

PM Prayut stressed that the

'Phuket Sandbox' project was initiated in line with his guidelines to slowly reopen the country to vaccinated foreign tourists to revive tourism.

The PM pointed out that the Centre for Economic Situation Administration (CESA), which he chairs, had already approved the project. However, he also noted that the Sandbox model had yet to be approved by the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) and the Cabinet, which at last report was expected to pass final judgement on the July 1 reopening next Tuesday (June 22).

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Yuthasak Supasorn was in Phuket in person last Saturday (June 12) to lead a workshop with leading local tourism figures to go

over the Sandbox requirements for allowing foreign visitors onto the island.

Mr Yuthasak noted that many tour operators, and governments, were waiting for final confirmation of the requirements of the Sandbox policy by publication in the Royal Gazette, which should be announced in the final week of June to meet the scheme timeline.

Mr Yuthasak said the TAT acknowledged there was growing concern and discontent among the private sector about the additional measures for tourist destinations to reopen, which could discourage visitors in the initial stages (see page 4).

He insisted the tighter screening measures were necessary as the Public

Health Ministry had stressed that no tourist should be infected while roaming the island.

"We should accept an influx of tourists is unlikely in the third quarter. The Sandbox scheme was established as a test run, which means it is a gradual process where we determine the best practices to allow other destinations to follow suit," Mr Yuthasak said.

Kongsak Khoopongsakorn, President of the Thai Hotels Association Southern chapter, told *The Phuket News*, "Phuket is very ready, in terms of both business operators and preparation. As the Phuket Governor said, we need three levels of being ready: Phuket, Thailand, and the world."

"Right now, Phuket is ready..."

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## News



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# Officials silent on COVID deaths

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At the time this article went to print, Phuket officials had yet to comment publicly on the three most recent deaths attributed to COVID-19 on the island.

As of Monday (June 14), Phuket had suffered five COVID-19 related deaths since Apr 3, most recently last Saturday (June 12) – the fourth COVID death on the island in two weeks.

However, as with the previous two COVID deaths in Phuket, on June 2 and last Friday (June 11), no details of the latest victim's death have been provided.

Officials have reported that Phuket's second death from COVID in the ongoing outbreak was an 86-year-old Thai woman who had a hyperlipidemia and hypertension on June 1. The woman's death sparked a mass testing frenzy at the major fresh markets in Phuket Town, including the forced seven-day closure of the fresh market on Ong Sim Phai Rd after four workers there tested



Dr Kusak on June 2 explains Phuket's second COVID death, but since then the daily reports have stopped. Screenshot: PR Phuket

positive for the virus.

The first death attributed to COVID infection recorded since Apr 3 was that of a 71-year-old man who was already suffering from emphysema on May 11.

## PATIENT COUNT FALLS

Phuket on Monday recorded four new cases of COVID infection on the island while the number of COVID patients still under medical care had fallen dramatically.

According to the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) daily report for Monday (June 14),

the four new cases brought the total number of people infected on the island since Apr 3 to 681.

The 681 cases did not include six people infected outside Phuket but brought to the island for treatment and one foreigner who tested positive on his 13<sup>th</sup> day stay in local quarantine on the island. As with the most recent deaths, no details have been released about the foreigner contracting COVID-19 while in local quarantine.

Of the 681 cases recognised since Apr 3, 658 had been released from hospital care while 25 patients

remained under medical care and supervision, down from 32 reported as still under care two days earlier, on Saturday (June 12), the PPHO reported on Monday.

Of note, the PPHO recorded zero new cases of COVID infection on the island on both Saturday and Sunday last weekend (June 12-13).

## MASS VACCINATIONS

The Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) has reported that as of last Sunday (June 13) 73% of the target 466,587 people in Phuket to be vaccinated have received at least one vaccination injection.

The report for last Sunday marked that 340,483 had received one vaccination injection and that 139,507 people in Phuket had received two vaccination injections.

Of note, while the PR Phuket report marked that the target is for 466,587 people in Phuket to be vaccinated in order to achieve herd immunity by vaccinating 70% of the island's full population, only 397,971 so far have registered to receive a

state-provided vaccination under the national mass-vaccination campaign.

The latest stage of the mass-vaccination campaign in Phuket got underway last week, with officials aiming to vaccinate 24,000 people who are older than 60 years old and those with risk medical conditions by administering the first doses of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to be deployed in Phuket from June 7-9.

Official reports confirmed that the AstraZeneca vaccinations were underway, but no update was reported at its conclusion confirming how many of the special risk groups had been vaccinated.

Unlike the past month of daily reports about the mass-vaccination campaign in Phuket, local officials have now fallen silent about the campaign. As of Monday, there had been no comment from local officials as to how they expect to vaccinate the minimum 70% required in order to technically achieve herd immunity by July 1 – a factor that has always been a requirement for the island to reopen under the Phuket Tourism Sandbox scheme from July 1.



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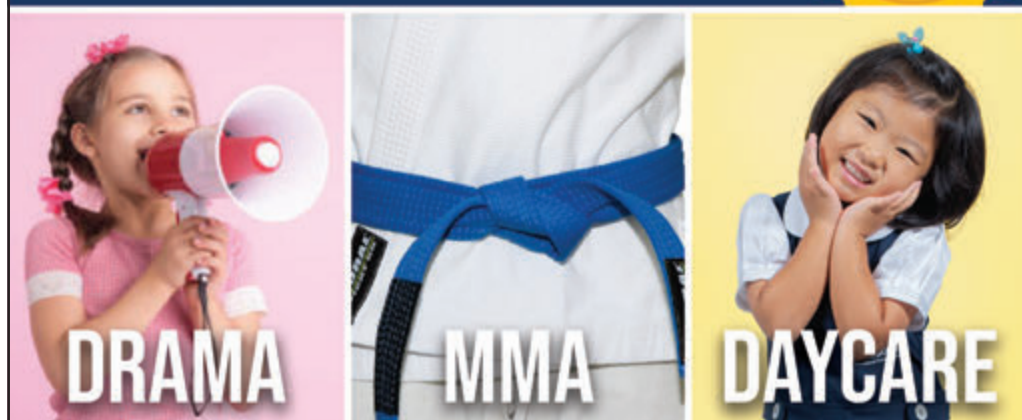
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## Tourism figures 'Sandbox' confident

Continued from page 1

...because our people are vaccinated, and we have enough or even more than enough for tourism industry businesses that are opening to welcome 120,000 tourists in the third quarter of this year.

"Is Thailand ready? We are speeding up to make agreements and confirm conditions on everything, which needs to be approved by the CCSA as soon as possible."

However, Mr Kongsak noted, "If the measures come to be very strict, then tourism cannot move on, and tourists will not come. If the measures come to be not strict, we may have a fourth and subsequent outbreaks, and tourists will not come."

"So every ministry needs to take this all in together and come up with the decision, which must be the most natural. No political issues involved," he said.

"For the world level, we cannot control anything, as it is all about international relations policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Tourism and Sports should have made agreements to have travel bubbles with countries, but we have not seen anything," he added.



TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn at the 'Phuket Tourism Sandbox' workshop in Phuket last Saturday (June 12). Photo: TAT

Phuket already has enough rooms at hotels to accommodate the positive projected number of tourists, Mr Kongsak said.

"We have about 300 hotels open right now," he said.

Tested on whether this will be enough, Mr Kongsak explained that the TAT had projected some 120,000 tourists to come in the first three months after July 1, giving an average demand of 40,000 visitors per month.

"That averages to about 1,000 people per day. Tourists on average stay for 5.5 nights, which gives a demand of 5,000-6,000 room nights. Most tourists stay two people to one room, so we need about 3,000 hotel rooms per day. We have 15,000 rooms, so it is more than enough for the coming tourists," he said.

"For other businesses in the tourism industry, we still have more than enough. For example, we have 14,000 vans registered to serve tourists, but right now we have 9,000. I think that is enough. As for buses, they may not be used at this time, as we do not have tour groups," he added.

Mr Kongsak cautioned operators from taking government-supported loans in order to open if the demand is not yet there to support their businesses.

Thanusak Phungdet, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, agreed. "I would love to advise hotel operators who are not yet ready to open, do not rush to reopen your hotels. Monitor the situation in July first, then decide to make any movement," he said.

"We do not expect a high number of tourists coming in the first couple weeks. I think we will have about 1,000 tourists. In this first month, I think the tourists may be those who work with the TAT," Mr Thanusak said.

"I will be happy to see more bookings after the official announcement [of the entry conditions]. I do expect to see more tourists in August and September," he added.

# Pubs, bars closed for July 1

## Patong Mayor confirms entertainment venues to stay shuttered

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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Patong Mayor Chalerm-sak Maneesri has confirmed that pubs, bars and other entertainment venues across Phuket will be closed for the July 1 reopening of the island to receiving vaccinated international tourists.

“For the entertainment venues in Phuket, from a meeting of [Phuket] officials, they altogether agreed to keep the venues closed in the first period of July, as we had a cluster from that kind of venue.

“Phuket Governor and the TAT Governor have not allowed them to open,” Mayor Chalerm-sak told *The Phuket News* last Thursday (June 10).

Mayor Chalerm-sak, who took office only on Apr 28, plainly admitted the current economic situation in what was once Phuket’s busiest tourism town.

“The economic situation in Patong is very bad right now,” he said.

Mayor Chalerm-sak said that he was to meet representatives from hotels in Patong “to



Patong Mayor Chalerm-sak Maneesri confirmed the extended closure on June 10. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

share their problems and what they want the municipality [to do] to help to welcome tourists”.

“So far to support the Phuket Sandbox, our staff have gone out and knocked on people’s doors and encouraged them to register and get vaccinated in order to complete vaccinations of 70% of the people on the island. I have

gone to facilitate the vaccination at Jungceylon shopping mall every day,” he said.

“We will send staff to hotels and other places to check whether staff at those places are vaccinated or not, to ensure that not only that they are kept safe, but also that tourists are kept safe,” he said.

“For entertainment venues, from the meeting with Phuket

Governor and TAT Governor, the venues will remain closed for the first period of Phuket Sandbox because recently there has been a cluster from those types of establishments,” he confirmed.

“To develop Patong, I will try to finish the resurfacing of the beachfront road before the new year, as after we had the electricity cables [and com-

munications cables] installed under the ground, the road was damaged a lot,” Mayor Chalerm-sak said.

“I will also make the view of the beach better, by clearing the signs and cleaning up the beach. Right now, it is monsoon season, we will have a lot of marine trash wash ashore,” he added.

“I will develop environmental tourism and start by creating a footpath from the Seaview Patong Hotel [at the southern end of Patong Beach] to Tri Trang Beach and make the area into a botanic garden. The request to use the land has been already filed with the national government,” Mayor Chalerm-sak said.

“Additionally, I will try my best to help vendors and business operators by negotiating for discounts on ground rents, so they can keep their business going,” he added.

Operators of entertainment venues in Patong on May 31 filed a formal request for Phuket provincial officials to allow their businesses to reopen to prepare for return of international tourists from July

1 under the ‘Phuket Tourism Sandbox’ campaign.

Weerawit Kreuasombat, President of Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA), filed the formal request addressed to the Phuket Governor.

“We will set up checking points at the entrances to Bangla Rd. Staff must be vaccinated. If they are not vaccinated, they will not be allowed to work,” he said.

“For now, operators have bought thermometers to be used in front of their venues, and more than 90% of staff working in entertainment venues in Patong have been vaccinated,” Mr Weerawit said.

“We all are pleased to co-operate with the Phuket Public Health Office [PPHO] for any other appropriate measures,” he urged.

All pubs and bars in Phuket have been ordered closed since Apr 9 when Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw issued their closure ahead of the Songkran holidays

Under the latest order, they are to remain closed until further notice.

## Wife blames AstraZeneca shot for husband’s death

MEDICAL STAFF AT VACHIRA Phuket Hospital have confirmed that a 60-year-old Krabi man died from hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) shortly after receiving the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

Pruktichai Maksin, a lawyer, received the injection at Krabi Hospital Tuesday last week (June 8) and died two days later (Thursday, June 10).

Medical staff explained that the wall of Mr Pruktichai’s heart had thickened due to high blood pressure which in turn led to his death.

Mr Pruktichai’s wife, 55-year-old Rattana Klubching, believes that his death was a direct result of the vaccination as he was a fit and healthy man.

Ms Rattana explained that her husband did not exhibit any unusual symptoms or reactions in the 30-minute period immediately after receiving the vaccine.

However, around 9pm the following day her husband complained of chest pains and was taken to Krabi Hospital where doctors examined him, took x-rays and administered medication to help dissolve blood clots.

Mr Pruktichai was kept in hospital overnight for observation and around 11am the following morning suffered a heart attack.

Medical staff tried to revive him but were unsuccessful and he was pronounced dead shortly after. His body was taken to



Rattana Klubching believes that her husband’s death was a direct result of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccination he received. Photo: MCOT

Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town for an autopsy.

“I believe that my husband’s death is because of the vaccine, as before this, he was healthy and strong,” said Ms Rattana.

“Right now, I am collecting documents from the hospital in order to file for compensation with the National Health Security Office [NHSO],” she added.

Mr Pruktichai’s younger brother, Chamlong Maksin, explained that autopsy staff told him that the vaccine injection may have induced an irregular heartbeat in his brother and increased his blood pressure.

“I am waiting for the results of the examination from Krabi Hospital before discussing with relatives on how to proceed,” Mr Chamlong said.

Mr Pruktichai’s body was handed over to relatives to allow them hold his funeral at Wat Nai Chong in Thab Prik, Krabi, last Friday (June 11). *The Phuket News*

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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## TAT moves to clarify July 1 conditions

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

An updated release by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has clarified several key aspects about the conditions of entry for vaccinated tourists under the 'Phuket Tourism Sandbox' scheme from July 1, but openly identified details yet to be confirmed for many critical aspects affecting tourists' stays on the island.

The release, issued last Wednesday (June 9) and updated Monday (June 14), now notes that seven airlines have announced direct flights to Phuket: THAI, Emirates, Qatar Airways, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, El Al, Emirates and Singapore Airlines. Airlines removed from the June 9 posting of the information page include Hongkong Airlines, EVA Air, Korean Air, Jinair and KLM.

The notice on June 9 also formally recognised that international travellers who have received the Thai FDA-approved vaccines AstraZeneca, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, Sino-vac Biotech and Sinopharm will be allowed to enter Phuket. However, as of Monday the notice only explained that vaccines approved by the Thai



Image: TAT

Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) or approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO) would be accepted, but no longer named which vaccines they were.

Arrivals must be vaccinated more than 14 days to one year before entering Phuket, and proof of vaccination must be submitted when applying for a Certificate of Entry (COE), the release noted.

Children under 6 years of age must travel only with their parents or guardians who have been vaccinated. In the case the parents or guardians are found to have COVID-19, the children are to be placed in isolation for 14 days, the release added.

Regarding which countries tourists will be allowed to arrive from, the release noted that the Phuket Sandbox is applicable only for fully vaccinated international travellers from countries/regions with a low to medium risk of SAR-CoV-2 virus as announced and constantly updated by the MoPH.

"The list will be available soon," said the release.

"High-risk countries are not allowed entry at this stage," it added.

Under the section "Visa & Certificate of Entry", the TAT noted, "Every traveller must obtain a Certificate of Entry (COE) at <https://coethailand.mfa.go.th/>. Check the website to see

the required documents."

"Embassy/Consulate-General takes 3 working days to process the application," it said.

"International travellers must have insurance covering treatment and medical expenses including those related to COVID-19 with a minimum coverage of US\$100,000. The insurance must cover the total duration of stay in Thailand," the TAT confirmed.

It is mandatory to book a 'SHA Plus' hotel for the first 14 nights in Phuket. "Residing in a private residence is not allowed on the first 14 nights for COVID-19 control purposes," the TAT confirmed.

However, there is no requirement that tourists must stay all 14 of their first days on the island at the one hotel.

Bookings must be prepaid, it added.

However, oddly contradicting the current Phuket Provincial Government policy for no members outside a family attending the same residence for any gathering, including sharing meals, in posing its own question, "Can a 2<sup>nd</sup> guest who is already resident in Thailand join a guest who has arrived 'internationally' into a 'SHA Plus' hotel?", the TAT said, "Yes, providing the guest follows all rules stipulated for Thais and expats in Thailand."

## Ambulance driver, nurses escape serious injury in bypass accident

AN AMBULANCE DRIVER and two nurses escaped with only minor injuries after the vehicle hit a light pole and slammed into a tree on the central reservation while driving northbound on the bypass road early Monday morning (June 14).

The ambulance was not carrying any patients at the time of the accident.

Lt Col Chaliaw Thaihu of the Phuket City Police was called to the scene, in front of the Premium Outlet store, at about 1:30am.

Police together with Kuso-lharm rescue workers arrived to see the Thalang Hospital ambulance with massive damage still wrapped around the tree.

The driver suffered only a minor injury to his forehead and the nurses suffered only minor scratches to their bodies. All three were taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town for treatment.

The ambulance driver, whose name has not been released, told police that they



The accident occurred on the bypass road just before 1:30am. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

were returning to Thalang Hospital after delivering a patient to Vachira Phuket Hospital.

The driver said that heavy rain had made the road slippery and strong winds had made the ambulance unsteady. He lost control of the ambulance, hit the light pole and slammed into the tree.

The ambulance has been taken to Phuket City Police Station, and police said they were to check CCTV footage from cameras along the road to confirm the cause of the accident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Ex-prosecutors face bribe charge in long-awaited Phuket case

TWO FORMER PUBLIC PROSECUTORS based in Phuket have been indicted in connection with demanding a bribe from a private company accused of encroaching on a national park, according to the Office of the Attorney-General (OAG).

The OAG said in a statement that the attorney-general had decided to indict prosecutors Thamma Sornchai and Wanchat Choonhathanom, the *Bangkok Post* reported last Friday (June 11).

The news follows the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) announcing in December that the agency was moving to have two former Phuket Public Prosecutors charged for corruption for allegedly demanding money from a defendant in order to drop charges of encroaching on state land.

Thamma was accused of demanding a bribe from a company run by a foreign national, sought for prosecution for encroaching on and grabbing land in Sirinart National Park in Thalang district of Phuket. The case reached the prosecutor in 2019, noted the *Bangkok Post* report today.

The prosecutors allegedly sought a bribe worth B10 million between them, with Wanchat acting as Thamma's accomplice.

According to the OAG, the attorney-general has assigned the provincial



Wanchat Choonhathanom is one of two former public prosecutors at the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office facing corruption charges. Photo: PR Phuket / file

prosecutor's office to take legal action against the pair. The alleged bribe was demanded with a promise to the company that the case would be dropped and the provincial governor would not seek to reverse the decision.

A complaint was later raised against the prosecutors, prompting the OAG to order a probe which ruled the allegation had grounds. A formal investigation was then set up while at the same time the NACC launched a separate probe into the matter.

According to the OAG, the prosecutor's investigation confirmed the alleged bribery demand had taken place and ordered one prosecutor to be dismissed and the other transferred from Phuket. It is understood that Thamma had lost his job and Wanchat faced a transfer.

Later, the NACC probe also found grounds for the allegation and recommended the OAG indict the pair. *Bangkok Post*

# Phuket Town Mayor takes office, outlines policies

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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**S**aroj Angkanapilas has been installed as the new Mayor of Phuket City and held his inaugural meeting to take office.

Speaking at the main conference chamber at the Phuket City Municipality main office in Phuket Town last Thursday (June 10), Mayor Saroj broadly outlined his policies for the development of Phuket City Municipality, pushing towards a “special model” for the country to follow.

In outlining nine major policies his administration will follow during his four-year-term, Mayor Saroj said the contact and feedback from the people was the top concern.

The municipality will improve the 24-hour complaints hotline, organise forums to hear opinions from all segments of the community and actively invite people to take part in submitting proposals to the government for consideration.

Improving education and



**New Phuket City Mayor Saroj Angkanapilas outlined his policies at a Phuket City Council meeting last Thursday (June 10). Photo: Phuket City Municipality**

supporting children with disabilities and the underprivileged to receive equitable education were also high on his agenda, including developing educational institutions in terms of quality and efficiency, he said.

Improving civic and community areas, such as by creating a music-performance area at Queen Sirikit Park and developing public areas at Khao Rang Park and Suan Luang Rama IX Park to become “beautiful as a tourist attraction and exercise place”, with emphasis on sustainable

waste management, as well as developing a wastewater treatment system to be more efficient, were key objectives, Mr Saroj said.

In terms of local residents safety and security, the municipality will pursue quality of life policies such as promoting “safe cities” under the Pineapple Eyes project and monitoring traffic safety through CCTV.

Public health policies included pushing for the development of a public health service center to provide care for the elderly, as well as

improving care for the disabled and the development of dialysis centres, Mr Saroj said.

Other key issues to be addressed included developing areas in Phuket Town to become tourist attractions, such as by transforming the municipality’s two main fresh markets to become “walking markets” and by developing the beach area at Saphan Hin.

Also key issues were consistent quality tap water supply, public transport, Wi-Fi connectivity, openly dealing with corruption complaints and the sustainable economic development of Phuket Town, he added.

“For the policies presented to the Phuket City Council to be effective and successful requires cooperation from all sectors, to cooperate with each other and develop with the intention of managing the government of Phuket City to be in accordance with the law, rules, regulations, ordinances and policies, and we will adhere to the principles of good governance in accordance with good governance practices,” Mayor Saroj said.

## Beach guards urge monsoon surf safety

LIFEGUARDS ARE URGING people to swim only where red-yellow flags have been posted and lifeguards are on patrol following warnings from the Southern Meteorological Center of heavy weather and intermittent monsoon storms.

Nai Harn chief lifeguard Chula Nontree told *The Phuket News* last Wednesday (June 8), “Today, the sky is still clear, but we have about two-metre-high waves. Please enter the water only in the areas between the yellow-red flags, and follow lifeguards’ suggestions.”

“Right now, we do not have many tourists on weekdays, but the beach is quite crowded on days with good weather. I want every person to keep social distance in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” Mr Chula added.

More strong waves were expected to continue during the annual southwest monsoon, which lasts until about October. Rungrawee Oankhot, Director of the Southern Meteorological Center, West Coast, last week issued a standard weather warning for impending storms during the southwest monsoon.

Wind waves reach up to



**Lifeguards are urging beachgoers to beware strong waves. Photo: Patong Surf Life Saving**

two to three metres, and above three metres in thunderstorm areas, she said.

Meanwhile, the International Surf Lifesaving Association (ISLA) has announced *The Phuket News* as ISLA SE Asia’s ‘Guardian Lifesavers of 2020’.

“Their efforts directly contributed to the training of sixty Ocean Lifeguards on Phuket, and the donation of needed lifesaving equipment, which is still in use to this day. In addition, beaches such as Surin, Bang Tao, and Layan have had continuous qualified lifeguard coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic as a direct result of their efforts, wrote Daren Jenner, Thailand Section Chief, International Surf Lifesaving Association.

*The Phuket News*

## Rescued baby turtles hatch

A TOTAL OF 50 BABY green sea turtles rescued as eggs from a nest being inundated by strong storm-surge waves near Promthep Cape late last month hatched under care at the Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC) on June 10.

The nest was initially discovered on Laem Pai Beach, Rawai, by local resident Plernthana Chartsuk on April 18.

The nest was threatened



**The eggs rescued from the nest started hatching on June 10. Photo: DMCR**

by strong waves surging high up the beach late last month, forcing marine life experts at the PMBC to take the eggs into care.

In total, 83 eggs were

safely recovered from the nest and were taken to the PMBC at Cape Panwa, on Phuket’s east coast. The remaining 25 eggs were no longer in a condition to produce offspring.

PMBC biologists reported that the 50 baby turtles took 53 days to hatch since the nest was found. The remaining 33 eggs were still under close care and expected to hatch soon, they noted.

*Eakkapop Thongtub*

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# Property recovery will take time

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket's property sector is not likely to benefit until later this year from the 'Phuket Sandbox' July 1 reopening of the island to receiving vaccinated international arrivals, but the move will open the door to the island's real estate market to recover in the long term, local property experts have predicted.

"Condominiums and houses, located even in best sale areas, have been affected at every price level," Wichai Wiratkapan, Director of the national Real Estate Information Center (REIC), said during a live teleconference last week.

"If the situation improves, real estate sales may get better after the market slowdown in the first half of this year and the whole of last year," he said.

Overall, 2021 is expected to see a 9.8% increase in the number of new units launched compared with 2020, with the total number of new units launched by the end of 2021 expected to reach about 3,005 units, with a total estimated value of B17.045 billion, Mr Wichai said.



REIC Director Wichai Wiratkapan during the live teleconference last week. Photo: REIC

For the whole of 2021, 1,246 units are expected to be sold, a 5.2% increase on last year.

Sales value total for 2021 is expected to reach B5.402bn, a 0.8% increase on 2020, Mr Wichai predicted.

"At the end of this year 2021, there will be 8,468 units in total left unsold, a 1.5% decrease on the total units left

unsold at the end of 2020," Mr Wichai explained.

The 8,468 units in total left unsold will have an estimated value of B47.775bn, a 9.2% increase in the value of unsold units at the end of 2020, he said.

"For the whole year, we expect 6,374 units will be transferred, that's 19.5% more than in 2020, with the total

value of transfers for 2021 valued at B21.161bn – a 20.9% increase on 2020," Mr Wichai said.

## HOPES AND CONCERNS

Phattanan Pisutwimol, President of the Phuket Real Estate Association (PREA), said that despite the Phuket Sandbox reopening and the mass-

vaccination efforts underway across the island, he still had key concerns.

"The worst-case scenario is that few foreign tourists come while the number of Thais coming also decreases," he said.

Phuket's tourism and property sectors were deeply connected, Mr Phattanan said.

"Phuket's main foreign property customers are Chinese, Indian and Russian. These three countries have not allowed their people to travel abroad, but we expect this opening to be a testing model, because if we do not open we will not have a chance to allow our economy to recover," Mr Phattanan explained.

"In these three months, we must be able to control the spread of infection, and achieve herd immunity," he said.

If those tasks can be accomplished, "I believe that we will have more tourists in the Q4 this year," he said.

"The situation of real estate business in Phuket right now is very bad. If anyone can sell 10% of their units, they are doing very well," Mr Phattanan said bluntly.

"There are many town-

houses left to sell because people do not have income and financial institutions are being strict in lending. Developers need to fight to get customers who are getting loans from banks," he noted.

"Real estate agents that have close relations with banks know who have been approved loans and will approach them. The real estate agents attract customers by offering special conditions, such as lower prices. This situation has intensified the promotional campaigns, which right now is already interesting, such as offering no payments for two years," he added.

"Currently, the market for properties valued at more than B8mn is quite good, as those who have purchasing power think that this might be the last minute for special promotions before the economy improves after the July 1 opening," he noted.

"In general, the real estate business in Phuket needs some time to recover, especially the Thai market, which is not expected to get better until Q3 2022. The market for properties valued cheaper than B3mn will be the first to recover," Mr Phattanan said.



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# Prayut refuses to lay vaccine blame

Bangkok Post

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha refused to lay the blame for recent vaccination cancellations on individuals or state agencies, saying on Monday (June 14) that reports had been muddled by too many sources.

The national vaccination rollout hit turbulence last week after several public and private hospitals postponed inoculations amid a shortage of the COVID-19 vaccine.

"I'm not blaming anyone. Others may not have the same understanding of the issue because information is being passed through too many channels," Gen Prayut said while replying to questions about the stop-start nature of the national vaccination programme in some parts of the country of late.

The prime minister said he has instructed the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) to reiterate his desire to balance current stocks according to demand and urgency.

He also said he wanted to see appointment numbers aligned more closely with the concept of demand so fewer people would have their appointments cancelled or be turned away. He added that he did not expect any more significant hiccups.

"If any such problems still exist, [we will] do some fine-tuning," he said.



Pointing the finger: Amid ongoing criticism, Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul was quick to deflect blame for the haphazard national COVID-19 vaccine rollout. Photo: AFP

The premier reiterated that supplies are received in batches throughout the month, and the amounts are not uniform.

"From now on, the appointments will be organised based on the vaccines that arrive in each batch," he said.

## 'GIVE PEOPLE THE FACTS'

His remarks were made after many hospitals in Bangkok, both privately run and state-owned, announced they had suspended appointments

because they ran out of supplies.

Most of the postponed vaccination appointments were made by senior citizens and people with underlying medical conditions through the Mor Prom ("Doctor Ready") app.

This prompted Youwanush Kongdan, the director of Namarak Hospital, a private 10-bed facility in Bangkok specialising in breast cancer treatment, to take the problem to her Facebook page with some timely suggestions for the Public Health Ministry.

"I am making an appeal to the government that it should give people the facts and communicate with them in a straightforward manner," she said on Sunday (June 13).

"If you have sufficient vaccines, please say so. If you don't have enough vaccines, you also should say so and tell people when the vaccines will come. People will accept that.

"This war [against the coronavirus outbreak] needs a clear policy and quick communications.

"The [public health] minister is the commander-in-chief who sets the policy," she said. "Or is it the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration now?"

The post prompted Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul to give an interview on Channel 3, in which he blamed the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA).

He said the Public Health Ministry had agreed to supply the BMA with one million doses of the vaccine and in less than two weeks 500,000 doses had already been delivered.

"Please don't say the ministry isn't doing anything because it already has distributed all vaccine supplies received from the suppliers to eligible parties as instructed by the CCSA and on time," he said.

Soon after Anutin's interview, the BMA's public relations office posted a statement on its Facebook page saying that the ministry failed to supply vaccines to the

BMA as planned.

It said the BMA was notified by the ministry that 2.5 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine will be provided, and therefore the BMA planned its mass vaccination programme accordingly.

However, the BMA said it only received 350,000 vaccine doses, in addition to the 150,000 Sinovac jabs it had to cover injections from June 7-14.

Out of the total supply of 6.3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines expected to be delivered this month, Bangkok was promised to get 1.16 million doses, while the other 76 provinces will receive 3.22 million doses, said Dr Opas Karnkwinpong, director-general of the Department of Disease Control (DDC).

On Monday, the CCSA held a joint conference with Dr Opas and Bangkok governor Aswin Kwanmuang to explain how the rollout is being managed.

Both reiterated the aim was to procure enough vaccines for at least 70% of the population to have received both doses necessary for immunity by the end of the year.

Dr Opas said that as of June 13, 6.1 million shots had been administered, adding that 17% of the capital's residents have now had their first doses, and they included many key education personnel, public transport workers and subscribers of the social security fund.

## PM insists he will complete term

PRIME MINISTER PRAYUT CHAN-ocha ended speculation about an early general election in bizarre fashion last Monday (June 14).

Gen Prayut asked the military-appointed senators to raise their hands if they did not trust him. None did.

The PM duly told the Senate he intended to complete his four-year term, which ends in 2023.

Gen Prayut had prompted speculation about a House dissolution when he previously instructed the cabinet to speed up implementation of critical projects because the government had only "one year" left to work.

However, on Monday he confirmed he planned to stay on.

"I plan to complete my term, so it should



Prayut is staying put. Photo: AFP

put a stop to the talk [about a snap election]," he said.

He added that he continued to dedicate himself to addressing the people's problems and still faced several lawsuits.

"I never think about myself," he insisted.

"It is all about work, day in and day out... and the more they try to throw me out, the more I'll fight." Bangkok Post

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# The 4Cs for Change

## ON CAMPUS

Manutchaya Maneechote

One day when I was watching TV with my mum, the news about the widespread protests in Thailand came up. It was about the clash between the anti-government protesters and the pro-monarchy supporters. So my mum and I tried to have a discussion about this issue, but we ended up having a clash of our own. My mum loves the monarchy and the government, while I hate the current situation and the violence. We were both opinionated and stubborn, so we ended up arguing with each other. This incident inspired me to write this article.

To me, change is whatever in this world that is different from their original, it could be for the better or worse. The world is constantly changing, and so are the advancement of technology, education and the economy. People are able to easily access any kind of information in this world at any time and anywhere. But if we are not careful, we could fall victim to misinformation or worse, false information. With more information readily available and accessible, we know more, learn more, and think more; people start to think more about their rights and freedom, and other political issues. They speak up and speak out more, but listen less.

I believe that the root of every problem starts out from miscommunication, and the core of miscommunication is when you don't listen to each other. Simply put, if you don't listen, you will not understand. And when you don't understand something, that's when the conflict starts. As was the case between my mum and I, we learned more from the

news but we picked and chose the information differently based on what best fit our beliefs.

Sometimes we think that our beliefs are 100% correct, so we refuse to listen to opinions that are different from ours. Aware of this notion, now when I talk to someone who has a different opinion than mine, I apply the 4Cs strategy:

**Chance:** Give the other person a chance to express his/her opinion.

**Communication:** Listen with an open mind without any prejudice, even if you disagree with his/her opinion. By listening, you could learn more about his/her way of thinking. Just like in a debate, you need to learn what evidence the opposition can present in order to better understand his/her stance.

**Consideration and Cerebration:** Be kind and considerate of people's feelings, but at the same time, analyse and comprehend the information given. This combination enables you to be more respectful toward each other and listen more efficiently.

**Compromise:** If an agreement cannot be reached, both sides need to meet in the middle and accept mutual agreement. You cannot force your opinion onto others.

Now, you may wonder what happened after my disagreement with my mum. I'm sorry to say that she kicked me out of the house. Haha, I'm just kidding! We still live peacefully in the same house and we love each other just as much as before.

This is because we listen to each other's opinion and we respect one another. Although we still have different views, we don't argue about it because we have a common understanding.



Manutchaya Maneechote. Photo: Supitcha Janpeng

Manutchaya Maneechote is a third-year student at PSU Phuket studying International Business China at the Faculty of International Studies. This article was featured in 'The Phuket Collegiate Magazine', the university magazine published by Milla Budiarto at Prince of Songkla University (PSU) Phuket Campus. For more information, visit: <https://www.phuket.psu.ac.th/en/magazine> or to share ideas with Milla email: [magazine@phuket.psu.ac.th](mailto:magazine@phuket.psu.ac.th).



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245.55 Rai (392,880 Sqm) with Beachfront Land for Sale in Khao Lak (Can be Subdivided)

# Into the Fire

On a beach in Phuket, an act of kindness leads British volunteer to life's calling

Daren Jenner

It's 2017 and tourism is near an all-time high in Phuket. The paint on a B5 billion airport expansion is barely dry, and the terminals are teeming with international passengers. Local businesses are booming, and Phuket's west coast beaches are packed with visitors.

As the monsoon season approaches, the island is facing a crisis. Doves of residents and visitors alike have been drowning in Phuket's ocean waters. Snorkeling, swimming and even wading all too often result in serious injury or death. Making matters worse, the provincial government halts funding for Phuket's ocean lifeguards, and the beaches are left unguarded.



An international lifeguard aid organisation, the International Surf Lifesaving Association (ISLA) has been following the situation. Fearing a humanitarian drowning crisis, ISLA president Henry Reyes sends a letter directly to Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha pleading for the return of lifeguards to the island. There is no reply.

Phuket's lifeguard crisis is born.

In steps Barney Hedgecock. A professional lifeguard from the famed Royal National Lifeboat Institution of England, the veteran lifesaver makes his move to help. Logging on to ISLA's website, he applies to be one of 20 elite lifeguard instructors chosen by ISLA to combat Phuket's drowning epidemic. The selection process is extremely competitive. Sixty-six other applicants to the volunteer project, all qualified lifeguards from around the globe, are turned away.

Being selected is only the first step in the volunteer process. Barney still needs to come up with thousands of dollars, just like the other volunteers, to fully fund the project and pay for his air travel. Then there's virtual homework and team building he must complete, all before arriving on island for the training project.



Barney Hedgecock was already a professional lifeguard from the famed Royal National Lifeboat Institution of England.

"I was apprehensive about my own abilities and whether I would be able to offer anything to this party of super heroes," recalls Barney.

"I loved chatting with my teammates during the training at Surin Beach, especially Aurelio Norte and Daniel Ferrari about their double lives as both firefighters and beach lifeguards. A career I had not previously considered suddenly became my life's ambition.

"On returning to England, I immediately began searching for firefighter recruitment anywhere in the country. I discovered that rarely did fire and rescue services in the UK recruit as it was such an elite job," he says.

"The hospitality from the instructor team in Thailand and the way those two spoke of the fire service, I knew I

had to pursue my dream. The application process took the best part of a year with various interviews, fitness tests and skills assessments," Barney notes.

"With much perseverance in October 2018 I found out I was successful in joining the London Fire Brigade and graduated from the training academy in December 2018. I now serve on Hammersmith Fire Stations Blue Watch whilst also part time beach lifeguarding on the beautiful Dorset coast.

"I'm still very proud of what we did in Phuket. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity."

*The writer of this article, Daren Jenner, is the Thailand Section Chief of the International Surf Lifesaving Association (ISLA).*

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## POP QUIZ

- Which is taller, a full-grown Tyrannosaurus Rex or an adult giraffe?
- How old was Pelé when he played in his first FIFA World Cup in 1958?
- What was Nobel Prize winner Lech Walesas's occupation at the Lenin Shipyard, Gdansk?
- La Scala opera house is in which European city?
- Ailurophobia is the fear of what?

Answers below, centre

## SUDOKU

Hard

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

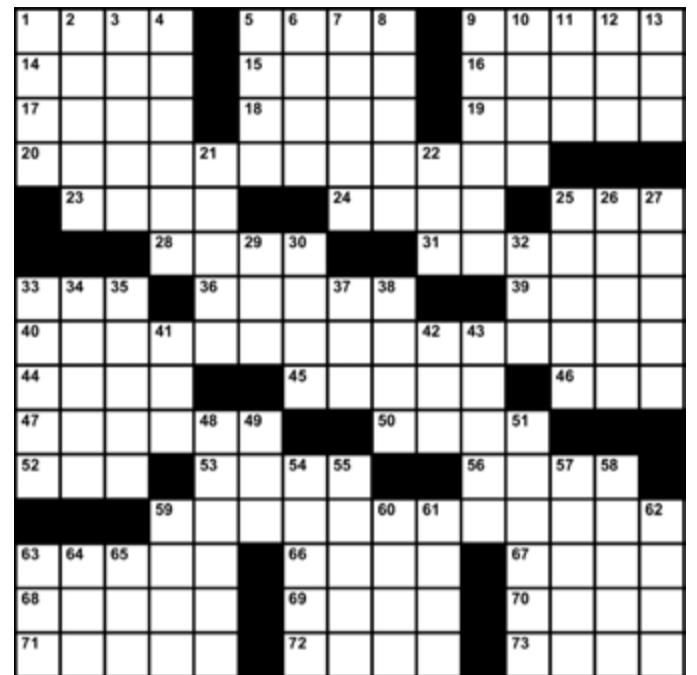
Across

- Hit
- "Hey, there!"
- Harley
- Cell phone display
- Audio effect
- Didn't give up
- Country on the tip of the Arabian Peninsula
- Petitions
- Coins featuring a ring of 12 stars
- Chef's gadget
- Hyperbolic function
- Shooter's ammo
- \_\_\_ general rule
- Movie \_\_\_ (one who watches films)
- Scale reading
- Atlas sect.
- Crib parts
- Turkish generals
- Cutter for a specific fruit
- German article
- Event controller
- Airport sign data
- Make sterile, in a way
- Thief's obstacle
- Cooking abbr.
- Soybean curd
- Seine sights
- Cheddar shredder
- African beast

- Spanish appetizer
- \_\_\_ Alto
- Fragrant purple flower
- Middle-\_\_\_
- Earthy sediment
- Armani creation
- Dregs of wine
- "Do it or \_\_\_!"

Down

- Traffic sign
- Red carpet cars
- Valuable violin
- State of Malaysia
- Mexican mint product
- Food fish
- Follower
- "I'm dying \_\_\_ it!"
- Sardo or Havarti
- Part of BYO
- Life saving technique
- August zodiac sign
- Actors Harris and Begley
- \_\_\_ were the days, my friends"
- Order's partner
- Texas A & M student
- 2000 Sam L. Jackson film
- Confused
- Santa's help
- Scarce
- McKellen or Fleming
- Authorized representative
- Common side order
- Incurred a bar tab
- Stomach, to a tot
- Sets (on)
- Animal companion
- Earl Grey is an example of this drink
- Drink from fermented milk
- High standards
- Unnamed litigant
- Pass, as time
- Relating to an unborn baby
- Phrasing
- Sell online
- Barbers
- Professional bean counters
- Sporting sword
- Wanders about
- Memorization method
- Venerable
- White wine aperitif
- Ginger \_\_\_



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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

3.4

metres is the highest jump on a pogo stick, achieved by Dmitry Arsenyev of Russia on the set of 'La Notte dei Record' in Rome, Italy, on Nov 20, 2018.

50

people on average use the same bathroom on a plane flight.

70

percent, on average, of ice from fast-food restaurants is dirtier than the water from toilet bowls, a middle schooler's award-winning science project revealed in 2006.

7,000

US dollars in gift tax had to be paid by each member of the audience that Oprah gave a "free" car to.

32 million

bacteria can be found on every square inch of your skin.

Source: Uberfacts

## ISLAND VIEW



Nai Harn sunset. Photo by Will Matkin

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## This week in history

June 18, 1815

Duke of Wellington and Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher defeat Napoleon Bonaparte in the Battle of Waterloo, forcing him to abdicate the throne of France for the second and last time.



Galileo Galilei, 1636.

June 19, 1978

Garfield, the long-term holder of the Guinness World Record for the world's most widely syndicated comic strip, makes its debut.

June 20, 1837

Queen Victoria succeeds to the British throne.

June 21, 1900

Boxer Rebellion. China formally declares war on the United States, Britain, Germany, France and Japan, as an edict issued from the Empress Dowager Cixi.

June 22, 1633

The Holy Office in Rome forces Galileo Galilei to recant his view that the Sun, not the Earth, is the center of the Universe in the form he presented it in, after heated controversy.

June 23, 1611

The mutinous crew of Henry Hudson's fourth voyage sets Henry, his son and seven loyal crew members adrift in an open boat in what is now Hudson Bay; they are never heard from again.

June 24, 1939

Siam is renamed Thailand by Field Marshall Plaek Phibunsongkhram, the country's third prime minister.  
Source: Wikipedia

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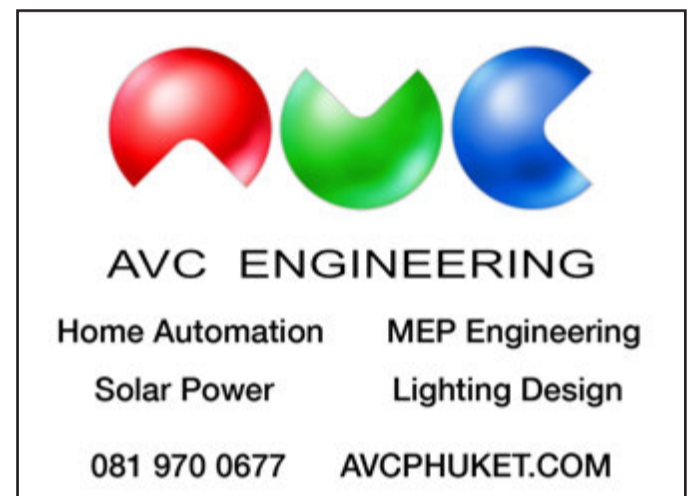
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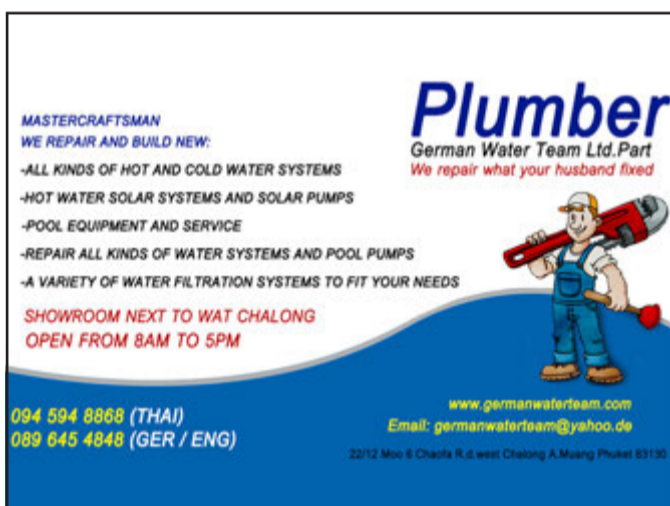


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### Sunday roast

12PM – 9PM: All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet Beef, Pork & Lamb – Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, Fried mushrooms, Grilled Tomatoes – Yorkshire pudding – Roasted Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes – Gravy, Mushroom sauce, Horse raddish, Mint Sauce. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 350 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 175 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket

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www.shakersphuket.com  
shakersphuket@gmail.com  
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### Monday BBQ night

6 PM onwards: All you can eat BBQ buffet cooked to order. Beef, Pork, Chicken, Burgers, Sausages, Prawns & Squids, salad buffet, Baked potatoes, potato salad & various sauces, Bread, Buns & garlic bread. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 395 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket

## WED 23 JUN

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Tel: 081/891 4381  
www.shakersphuket.com  
shakersphuket@gmail.com  
GPS: N07°46.971 E098°19.001

### Wednesday Ribs night

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### Run Phuket For One Phuket

Mark Gillett a British adventure runner from KIS Phuket, is running 70km across Phuket for One Phuket raising money for Scholars of Sustenance. Following the West Coast from the Southernmost tip at Promthep Cape, to Sarasin Bridge in the North, Mark's route will take him over hills and sandy beaches in 9 hours of running. You can support Mark's solo effort by donating to One Phuket through Scholars of Sustenance or through One Phuket's Weebon account for International donors. Follow the adventure: www.instagram.com/markgonarun

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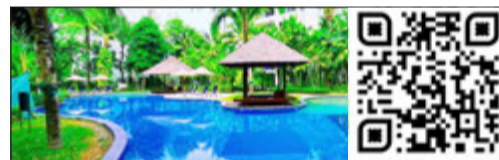
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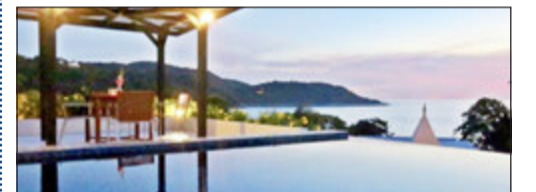
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*Jason Beavan*

# Djokovic the history maker

## Serbian comes from two sets down to win epic French Open

### TENNIS

AFP

Novak Djokovic claimed a 19<sup>th</sup> Grand Slam title and became the first man in 52 years to win all four majors twice when he came from two sets down to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in a gripping French Open final last Sunday (June 13).

The world number one triumphed 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 in four hours and 11 minutes over the Greek 22-year-old who was playing in his first Slam final.

Djokovic is now just one major away from equalling the all-time record of 20, jointly held by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

It was a second French Open crown for the Serbian after his 2016 victory and adds to his nine Australian Opens, five Wimbledon titles and three at the US Open.

The 34-year-old is the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four Slams on multiple occasions and just the third in history.



Novak Djokovic holds the trophy aloft after his epic six-set win against Stefanos Tsitsipas. Photo: AFP

"It was an electric atmosphere. I want to thank everyone who has been with me on this journey," said Djokovic after his win.

Djokovic is the first man ever to win a Slam title by twice coming back from two sets down following his last-16 battle with Italian teenager Lorenzo Musetti.

Djokovic now has 84 career titles in total while his latest win pushed him to the brink of US\$150 million (B4.6

billion) in prize money.

Next on the list is an assault on a calendar Grand Slam, only achieved in the men's game by Don Budge in 1937 and Laver in 1962 and 1969, by defending his Wimbledon crown and then winning a fourth US Open.

On top of that, Djokovic also wants the Olympic gold medal in Tokyo to complete the first ever Golden Grand Slam by a male player.

Tsitsipas, who revealed

that he learned of his grandmother's death just minutes before the match, said he was inspired to follow in Djokovic's footsteps.

"What I learned today is that no matter what, in order for the match to be finished, you have to win three sets and not two," he said.

"Two sets doesn't really mean anything. It's still one away of winning the entire match.

"But I had a good run here

so I am happy with myself," he said.

"Novak has shown what a great champion he is and I hope one day to have half of what he has achieved."

### 'RIGHT TACTICS'

Djokovic, meanwhile, said he gave away his winning racquet to a young boy watching court-side for "giving me the right tactics".

At the end of the mammoth encounter, Djokovic handed his racquet to the youngster who was then pictured on TV jumping for joy and in shock at the gesture.

"He was in my ear the entire match basically, especially when I was two sets to love down. He was encouraging me. He was actually giving me tactics, as well," said Djokovic.

"He was like, 'Hold your serve, get an easy first ball, then dictate, go to his backhand.' He was coaching me literally.

"I found that very cute, very nice. So I felt like to give the racquet to the best person was him after the match. That was kind of my gratitude for

him sticking with me and supporting me."

### DOUBLE DELIGHT

Earlier on Sunday, Barbora Krejčíková became the first player since Mary Pierce in 2000 to win the French Open singles and doubles titles.

Krejčíková teamed with fellow Czech Katerina Siniakova to defeat Bethanie Mattek-Sands and Iga Swiatek 6-4, 6-2 for their third Slam title together.

It came a day after the 25-year-old became the first Czech woman since Hana Mandlíková in 1981 to lift the singles title with a 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 win over Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova.

"It's an extraordinary achievement to win in singles and doubles," said Swiatek who was singles champion in 2020.

Krejčíková admitted she planned to enjoy a rare glass of champagne to celebrate her impressive achievement.

"I already said I don't really drink but I think it's a time to actually celebrate," she beamed after her doubles triumph.

## F1 calendar in jeopardy

### FORMULA ONE

THE CANCELLATION OF the Singapore Grand Prix for the second successive season bodes badly for Formula 1's record-breaking season.

Singapore's withdrawal followed the cancellation of the Canadian Grand Prix, originally set to run last weekend (June 11-13). It was to be replaced by a race in Istanbul, but a surge in cases in Turkey meant that too was cancelled.

Instead the French Grand Prix has been brought forward seven days to this Sunday (June 20), with two races back to back at Austria's Red Bull Ring to follow.

With Singapore's vacated weekend to be filled later in the year, F1 can purport to still be targeting what would be an unprecedented 23 grands prix. But serious further problems loom.

The Australian Grand Prix, postponed from March to November, is also in doubt as the Australian government maintains strict immigration controls similar to those that undid Canada and Singapore, and the country's lethargic vaccine rollout means it's unlikely to hit the immunisa-



The French GP takes place this weekend. Photo: AFP

tion benchmarks that could facilitate the race.

The Japanese Grand Prix too is in flux with local authorities unlikely to approve it until the Olympics have been run successfully or otherwise.

The Brazilian Grand Prix is unlikely to proceed due to its persistent COVID infection rate, though Mexico City Grand Prix organisers are working to convince the sport it can run its event safely as daily coronavirus counts decline.

The final round of the year, in the United Arab Emirates, is also potentially under threat for its placement on the UK's do-not-travel list, which would require F1's seven UK-based teams to quarantine up to

Christmas upon return.

The sport has some races in reserve. The United States may host two rounds in Texas, while last year's fallback races at the Nürburgring in Germany and Mugello in Italy are likely to reappear to keep the sport within the certainty of the European environment.

Formula 1, among the world's best travelled sports, has worked hard to shield itself from the pandemic, and for four races in a row it has recorded no coronavirus infections among travelling staff.

But eventually this supreme determination will have to compromise with the reality of the second year of the pandemic.

Michael Lamonato

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## 26 JUNE, 2021

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SCAN TO DONATE

# Football loses but life wins

## Denmark's Eriksen suffers cardiac arrest on pitch

### FOOTBALL

Ben Tirebuck

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

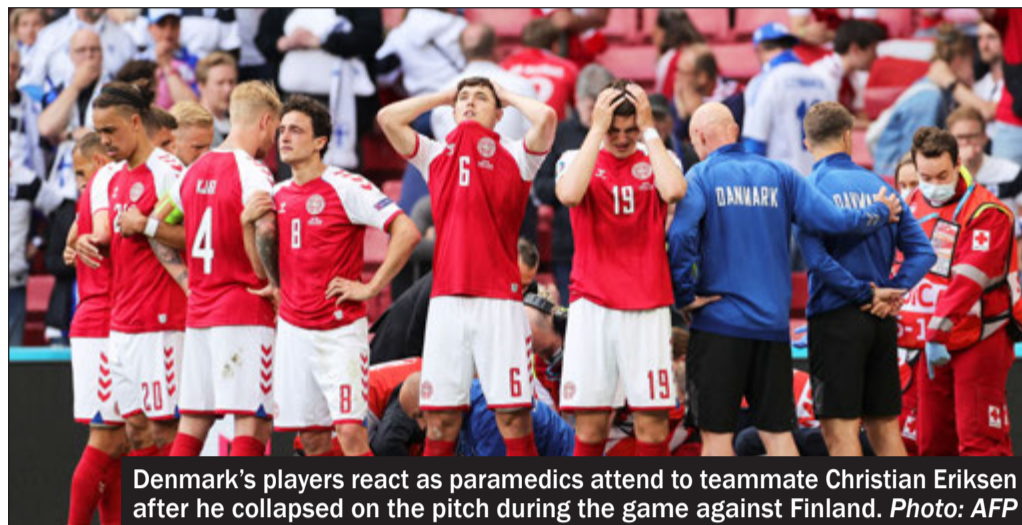
Regarded by many as a symbol of hope and triumph over the COVID-19 pandemic, Euro 2020 finally got underway last Friday (June 11).

The month-long tournament, played across 11 European cities, generated huge excitement from London to Baku, from Amsterdam to Bucharest as fans were permitted to attend matches after a year-long absence.

However, the traumatic events that transpired in the third game of the tournament on Saturday completely overshadowed all anticipation and provided a sobering reality-check.

Denmark took on tournament debutants Finland in an all Nordic affair at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen where 16,000 raucous and passionate fans convened.

The hosts were quietly confident of not just their chances in the opening game



Denmark's players react as paramedics attend to teammate Christian Eriksen after he collapsed on the pitch during the game against Finland. Photo: AFP

but in a broader context of being able to advance deep into the tournament with their talisman and national hero Christian Eriksen pulling the strings.

Playing at the peak of his powers having just won the title in Italy with Inter Milan, 29-year-old Eriksen is an attacking midfielder with such astute craft that he always inspires fear into opponents.

In the 43rd minute of the encounter with Finland Eriksen made a routine run to collect a throw-in from a teammate. Prior to receiving the ball he

started to waiver and lose his footing, eventually tumbling to the turf face-first.

No opposing player had been near him and it was immediately clear something was seriously wrong.

Danish captain Simon Kjaer dashed to Eriksen's aid, ensuring he had not swallowed his tongue and manouevering him into the recovery position. Players from both sides and English referee Anthony Taylor gestured frantically for the medical team to attend to the stricken Dane.

Fearing the worst, the

crowd fell silent. Millions watching around the world on TV no doubt did likewise. This was a hugely distressing incident to be an observer of.

### 'HE WAS GONE'

The medics administered CPR then the defibrillator as Eriksen's teammates formed a protective circle to shield him from the spotlight of watching eyes at the ground and via TV broadcasts. Several were in tears of distress, covering their faces with their jerseys as they wept.

After a while, Eriksen

was carried on a stretcher from the field and it was clear from initial pictures that he was conscious. A Reuters photographer in the stadium said he saw the player raise a hand to the crowd as he was carried from the pitch.

Eriksen was taken to Rigshospitalet hospital and shortly after the news everyone had been praying for was announced: that he was in stable condition.

Morten Boesen, the Danish team doctor who attended to Eriksen on the pitch, stated on Sunday there was still "no explanation" for why the midfielder had collapsed but did confirm he had suffered a cardiac arrest.

"He was gone, and we did cardiac resuscitation," Boesen said.

"How close were we? I don't know. We got him back after one defib [defibrillation], so that's quite fast," he added.

Surprisingly, the game was eventually completed after the news came through that Eriksen was in a stable condition, ending in a 1-0 win for Finland.

But the game and the score were completely immaterial. Maybe even the entire competition would be. Such was the sheer shock of Eriksen's ordeal that it delivered a sobering dose of perspective and left one seriously re-evaluating priorities. Tributes and well wishes came flooding in from all over the world. It was clear Eriksen's predicament had touched, shocked and scared many.

Naturally, Eriksen will remain in hospital for the immediate future as further tests are conducted and it seems highly unlikely that his mercurial talents will ever grace a professional football field again.

Maybe, as we progress and hopefully a fit again Eriksen speaks publicly, the tournament can still serve as a celebration of a return to normality. However, the harrowing events in Copenhagen last Saturday have reminded us all that football is just a game between 22 players and not of life or death.

As Danish newspaper *Dagbladet* said so adroitly: "Denmark lost but life won."

## Vietnam wants SEA Games moved

### SEA GAMES

VIETNAM HAS PROPOSED to postpone this year's Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) as the country grapples with a fresh outbreak of COVID-19.

The regional equivalent of the Olympic Games is scheduled to be held from Nov 21 to Dec 2 in Vietnam's capital city of Hanoi and 11 other locations across the country – some of which are at the epicentre of the fresh COVID-19 wave.

However, authorities in Vietnam want to postpone the 31st edition of the Games to July of next year.

"The Vietnam Olympics Committee, the host for SEA Games 31, has sent a letter to countries informing them of its proposal to postpone SEA Games 31 to July 2022 due to the complicated situation of the COVID-19 pandemic," *Phap Luat Online* stated on June 9.

The Vietnam Olympics Committee confirmed that the SEA Games Council, which is based in Bangkok, met on June 10 to discuss.



The closing ceremony of the 2019 SEA Games in Manila. Photo: AFP

Representatives of the Olympic Committees in other Southeast Asian countries joined the meeting virtually and have briefed their respective governments. The Standing Committee of the Southeast Asian Games Federation also needs to review the proposal before an official decision can be made.

The next round of discussions was scheduled to take place last Tuesday (June 15) with hopes a final plan can be agreed upon.

However, the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) stated that eight of the 11 member states initially objected to the postponement

due to the "busy sports schedule" next year.

Vietnam has recorded almost 11,000 cases of COVID infection since April and 59 deaths. Many of the SEA Games events are due to take place in some of the worst affected provinces including Bac Ninh and Bac Giang, in the country's northeast.

Ensuring the safety of 20,000 participating athletes, coaches, officials, referees, logistics staff of the delegations, and fans is a huge challenge for the organisers.

If the proposal is approved it will be the first time in history that a SEA Games event has been postponed. *The Phuket News*

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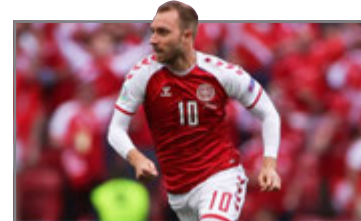
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# Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



**Football world prays for Great Dane > p15**

## TOUR DE PHUKET

**British expat to replicate Tour de France by cycling around island to raise funds for One Phuket community charity**

John will be cycling 3,417km over a 19-day period to raise funds for the One Phuket food drive. Photo: John Julius Bennett



### CYCLING

**Ben Tirebuck**  
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

He calls it the “craziest, hardest challenge of my life,” an assertion no doubt many would agree with.

On June 26, British expat John Julius “JJ” Bennett is taking on the monumental feat of replicating the famed Tour de France around Phuket, cycling a distance of 3,417km over a 19-day period to raise funds for the One Phuket food drive supporting those devastated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“It is heartbreaking to see so much poverty impacting so many in Phuket,” says 57-year-old John. “People’s lives have been ruined, lifetime savings have disappeared, businesses gone forever and many families within poorer communities remain desperate for food and bare essentials.”

“I have seen many Phuketians selling their saucepans for as little as B100 just to be able to buy some food to eat, which is incredibly sad,” he adds.

Stirred by the dire situation, John decided to take on a challenge that would attract attention and hopefully raise much needed funds.

“To cycle 3,417km in 19 days is tough,” John commented. “To put it

into perspective, that is equivalent to the distance between Edinburgh and Moscow, or Canada to Mexico. Many people have told me I am completely mad and I probably am, but that’s what makes it a challenge.”

The cycle will be split across 21 days with two days allocated for rest and incorporates the varying stages seen at the Tour de France; hills, flats, mountains and time-trials will all factor in across separate days with the longest cycle set at a distance of 249.5km.

### RECORD HOLDER

Last year John rode 3,000km in 30 days around Phuket and raised B150,000 for a charity supporting youngsters and babies affected by the pandemic. He is hoping to improve on this achievement this time around.

John has always been a cycling enthusiast. Aged 14, he became national school boy champion and junior record holder in the South West of England for the 25 miles Time Trial, a record that stood for 30 years. At senior level he raced in France for Peugeot but never made it to the real Tour de France. “I just wasn’t good enough,” he says, modestly. While continuing to cycle for fun, John took a sabbatical from racing for many years before returning competitively and

winning over 200-time trial races in the UK between the ages of 35-45.

He moved to Thailand seven years ago to take on the role of Professor of Sports Science at Thammasat University in Bangkok. Regular freelance work at Thanyapura meant frequent visits to Phuket, a move he and his wife made permanent last March just before the first lockdown descended.

### ‘HYDRATION, NUTRITION, PACING’

John’s training regime in preparation for the upcoming challenge is intense and regimented, incorporating anywhere between one to four hours before or after work, five times a week.

“I was too heavy six weeks ago, so have had to focus on losing 6kg and teaching my body to use more fat as a fuel and less carbohydrates. It’s quite a complex process that uses specific nutrition techniques and specific training intensity to teach the body into burning more fat.

“For example, Friday evening a low carb meal, then Saturday no breakfast, a coffee to kickstart fat metabolism, followed by a four-hour ride at fat burning intensity with only 10 grammes of carbohydrates per hour, just enough to ignite the fat and get me home.”

John’s comprehensive training

routine and sports science expertise will place him in good stead for when the challenge starts, crucial when tackling the average daily rides of 169km.

“The key to coping with the distances is hydration, nutrition and pacing,” he says.

“I am confident I can hold 200 watts using a power meter on the bike to gauge my effort. Having a support car with me means I have peace of mind that all my drinks, nutrition and spare bike are at hand if required.”

The one challenge he has no control over, of course, is the weather, something he states could be the biggest hurdle.

“Whereas I don’t mind some rain, which can be warm and cooling, it is monsoon season and the heat and humidity are intense.”

“But by starting at 6am daily, 160km will take me between five to six hours, meaning I am back by lunch and avoid the main heat of the day.

“However, the 249km stage will take me eight hours, so that day will be really tough physically and mentally.

“I will become more and more fatigued as the days go on but it then becomes a mental battle of focus and motivation. When someone tells me I am mad and it’s impossible to emulate these distances aged 57,

it just makes me want to complete it and raise as much as we can.”

### ‘RAISE AWARENESS’

With Phuket scheduled to reopen to vaccinated tourists on July 1 many see light at the end of a very long and painful tunnel. However, if anything the last 18-months has taught us it is that nothing is certain and to be prepared for the unexpected.

“We are in desperate need of donations right now to help keep families fed and watered for the next six months,” John says gravely.

“If we can get 1,000 people to donate US\$10 (B310) each that will help feed and support an incredible amount of families struggling in poverty.

“I am willing to give up three weeks of my time to ride 3417km in monsoon rains, 35-degree heat and 90% humidity. All I want out of this is to raise awareness and donations to help. Every single baht will go to the charity.”

*All donations can be made via the GoFundMe page, established to ensure maximum transparency and to monitor all contributions.*

*John is still seeking the help of someone who has a car and can drive as his support, with all petrol costs already covered by sponsorship. Interested parties can email him directly at: jjcoach555@gmail.com*