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PHUKET GOES FOURTH

HEALTH OFFICIALS ROLL OUT 'FOURTH JAB' BOOSTER VACCINATIONS TO THE PUBLIC



The 'fourth jab' booster vaccination campaign opened to the public on Monday (Jan 17). Photo: PR Phuket

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket health officials this week began rolling out 'fourth vaccination injections' to the public as the island continues its mass-vaccination campaign against COVID-19.

The vaccination injections were conducted at the Indoor Sports Stadium in Saphan Hin, where some 4,000 people received their 'fourth jab' on Monday (Jan 17).

The vaccinations were administered to "frontline personnel", reported

Nawapan Praiphan, of the Phuket office of the Relations Department (PR Phuket).

Healthcare workers have already received their fourth vaccination jabs, she added.

According to the mass-vaccination daily update report issued by Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO), a total of 5,059 people had received their fourth jabs as of Jan 12. As of Tuesday (Jan 18) that number had grown to 11,357.

The vaccinations for "frontline personnel", which *The Phuket News* has confirmed includes teachers, was

just the first round of "fourth jabs" and was to continue through until Wednesday (Jan 19), Ms Nawapan said.

On Monday and Tuesday this week, the recipients received Pfizer as their fourth jab, and on Wednesday the recipients were to receive AstraZeneca, she said.

"For the general public who received their third jab in September, expect to receive the fourth jab this month, after this group," Ms Nawapan said.

People who received their third-dose 'booster' vaccination in Sep-

tember need to register through the PhuketMustWin website in order to receive their fourth booster dose this month, she explained.

"And those who have received their second jab should register to receive their third," she said.

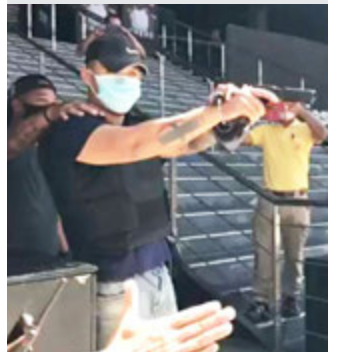
According to a notice by Vachira Phuket Hospital, the main government hospital on this island, the fourth-booster jabs are first and foremost going to Thai nationals who received Sinovac or Sinopharm as their first two injections.

The fourth booster jab is also being made available to Thai nationals...

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Bangla shooter cop still waiting for trial to start



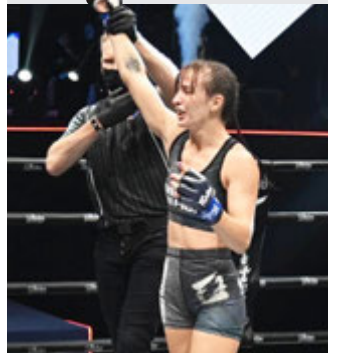
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True testament to trailblazing in Phuket



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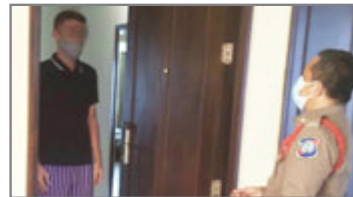
Historic MMA win at Lumpinee for Phuket's Jada



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News



Police search for Russians fleeing hotels > p4

95% of new COVID cases are 'Green'

The Phuket News

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An estimated 95% of all new COVID-19 cases being detected in Phuket are resulting in mild symptoms, or no symptoms at all, Dr Witita Jang-iam, Deputy Director of Vachira Phuket Hospital, has confirmed.

The number of people across the island confirmed to be infected with Omicron continued to spiral upward, Dr Witita said in a public address broadcast online on Jan 13.

However, she added, "The lack of serious infections is why provincial authorities are placing emphasis on Home Isolation Treatment, so we can reserve hospital beds for critically ill patients."

Dr Witita noted local health officials had been monitoring the rising number of new infections since the New Year celebrations.

"But from the analysis of



Dr Witita Jang-iam, Deputy Director of Vachira Phuket Hospital. Photo: Radio Thailand Phuket

the data we have found that most of the infected, more than 95%, were 'Green' patients. That is, there are no symptoms at all or that there are very few symptoms," she said.

"And only 0.5% to 1% required admission to the ICU,

or were Red patients. It can be confirmed that Omicron is a much less dangerous virus strain than Delta," she added.

"This may be due to many factors. For example, a lot of the people of Phuket have received vaccinations. This

may have helped create group immunity, and now when an infection occurs the body can react quickly, so the person is infected but not seriously ill," Dr Witita explained.

Dr Witita pointed out that initial preparations for treat-

ment of people infected in the latest outbreak saw every government hospital set up a special respiratory clinic.

"But from the increase in the number of infected people in Phuket, which has been in the hundreds each day, this service in each hospital is not enough," she said.

"Therefore, we would like to emphasise that people should help each other strictly maintain personal protection measures, such as wearing a mask, washing their hands and not being in a crowded community. Avoiding eating with others will also help. We believe that no matter which strain of the virus it is, this will help prevent it from being able to enter the body," she added.

To help alleviate the case-load on local hospitals, the government is calling for all local people who test positive by ATK (antigen test kit) to contact the Aunjai Clinic, set up at the Auditorium of the

new Phuket Provincial Hall on the south side of Phuket Town.

"The Aunjai Clinic provides services for those who have tested positive for ATK and can travel to the Aunjai Clinic for treatment," Dr Witita said.

"In addition to the Aunjai Clinic, the Phuket COVID-19 Call Center hotline has been opened at 076-254200 to provide advice on treatment guidelines or coordinate referrals for infected people to receive treatment according to the standard procedure," she said.

"The Phuket COVID-19 Call Center hotline has staff who also speak English. A foreigner can press 88 [when asked by the recorded service], and the service will be available in English.

"This is for the convenience and confidence of the people of Phuket and tourists who are staying in the Phuket area now," she added.

Officials move forward with targetted booster vaccination push

Continued from page 1

...who received AstraZeneca as their third 'booster' dose before Sept 15 last year.

"It can be seen that most of the infected people in Phuket are Green patients. They have no symptoms or only a few symptoms. This is likely a result of being vaccinated," she noted.

Ms Nawapan urged all people to closely follow the news from government agencies in order to get accurate information about the mass vaccination rollout and the COVID-19 situation in the country.

BOOSTER PUSH

Meanwhile, Vachira Phuket Hospital is continuing to provide walk-in first-, second- and third-dose 'booster' vaccination injections throughout January, but vaccination sessions are limited to 50 people a day.

Those who are interested can receive the vaccine at the "Lan Muang Khao" area set up at the hospital, Vachira Phuket explained in a notice posted last week.

People still waiting to receive their first vacci-

nation injection have been able to receive a Sinovac jab Monday-Thursday each week through the month: already on Jan 10-13 and Jan 17-20, and again on Jan 24-27.

Another session of Sinovac vaccine first injections will be held on Friday, Jan 28.

Each session each day is available only for 50 people, the hospital explained clearly.

No explanation was given as to why the number of vaccinations are being limited to such a small number.

Vachira Phuket also scheduled to provide AstraZeneca vaccinations for people needing a second- or third-dose 'booster' injection, first on Jan 14, and again today (Jan 21).

Again, each session was limited to 50 people.

To receive the injections Thais have needed to show only their government-issued ID card, while foreigners only needed to present only their passport or work permit.

ASTRAZENECA + PFIZER

In a separate notice, Vachira Phuket Hospital announced that it is providing first injections of AstraZeneca for



Fourth-dose 'booster' jab recipients wait at Saphan Hin on Tuesday (Jan 18). Photo: PR Phuket

people looking to have the AstraZeneca vaccine for their first injection and Pfizer as their second injection (the "AZ+Pfizer" combo).

The vaccinations are open to Thais and foreigners, but only people aged 18 or older.

Walk-ins for first injections of the AZ+Pfizer combo will not be accepted. People wanting to receive the AZ+Pfizer combo must register through the PhuketMustWin.com website.

To register for the AZ+Pfizer injections, Thais will need to submit a copy of their government-issued ID card, while foreigners will need to submit a copy of their

passport or work permit.

Those who successfully register and are approved a vaccination time will be allowed to receive their first injection at the Lan Muang Khao area at the hospital.

The vaccination sessions were held from 9am to 3pm on Jan 10-13 and Jan 17-20, and will be held during the same hours on Jan 24-28.

PFIZER BOOSTER JABS

Meanwhile, Thalung Hospital has announced that it is providing the Pfizer vaccine as a third-dose 'booster' jab.

The jabs are available only to people who have received

AstraZeneca+AstraZeneca or Sinovac+AstraZeneca (AA or SA) as their first and second injections.

Recipients also must have received their second-dose injection before Sept 30, 2021.

The hospital started providing the Pfizer booster jabs at the X-Terminal, at Phuket International Airport, on Jan 10.

The announcement by Thalung Hospital gave no end date to the campaign to provide the Pfizer booster shots.

However, people must register and make an appointment to receive the Pfizer injection via the PhuketMustWin.com website.

Of note, all notices announcing the ongoing vaccination rollout were issued in Thai language only.

Also, according to the PhuketMustWin website, all expats must have received their second Sinovac injection in order to currently receive any third-dose booster jab.

Under the "Third dose vaccination for foreigners" section posted on the website is the message, "Check for the eligibility for the 3rd dose for expats and migrant workers

who received their 2nd dose Sinovac vaccination already in Phuket."

HIT & MISS

The Phuket News has sporadically received several messages over recent weeks from foreigners who have been unable to successfully register to receive a third-dose booster injection.

However, *The Phuket News* also notes that many, if not most, expats with work permits already received their booster vaccinations last year.

Phuket officials have issued no statements to clarify the situation for foreigners on the island who have continued to be denied a third-dose booster jab.

According to the mass-vaccination daily update report issued by Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) on Tuesday (Jan 18), of the 547,584 target population to be vaccinated, so far the following number of people have been vaccinated: 1st injection - 482,152 (88.05%); 2nd injection - 468,054 (85.48%); 3rd injection - 297,540 (54.34%).

Bangla shooter police trial still yet to begin

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The trial of Pornthep Channaong, the Phuket police officer who shot a 25-year-old noodle vendor on Bangla Rd while drunk off duty in February last year, has still been postponed for COVID reasons. The next trial date is currently set for March.

Pornthep was drunk off-duty when he shot noodle vendor Aroon Thongplab in the stomach on Bangla Rd in Patong early on Feb 23 last year.

He was corporal with the Phuket Provincial Police who had just been transferred to Region 8 Police at the time.

Pornthep was quickly stripped of his rank and discharged from the Royal Thai Police. He now faces charges of attempted murder, carrying a firearm in a public area without necessary reason, and firing a weapon in a public area.

Mr Aroon has been left paralysed from the waist down after surgeons removed the bullet, which had lodged near



Pornthep Channarong takes part in a re-enactment of the shooting on Bangla Rd last year. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

his spine. His wife, Kulthida Chananan, spends most of her time caring for him, and their two young children.

The trial was first deferred in August last year, and again in September. Now it has been postponed again, until Mar 17.

"No progress has been made in the trial," Kerdphol Kaewkerd, the Bangkok-based lawyer assisting Mr Aroon with the case for free, told *The Phuket News*.

"The court has scheduled

an examination for witnesses on March 17-18, and April 7," he said.

"The appointment for witness examination has been scheduled since last year, but has to be postponed every time because the defendant's lawyer has requested to postpone the appointment two to three times, claiming that it is during the COVID outbreak, and the lawyers, prosecutors and courts can't find the time to match," he said.

Mr Kerdphol confirmed that Pornthep continues to remain in remand at Phuket Provincial Prison.

"The police take care of the family to a certain extent, not special care. Police patrol their house from time to time," he added.

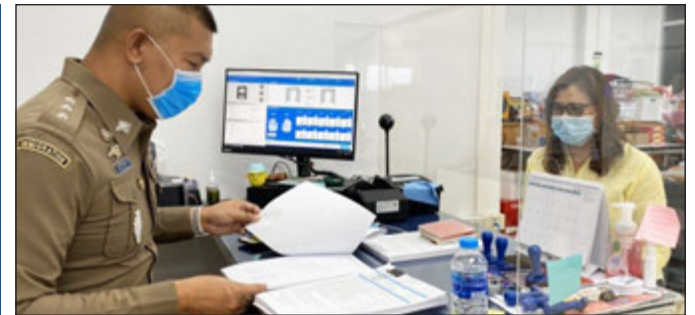
Lt Gen Amphol Buaraborn, who took up the post of Region 8 Police Commander after the shooting in February last year, said he did not know much about the case, but strongly decried it and thanked the press for following up on progress in the trial.

"The police can't shoot anyone carelessly, Lt Gen Amphol told *The Phuket News*.

"The use of guns by police has rules. Everyone must obtain prior authorisation every time they carry a firearm in a public area.

"If you are in uniform, you are legally allowed to carry a gun because it is considered that you are on duty. But if they are not in uniform, permission must be obtained first," he said.

Lt Gen Amphol also said that he would raise the issue with subordinate officers.



Phuket Immigration has confirmed that proof of vaccination is not required in order for a 'visa extension' to be approved. Photo: The Phuket News / file

Jabs not required for visa extensions

THE PHUKET IMMIGRATION Office in Phuket Town has confirmed that proof of vaccination is not required in order to be approved for an extension to stay, often just called "visa extensions".

"At this time, evidence of vaccination certificates is not used in consideration of permission for extension of visas. [People] Can apply for a visa extension right now," the office confirmed through Facebook.

Regarding issues with the new 90-day reporting app launched just before Christmas, the officer did not respond to questions about any problems with foreigners still trying to report themselves through the web platform.

The officer responded only with a link to where foreigners may register to use the new app.

Of note, *The Phuket News* explained that repeated attempts to contact the main Phuket Immigration Office by phone resulted in phone calls being unanswered.

The officer explained that the phone lines to the Phuket Immigration Office were being upgraded.

"The phone system is still being upgraded to add more lines. However, we apologise for the inconvenience. Right now 076-221905 is still the only contact number, and people can contact us through the chat service through Facebook," the officer explained.

Foreigners were advised to regularly check the Phuket Immigration Facebook page for updates and any changes to visa requirements.

The Phuket News

Phuket students go back to school

ON-SITE CLASSES FOR STUDENTS OF all ages resumed on Monday (Jan 17) after Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew issued a provincial order less than 24 hours earlier.

The move made national news last Sunday night (Jan 16), as schools elsewhere throughout the country must remain closed to on-site classes until Jan 31 under an order by the Ministry of Education.

The order, Phuket Provincial Order No. 352/2565, although posted online last Sunday (Jan 16), was marked to be in effect from Jan 15-31.

The order was posted online by the Phuket Info Center, operated by the Phuket office of the Ministry of Interior, just after 10am, giving students and their parents less than one day to make arrangements to prepare to go back to school.

The provincial order recognised the previous order "asking" all schools, kindergartens and other educational institutions on the island, both public and private, to "refrain" from holding any on-site activities from Jan 15-31.

However, the order noted: "In the case of any educational institutions that are ready to open classroom teaching (On Site) before the deadline, they must follow the following measures..."

Schools with students 12 years old or older must randomly ATK test students, teachers and personnel on commencement of classes, and continue random testing every seven days.

Schools with students younger than 12 years old must ATK test *all* students,



The order allowing students to go back to school was issued earlier today (Jan 16). Image: Phuket Info Center

teachers and personnel on commencement of classes, and continue random testing every seven days.

All schools must comply with the Thai Stop Covid Plus operating requirements, the order added.

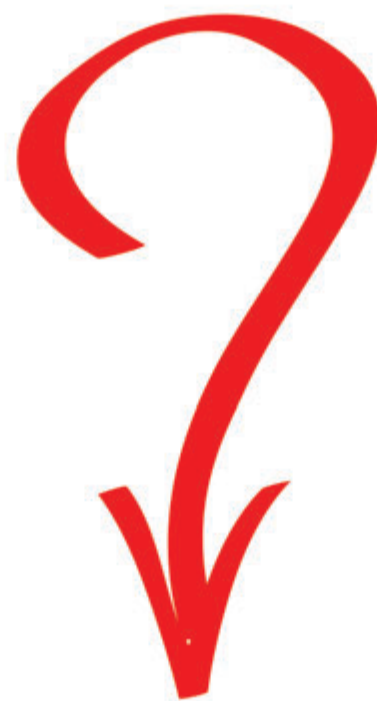
"The Office of Education of Phuket Province or the agency under the jurisdiction of each educational institution shall prepare a report on the results of educational institutions that are ready and wish to open classroom teaching (On Site), which must be reported to the province [provincial government within 7 days after the start date," the order noted.

Educational institutions must also submit to the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) their response plan for any students, staff or personnel who test positive by ATK, the order added.

The Phuket News



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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 7 m/s

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MON JAN 24

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Wind 7 m/s

TUE JAN 25

High: +34°
Low: +26°
Wind 7 m/s

WED JAN 26

High: +34°
Low: +26°
Wind 7 m/s

THU JAN 27

High: +34°
Low: +26°
Wind 7 m/s

COVID-positive Russians on the run

Eakkapop Thongtub
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Police are looking for several Russian tourists reported missing from their hotels after they had been informed that they had tested positive for COVID-19, presumably to avoid having to observe the mandatory 10-day Hotel Isolation, during which they must remain in their hotel rooms.

Officers at Kamala Police Station were notified on Jan 14 that Anton Tikhomirov, 29, from Moscow, had left the Sunwing Kamala Beach resort that morning, and had not returned.

Mr Tikhomirov checked into the hotel on Jan 3 after arriving on the island under the Phuket Sandbox scheme.

He tested positive for COVID-19 on Jan 8 and was to stay in hotel isolation at least three more nights.

Staff at the Sunwing Kamala resort confirmed to *The Phuket News* that as of Jan 15 Mr Tikhomirov still had not returned to the resort, where his room was a studio with a balcony facing the pool.



Police have had to follow up with hotels about Russian tourists checking out early after they learned they had tested positive for COVID-19. Photo: Phuket Tourist Police

Police urged people who have seen Mr Tikhomirov to immediately report his whereabouts by calling 098-010-8322 or calling the Kamala Police Station main contact number 076-385310 (24 hours).

Police were also alerted to husband-and-wife Russian couple Olga Tribstok, 35, and Sergei Iaroshenko, 35, checking out of their hotel in Patong early in order to avoid staying in Hotel Isolation for 10 days after the wife tested positive for COVID-19.

Patong Police reported that the couple left their hotel, the Holiday Inn

Express on Haad Patong Rd, before midday on Jan 15, the day they were already booked to check out.

However, officers visited the hotel, where they were told that Ms Tribstok had tested positive for COVID-19 the day before.

The couple went to Bangkok Hospital Siriroj to be tested on Jan 14, hotel staff told police. A copy of Ms Tribstok's positive test results was provided.

On Jan 15, both Ms Tribstok and her husband checked out of the hotel before noon. Hotel staff have

no idea where the couple might now be staying, said the report.

The hotel was unaware that Ms Tribstok had tested positive until staff at the hospital contacted the hotel to inform them at 1:38pm on Jan 15, the report added.

Standard practice is for hospital staff to inform the person being tested immediately of the initial test results, but conduct a second test to confirm the results and inform the couple – and the hotel – later.

Police are now looking for the couple.

Another Russian tourist, a 25-year-old man, was reported to the 191 police hotline on Jan 13 for “disappearing from his room” at a hotel in Patong after testing positive for COVID-19.

However, he was later found safe and sound, at his hotel room in Patong.

The man had tested positive on Jan 10.

Maj Boonyarit Inthakarn of the Patong Tourist Police Patrol said that the man was feeling stressed, and went to get some fresh air on Patong Beach.

Sinking platform at Chalong Pier under repair

LONG-TERM WEAR LEFT a pontoon listing dangerously at Chalong Bay Marina, next to Chalong Pier, last week, leaving officials with the decision of whether to just patch it again, or spend up to B1 million replacing it.

The pontoon began sinking on Jan 13, leaving the platform that tourists use to board boats heading out to tour nearby islands leaning dangerously to one side.

The platform was closed, and engineers inspected the damage on Thursday (Jan 13), explained Tiwat Seedokbuab, Vice President of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO, or OrBorJor), which is responsible for maintaining the tourist-busy Chalong Pier and Chalong Bay Marina.

The pontoon started taking in water through rust and abrasion after years of use, Mr Tiwat said.

“The technicians pumped out the water and placed a temporary patch over the leak. The pontoon is now back in its normal position, but it is still closed because it is still being fixed properly,” he said.

“It does not affect tourism because tourists can use other pontoons,” Mr Tiwat added.

“This pontoon is more than 20 years old and has had insufficient maintenance. It had previously sunk due to rust and the repeated



The sinking pontoon left the platform that tourists use to board boats to nearby islands leaning dangerously. Photo: PPAO

contact by boats when mooring,” he explained.

Other pontoons used by tourists to board boats do suffer as much damage as this particular pontoon, Mr Tiwat noted.

However, the other pontoons will be checked for safety, he said.

Mr Tiwat led a meeting last Friday (Jan 14) to discuss what to do with the pontoon, and any others found in disrepair.

“Technicians and all senior PPAO officials involved held a meeting about the budget required to address this issue. Depending on the action to be taken, it may cost anywhere from B100,000 up to B1mn,” he said.

“It is expected that the platform affected can be reopened by the end of this month. Now, its safety and usability are normal, but it has been in use for a long time, so we have to decide whether to just repair it again, or replace it entirely,” he said.

The Phuket News

Police allowing misuse of royal insignia threatened with charges under Section 112

A LAWYER ACCOMPANIED by a top representative of an anti-corruption organisation filed a complaint with Region 8 Police last week over police in Nakhon Sri Thammarat not taking any action to investigate a member of a “volunteer foundation” accused of misusing a royal insignia and a Royal Thai Police badge.

The member of the “volunteer foundation” used the insignia, called the ‘Phra Maha Phichai Mongkut’, and the police badge to stage checkpoints and force local residents to comply with other instructions given, explained Kottachayanat Liaotrakul, Secretary to the President of the Anti-Corruption Governance Association, at Region 8 Police headquarters in the Chatchai on Jan 12.

The “volunteer foundation” was not named in the report of the meeting by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket), but the actions described match those usually conducted by Civil Defense Volunteers, or ‘OrSor’.

Region 8 Police Commander Lt Gen Amphol Buarabphon received the complaint.

Also present was Parinya Jitjedsadaphon, Advisor to the Chairman of the Police Commission.

The matter was brought to the Region 8 Police because a formal complaint filed at Sichon Police Station in Nakhon Sri Thammarat had resulted in no action being taken by



The formal complaint was filed with Region 8 Police Commander Lt Gen Amphol Buarabphon on Jan 12. Photo: PR Phuket

police to investigate the complaint, Mr Kottachayanat said.

Lt Gen Amphol noted that he was aware of the complaint and that he would look into the claims, including “investigating the behaviour of the police officers to determine whether or not they have been neglectful of their duty.”

According to a report of the meeting yesterday by Thai-language news agency Manager Online, but not mentioned in the PR Phuket report, after the meeting Mr Kottachayanat said, “The [anti-corruption] association calls for justice in this case and will prosecute the police concerned under Section 112 [the lese majeste provisions] for allowing the Foundation to use the Phra Maha Phichai Mongkut insignia without asking for royal permission.

“We will also file for the police officers, from the commander down to the investigating officer, to be prosecuted under Section 157 [of the Criminal Code],” he added. *The Phuket News*

Southern peace talks held in Phuket

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Leading members of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional Melayu Patani (BRN) were in Phuket last weekend for talks with the a “Southern Border Provinces Peace Dialogue Panel” led by National Security Council (NSC) Secretary-General Gen Wanlop Raksanoh.

The talks were held at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort, south of Patong, on the Saturday (Jan 15). Joining the talks was Commander of the 4th Army Region, Lt Gen Kriangkrai Srirak.

The talks in Phuket follow a two-day meeting in Kuala Lumpur on Jan 11-12, the first peace talks held since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Thailand two years ago.

Gen Wanlop said that the talks with the BRN, led by Anas Abdulrahman, “went well”.

“We were friendly towards each other,” he said.

“Since the COVID-19 epidemic, which has caused problems with cross-border travel, the meeting has been halted. But due to the commitment of both sides to see the talks continue to progress,



The talks were held at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort, south of Patong, last Saturday (Jan 15). Photo: PR Phuket

we continued to move forward the discussion process, both online and through various channels, until being able to hold actual talks in person on Jan 11-12,” he added.

Gen Wanlop noted that three main topics were discussed last Saturday.

The first was the three essential issues – reducing violence, consultation with local people and seeking a political solution in accordance with the intentions and needs of the people in the area, he said.

“Both parties want to see the southern border provinces

to be a peaceful place, the participation of the people, as well as the solution to the fundamental cause of the problem, which will lead to a permanent solution to the problem,” he explained.

Talks on these issues will continue, he assured.

The second topic was that both parties have proposed creating a framework to guide the discussion on the three main concerns (noted above), Gen Wanlop said.

“To reduce violence and enhance consultation in the area, a coordinator and a joint working group of both parties

in each case were discussed,” he noted.

“Due to the problem’s complexity and specificity, political solutions are arranged in the form of a ‘Joys Start Group’. The group will be semi-formal and will be able to discuss directly with one another to eliminate flaws due to the difficulty of holding formal meetings during the COVID-19 outbreak,” Gen Wanlop explained.

The third topic, raised by the Thai representatives, was that both sides ought to endeavour to eliminate violent acts by doing so willingly,

Gen Wanlop said.

“We raised these issues to be discussed because we want to build a supportive environment for the next meeting and we want people in the area to be aware of the benefits of talks that bring peace and order to the area,” he added.

The group and the 4th Army Region were already making some preparations in this regard, Gen Wanlop said.

Further in-person meetings were hoped to continue and to be held in the near future, Gen Wanlop noted.

“The talks panel has carried out the government’s objective of driving the dialogue process as a means of achieving long-term peace in the area, taking into account the participation of all parties, including non-BRN parties and the public,” he said.

“To discover solutions together, we need cooperation from all sectors [of the community],” Gen Wanlop added.

Muslim separatist activity has existed in Thailand for decades but the insurgency turned increasingly violent beginning in 2004 and has since claimed at least 7,000 lives, noted Malaysian state news agency Bernama.

The talks provide a ray of hope in ending the bloodshed in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla, where the Muslims make up the majority, a report by *Kyodo News* noted.

The latest round of peace talks followed an increase in southern violence including multiple bomb explosions in Yala on Dec 31. According to Yala police, the BRN claimed responsibility, reports the *Bangkok Post*.

Regardless, Gen Wanlop refuted claims that three Thais suspected to be insurgents handed over by the Malaysian government to Thai authorities last Wednesday (Jan 12) was linked to the peace talks being held.

The three with criminal records were detained near Durian Burung, in Kedah state, last month.

Gen Wanlop said the hand-over is due to the cooperation in extradition between the two countries, and had nothing to do with the peace dialogue held in Kuala Lumpur last week.

The three suspects with various criminal records and links with militant groups in the south were in the wanted list in Thailand, said a report by Bernama.



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Prab calls for realistic policy

Chutharat Plerin
thai@classactmedia.co.th

Patong businessman Preechavude 'Prab' Keesin, Chairman of Pisona Group and Chief of the Patong Development Foundation, has called for a realistic approach to the current outbreak, with infected people isolated and uninfected staff allowed to keep businesses open.

"We would like people who haven't been infected with COVID-19 to go to work, while those who are infected must be quarantined and treated following steps," Mr Prab told *The Phuket News*' sister-newspaper *Khao Phuket* in an exclusive interview.

The Patong business sector and the local community have rallied together to establish free ATK checkpoints and provide affordable antigen test kits (ATKs) to help alleviate the expenses Patong people face in the repeated testing required just so they can go to work, he said.

"We have daily tests so infections don't spread. We sell test kits at an initial price of B40, which we have bought for B40-49 per set. The price



A motorbike taxi driver waits for customers on Bangla Rd shortly after the bars shut down in the forced 9pm closing. Photo: The Phuket News

depends on each lot. If the person has no money to spare, we will provide the test for free," he added.

"At the moment, we are still accepting tourists, so we have to live with COVID-19," Mr Prab continued.

"We have to open and close businesses sometimes in this situation. We have to take care of ourselves," he said.

"Importantly, we must know what to do when an employee or business operator

is infected," he added.

"Of course, a wide variety of COVID-19 variants will come. So we must adapt and learn to live with it because, while we may not die from COVID-19, we may die from economic catastrophe," Mr Prab said.

Mr Prab warned of the consequences of people not following the COVID-prevention measures.

"Even though we are currently entering our fifth out-

break, we are still at least one step behind the Omicron strain," he said.

"While the symptoms of being infected with Omicron are much less severe than that of Delta, it has an impact on our lives and businesses," he said.

"As a result, the government may have to reduce service times [the hours a business may be allowed open], it may order some closures, or it may even order lockdowns inside the country, and suspend

economic activities if the situation worsens," he warned.

"We can't stop Omicron, but now we know better how to stay with COVID-19 each day, and reduce the burden on the public health system," Mr Prab noted.

"People have learned to protect themselves and what to do when they learn they are infected with COVID-19. They now know that they can quarantine at home, at a community isolation centre,

or at a hotel, unlike before, when everyone had to go to a hospital," he said.

"We now have ATKs, but we still have a shortage of medicines and vaccines that aren't as easy to import as ATKs. As a result, we must continue to improve," he added.

Mr Prab's call for a united stand to counter the spread of infections while keeping Patong businesses alive comes as Phuket officials, through the police, are now enforcing a 9pm shutdown of all licensed venues to ensure that alcohol is not served or consumed on the premises.

The move came into effect on Sunday, Jan 9, in line with a national order issued by the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) in Bangkok on Jan 7.

One Patong bar owner explained to *The Phuket News* that keeping the nightlife venues on Bangla Rd open was vital, not only for the tourism industry, but also for the staff dependent on the income from working.

"People forget that Thailand has no income support for the unemployed. These people need these jobs," he said.

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Tour Teaw Thai slashed amid weak demand

THE TOURISM AND SPORTS MINISTRY will reduce the budget for the "Tour Teaw Thai" tour package subsidy programme, while slashing the scheme's projected tour packages from 1 million to 200,000 amid weak demand.

"After three months of implementation, the measure has proved ineffective in driving domestic trips or serving tourists' demand as very few packages were sold," said Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn.

As of Jan 17, only 27,277 tour packages had been sold, with 1,972 tour programmes offered on the scheme's website. Some 18,650 tourists had travelled with the scheme since Tour Teaw Thai opened for registration on Oct 8 last year.

The scheme has seen spending of B213mn, of which B82.4mn came from the government's subsidy and the rest from travellers.

Thus, the ministry and the National Economic and Social Development Council have discussed returning the Tour Teaw Thai's B4-billion budget and reducing the number of tour packages to 200,000.

Mr Phiphat said local tourists normally take domestic trips independently with family and friends rather than using tours, especially during the pandemic because travelling as part of group tours with strangers can raise health concerns.

However, the ministry wants to continue the scheme, which will be extended from Jan 31 until April 30 if the existing 200,000 packages are used.

Mr Phiphat said the remaining budget,



Tourists on Patong Beach. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

which came from the B1-trillion government loan, cannot be used for We Travel Together, a hotel and airline subsidy scheme, which is funded by the second B500bn emergency loan decree, due to different funding sources.

The proposed continuation of We Travel Together will be submitted to the Cabinet to kick off its fourth phase from February until September.

Mr Phiphat said the additional 2mn room nights planned under the scheme are expected to be fully booked by April thanks to the Songkran holidays.

Tour operators would like the budget to remain the same, but want to simplify regulations such as the scanning process during trips and the approval process of each package on the website, which takes at least 21 days, said Thanapol Cheewarat-anaporn, President of the Association of Domestic Travel.

He said Tour Teaw Thai is the only measure that offers opportunities to tourism operators apart from hotels, while there will be no new tourism stimulus to support the industry after April, which is the beginning of the low season. *Bangkok Post*

Test & Go revival proposed as fears over Omicron ease

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul is proposing to restore the Test & Go programme to win back overseas visitors and accelerate the economic recovery.

Anutin said on Monday (Jan 17) he will ask the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) to relax restrictions stepped up early this year in response to the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

His request will be put to the centre after a discussion with the Department of Disease Control which confirmed that the fast-spreading Omicron variant caused milder symptoms with far fewer hospitalisations and deaths.

As Omicron is within the government's ability to control it, measures to spur the economy, which were halted earlier, will be resumed amid a COVID-safe setting.

Anutin noted the public cooperated well in addressing



Tourists arrive at Phuket airport on Dec 22, 2021. Photo: Achadthaya Chuenniran

Omicron, which is now the country's dominant coronavirus strain. In the past few weeks, daily caseloads have surged although they now appear to be levelling off.

Anutin said approval will be sought from the CCSA, chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, to resume the Test & Go programme under which overseas visitors spend only one night at a hotel. If their COVID-19 test turns out negative, they are free to leave that accommodation and enjoy their stay. It was unclear when the CCSA is expected to meet to consider his request.

Anutin insisted a balance must be struck between keeping a guard up against the pandemic and restoring the economy although he stopped short of confirming if reopening entertainment venues will be among measures he had in mind to ease restrictions. He said this issue needs careful consideration as clubs and bars were blamed for triggering infection clusters, especially during New Year celebrations.

Meanwhile, Omicron has almost completely replaced the Delta variant in Bangkok, said the Centre for Medical

Genomics at Ramathibodi Hospital.

Via Facebook, the centre said checks of COVID-19 infections among patients in state-run and private hospitals in the capital and surrounding provinces showed Omicron accounted for 91% of cases and Delta 2.8%. The checks were performed from Jan 3-16.

According to the centre, after a brief period of 'Twin-demic', referring to the parallel infections between the Omicron and Delta strain ending, Omicron will be prevalent throughout the country.

"That is when almost everyone will be infected with Omicron at one time or another. After that people will have built a high immunity either from the vaccine or the infection," the centre said.

"The intensity of COVID-19 symptoms will decline and fatalities will be significantly reduced," the centre said, adding the cross-technology vaccination formula was also working well to boost immunity.

COVID-19 is likely to evolve into an endemic or a seasonal disease, it added.



The pelt of one of the Bengal tigers shot dead which was found at the camp. Photo: Piyyarat Chongcharoen

Tiger killers facing charges

KANCHANABURI

FIVE MEN WHO KILLED two Bengal tigers in Thong Pha Phum National Park will face 11 charges, national park chief Charoen Chaichon revealed last Saturday (Jan 16).

On Jan 9, forest rangers raided a camp in the Huay Pilok forest inside the national park. A group of hunters there ran away and escaped arrest.

The rangers seized the pelts and carcasses of two slain Bengal tigers with their meat being grilled. Also seized at the site were one shotgun, one .22 rifle with 50 rounds of ammunition, two muzzle-loading pellet guns and many other articles.

On Jan 13, the five men suspected of killing the tigers surrendered to Thong Pha

Phum police.

In a statement to police, they said they raised cattle for a living in the national park. During the past two months, they claimed tigers had killed and eaten about 20 cows belonging to them and other local farmers. They planned to kill the tigers to end the problem.

By using the carcass of a cow killed by the tigers as bait, they lay in wait and gunned down the two tigers. They said they borrowed the shotgun, one of the weapons seized by the rangers, from a village defence volunteer.

The charges include violating the forest reserve law, the National Park Act and the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act, raising cattle in a national park and other related offences.

Bangkok Post

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Trailblazing, Phuket style

MY PHUKET

By Bruce Stanley

As Phuket's economy struggles to revive from the effects of a pandemic that has decimated the local tourism economy for nearly two years, it's interesting to remember how the island went from a rather obscure tropical vacation destination to one of the world's most vibrant and desirable playgrounds for those wanting winter sun, sand, recreation and entertainment not easily found anywhere else.

The Thailand tourism authorities waged some successful campaigns to bring the country to the attention of the international travel industry, while on Phuket, a group of entrepreneurial westerners were also instrumental in developing the infrastructure to support the enthusiastic visitors who were looking for the Amazing Thailand they were promised.

Grenville Fordham was born in Yorkshire, England and lived in Malta and Kenya as a young boy. After a diverse career working in both the hotel

and construction supplies industries, he moved to Thailand in 1995. He worked in Bangkok's media as a writer at *Thailand Times*, editor at *Living in Thailand* magazine and as a freelance writer for international publications.

In 1998, he moved to Phuket looking for the fresh air and easy living that brings most expats to the island. But rather than spending his time relaxing at the beach, he launched media company, Image Asia, best known today for Phuket's premier dining guide, *Where to Eat*, and the bi-monthly print and online showcase of Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi, *Window on Phuket*. He also published *Exclusive Homes* on Phuket and the *Phuket Property Map* providing hard information for potential Phuket property buyers, as well as *Streets of Phuket*, a detailed (pre-Google) road map of the island.

"I started with a small office above my restaurant, Poo's Beach, where we created a beach atmosphere complete with a floor of sand downstairs, while upstairs I was designing brochures and press releases for any business that needed promotion."

Grenville soon became one of Phuket's most active supporters of



Grenville Fordham out on the bay. Photo: Brian Stamm

events. He worked as editor of *Phuket Magazine* and then for several years managed the media for Phuket's famous King's Cup Regatta, when the regatta grew from 50 to 100 entries.

"I had my first sailing experience, in the 1998 King's Cup, on a 32-foot monohull and was immediately hooked on sailing," he recalls.

Over the next five years, in addition to expanding his publishing ventures, working with business partner Andy Dowden, Grenville conceived and developed Thailand's first boat show, the Phuket International Marine Expo (PIMEX), raising the international profile of Thailand's leisure boating industry and putting Phuket on the map for the growing yachting community with expanding interest from regional players.

"One of the industry's biggest challenges was negotiating the reduction of taxes on yacht imports. They were considered luxury goods and were taxed at over 200 percent. I joined, and then became Chairman of, the Marine Alliance of Thailand [now Thailand Yachting Business Association - TYBA], a group of lobbyists working with the government to have this tax reduced and thereby facilitate the growth of Thailand's marine leisure industry. We were successful; import taxes were reduced to zero percent, leaving only 7% VAT. This single achievement by determined individuals led directly to today's thriving marine leisure industry."

July 2004 saw another first from Grenville's Image Asia, with the inaugural Phuket Raceweek, a summer regatta when the monsoon winds made for better racing, which was voted 'Best Asian Regatta' in the Asia Boating Awards 2011.

2008 saw him venture into boatbuilding. Working with business partner Bob Mott, and employing a skilled local workforce, Niña, a 38-foot fast cruising catamaran was launched just in time for the 2009 Six Senses Phuket Raceweek, taking top honours in a field of seven competitive multihulls.

Supported by founding authors Bill O'Leary and Andy Dowden, Grenville co-authors, designs and publishes Southeast Asia Pilot, the definitive guide to sailing in Southeast Asia and beyond. The book is published every two to three years, enjoys worldwide sales in print and electronic formats, and is the essential manual for anyone cruising or chartering a yacht in Asia.

Besides yachting and publishing, Grenville has been a strong supporter of Phuket's business clubs and charities. He joined the British Business Association of Phuket and served two terms as Chairman. During his tenure,

the club made many charitable donations, including to the Vachira Hospital Children's Unit, the island's Old People's Home and Childwatch. Through his company he has also supported youth sailing through various avenues, including the purchase of dinghies for training underprivileged youngsters in Phuket and Koh Samui.

In 2017 he was awarded the rare accolade of Honorary Life Member of the British Chamber of Commerce in Thailand (BCCT) in recognition of service to British business interests in Phuket.

He joined the Phuket Yacht Club in its early days, originally supporting club racing as a sponsor, and went on to serve as Chairman of the committee that designed and built the current clubhouse/restaurant in Chalong, going on to serve as both club treasurer and commodore.

In 2019 Grenville decided to change course and divest himself of his media projects and responsibilities. "I'm busy these days with more personal projects. I have finished with the corporate world and plan to spend time writing and travelling. I've bought a Toyota Commuter van to convert into a camper van. Once it's fully fitted out, my wife and I will spend weeks at a time on the road exploring Thailand."

On where Phuket should be looking for its tourism growth in the future, Grenville had this to say: "I'm not alone in believing that the kind of mass tourism we saw in the year or two prior to COVID is not what Phuket should be looking at if sustainable growth is an objective. In that context, it's important to note that we can't go backwards to the days of minimal shopping opportunities and deserted beaches; that's not going to happen. Nor, in my opinion, is an exclusive focus on the super-wealthy going to give the island what it needs moving forwards."

"What I believe Phuket should be doing is a three-pronged approach: firstly focus on FIT tourists – those who may come on a hotel + flight package but are free to spend their money where they want. Next, do everything necessary to encourage yachting tourism, including clarifying regulations on bareboat charter and finalising the superyacht charter issue."

"And finally, make the obvious move towards legalised gambling – and I mean luxury casino operations a la Macau – on Phuket Island, combined with designating Phuket as a duty-free zone. In each case, we should be looking at lower overall numbers with higher spend per 'tourism unit', combined with maximum indirect economic impact, specifically more, better paid and more diverse jobs."

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School for Life

ON CAMPUS

By Na-Siam Sa-Nguannam

One of the three core elements of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at the British International School Phuket (BISP) is creativity, activity and service, known together as CAS. The service component of CAS involves each student committing to a voluntary activity that will positively impact their community. I think it's very important for students to carry out service projects for their communities as it's a way of showing gratitude and helping those who are less fortunate. For me, a leader should understand that everyone's path is different, that it is his/her duty to spread love and kindness. Unlike most things in the world, the more happiness one shares, the happier one becomes.

I knew that I wanted to do my project focusing on children in need. My friend Anders suggested a school for orphans located in Phang Nga called School for Life. On my first visit to the school, I brought along my close friend Minha. Later on, my other friends Tiffany, Youn, Oak, Bank, Stamp and Mind also joined in.

I had mixed emotions upon entering School for Life; I was overwhelmed by how much land the school has and how friendly the children were. The school

principal along with a group of children gave us a tour of the campus. This was when I learned about the history of this orphanage. The school used to be sponsored by a German organisation. But since its sponsorship withdrawal in 2015, the school has been struggling to survive with little to no source of income. The teachers are not fully paid, and the school lacks sufficient food and other resources to support and sustain the orphans.

A group of nine teachers has been caring for upwards of 70 children who ended up at the school due to complex family issues or trauma – some lost their parents to drugs and crime, others were victims of physical and sexual abuse. As volunteers, we knew that we were dealing with fragile individuals who grew up in harsh environments.

I was determined to invest my time to help improve the children's quality of life. We wanted to assist the school to become more self-sufficient as they mainly rely on small donations on a day-to-day basis from the people around the area. This could be done through farming and raising chickens, at which they already have some experience. Another goal I wanted to achieve was to improve the mindset of the kids by encouraging creative thinking in solving problems so that they can excel in life.

Over the past several months, I have started teaching English to the kids. Every weekend, with the help of my brother Pokpong and occasionally



An English lesson with Porpan and Pokpong. Photo: Na-siam Sa-nguannam

Mind, we can see the children's steady progress. We laughed and played together, it's truly remarkable to be able to spread happiness to the kids. On several occasions, we also brought in some donations from our team such as foods, toiletries and clothes.

We will continue to support the school however we can, especially during these hard times. My goal is to help heal these kids as much as possible by guiding them to become great adults in the future. Through this experience, I have learned tremendously from everyone involved as well as from the children. It is clear that some bonds forged here could last a lifetime.

Being the leader of a group is challenging. Throughout this project, I underwent various challenges along the way. I made sure that I put in as much effort as I can to set a good example for my teammates because I believe that

a good leader should lead by example. The novelist Ken Kesey said it best, "You don't lead by pointing and telling people where to go. You lead by going to that place and making a case."

NOTE: The view and opinion expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of PSU Phuket and its employees or official policies of PSU Phuket.

Na-Siam Sa-nguannam is a Year 13 International Baccalaureate student at the British International School Phuket (BISP). This article was featured in 'The Phuket Collegiate Magazine', the university magazine published by Milla Budiarto at PSU Phuket. For more information, visit: <https://www.phuket.psu.ac.th/en/magazine> or to share ideas with Milla email: magazine@phuket.psu.ac.th.

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POP QUIZ

1. Who is the lead singer of the pop band Maroon 5?

2. In which year did New York City Police get its first-ever African American police commissioner, Benjamin Ward?

3. What is the peak power production of a horse, in terms of horsepower?

4. A mule is a cross between which two equines?

5. The Taj Mahal is in the city of Agra, in which Indian state?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Rapids transit

6. ___ print

10. Arizona's governor, to friends

13. Toothpick fruit

14. Defiant one

15. Arapaho foe

16. 1966 Beatles hit

19. Alexei's father, for one

20. Times to call, in classifieds

21. Sweet drink

22. Blue eyes or baldness, e.g.

24. Endings for ecto- and proto-

26. Zesty

29. Hollywood pole

30. Nymph

31. Almanac tidbit

32. Latin "I"

35. 1963 Beatles tune

39. Nonclerical

40. Squander

41. ___ the moment

42. Splendor

43. Ridges

45. Wets

48. Analyze, in a way

49. Neurotransmission site

Down

1. Egyptian Christian

2. Wistful word

3. Mangrove palm

4. Upset

5. Ballad's end?

6. Side

7. Exasperates

8. ___ Age

9. Bobble

10. Asian plants

11. Special Forces unit

12. Uncool candies?

14. Lifeboat support

17. Vetch or lupin

18. Prayer leader

23. Optical phenomenon

24. Somewhat, in music

25. Mythological

plants

26. "Murphy Brown" bar owner

27. Part of the Corn Belt

28. Jetty

29. Aircraft compartment

31. Elite group

32. Broadcast

33. Palestinian city

34. Half of binary code

36. Offering

37. Some jazz

38. Move

42. Ivy League team

43. Trick

44. Organic compound

45. Model material

46. College leave

47. Gift recipient

48. They remained undefeated by the Romans

50. "Time's a-wastin'!"

52. Bartlett's abbr.

53. Set aside

54. Roll call calls

56. It's a wrap

57. Prefix with profit

58. King's title: abbr.

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12
13						14					15		
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55				56	57				58				
59				60					61				
62				63					64				

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

I	C	O	N		P	O	T	A	T	O		H	I	T
C	L	U	T		A	S	H	E	N		E	D	O	
B	A	T	T		C	L	E	A	T	S		R	E	D
M	I	D	D	L	E	O	F	T	H	E	R	O	A	D
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O	H				T	U	N	A			O	P	A	L
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E	E	G	N			T	R	O						
B	R	A	D			J	E	E	P	S		L	I	B
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A	L	L				T	U	D	E	S		E	D	A
B	Y	E				D	E	S	E	R	T		D	O

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

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3.1

percent of the world's population was killed during World War II.

11

years old was Pocahontas' age when she met John Smith, who was 28 years old at the time.

100

times more potent at destroying cancer cells is the illegal drug ecstasy than the original form of MDMA.

10,000

beaches Australia has along its coast. Visiting a new one each day would take 27 years.


8.4

million

US dollars is how much a Philadelphia man in 1989 sold one of the first copies of the original US Declaration of Independence from 1776. He had found it hidden under the canvas of an old painting he bought at a flea market for \$4.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Child's play on Kamala Beach. Photo by Josie Burgess

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

This week in history

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The first Monte Carlo Rally takes place. The historic race, held annually since, was won by Henri Rougier and the victorious 25Hp Turcat-Méry.

Jan 22, 1957

The New York City 'Mad Bomber', George P. Metesky, is arrested in Waterbury, Connecticut, and charged with planting more than 30 bombs.

Jan 23, 1556

The deadliest earthquake in history, the Shaanxi earthquake in China. The death toll may have been as high as 830,000.

Jan 24, 1972

Japanese Sgt Shoichi Yokoi is found hiding in a Guam jungle, where he had been since the end of World War II.

Jan 25, 1995


The Norwegian rocket incident:

Jan 26, 1788

The British First Fleet, led by Arthur Phillip, sails into Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour) to establish Sydney, the first permanent European settlement on Australia.

Jan 27, 1967

Apollo program: Astronauts Gus Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee are killed in a fire during a test of their Apollo 1 spacecraft at the Kennedy Space Center, Florida.



Henri Rougier (right), winner of the very first Monte Carlo Rally.

Russia almost launches a nuclear attack after it mistakes Black Brant XII, a Norwegian research rocket, for a US Trident missile.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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FRI

21 JAN

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26 JAN

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28 JAN

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FRI

4 FEB



The Grow Boating Networking Evening for February 2022

The Grow Boating Networking Evening for February 2022 will be held at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar, at the Phuket Boat Lagoon on Friday the 4th of February from 5pm. Drinks sponsorship is available for the event. Sponsorship costs 10,000 baht and includes a generous media package from our media partner The Phuket News. Message us for more information. There will be a delicious free burger for all attendees and as always all of your favourite beverages will be available. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. We hope to see you there and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming please invite them along. To join our mailing list please send an email to growboatingphuket@gmail.com Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/growboatingphuket Grow Boating is kindly supported by our media partner The Phuket News, Live 89.5 radio and Phuket News TV. See www.thephuketnews.com

THU

17 FEB



Skal Phuket Dinner at Pizza on Fire Laguna

Dear Members, Colleagues, & Friends of Skål Phuket You are invited to join us for the 1st Skål Phuket Dinner of 2022 at Blue Tree Phuket from 18.00-22.00. Guest speakers include Daniel Steinke, Managing Director of Blue Tree Phuket & Bart Duykers, Area Director of BB&B Thailand. Become a member and connect with the biggest Travel & Tourism professional network. Being part of Skål Thailand offers you a wide range of benefits.contact@skalphuket.org , 080 376 7130

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ARINARA MONTHLY RACING 2022

The first Optimist race of 2022 organised by Phuket Boat Club was held off Bang Tao Beach, in front of the Arinara Bangtao Beach Resort, on Sunday, Jan 16. The Phuket Boat Club will be arranging sailing races every two months at different locations around Phuket. For more information visit: [Facebook/Phuket Boat Club](https://www.facebook.com/Phuket.Boat.Club) ชมรมแล่นใบภูเก็ต





Rattanon (right). Photo: Paul Lakatos / Asian Tour

Rattanon in Singapore play-off heartbreak

GOLF

THAILAND'S RATTANON Wannasrichan lost out in a gripping sudden-death play-off against Joohyung Kim at The Singapore International last Sunday (Jan 16).

South Korea's 19-year-old prodigious talent holed a pressure-packed 14-foot birdie putt on the first extra hole, on the Tampines Course's daunting par-five 18th, before Rattanon missed his birdie attempt from eight feet.

Kim and Rattanon, playing together in the final pairing, had finished the tournament tied on four under, after Kim closed with a 70 and Rattanon 72.

Kim had looked to be on course to take the title in comfortable fashion and held a one-shot lead playing the final hole in normal time, but Rattanon made an eight-foot birdie after

a brilliant chip from behind the green while the Korean took two to get out of the greenside bunker, after a difficult lie for his third, before making a brave par putt from three feet to force the tournament into a sudden-death play-off.

Thailand's amateur star Ratchanon Chantanuwat, aged just 14-years-old, was in contention for much of the day, making it a battle of the teenagers, took sole possession of third when he returned a 69 to finish two shots shy of the play-off.

Rattanon was attempting to become the youngest winner on one of the world's main Tours, aged 14 years, three months, four days.

However, it was not meant to be as despite going out in five-under-par 31, he came back in three over which included a double on 17.

The Phuket News

Debacle Down Under leaves Djokovic dreams hanging

TENNIS

Martin Parry

Novak Djokovic has never hidden his craving to be remembered as the greatest men's tennis player of all time, but his chance to make Grand Slam history is over for now – and perhaps indefinitely.

The Serbian world number one had been the overwhelming favourite to win a record-extending 10th Australian Open, and in doing so become the first man to clinch 21 Grand Slam crowns.

But his refusal to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and deportation from Australia after losing his court fight last Sunday (Jan 16) has halted him in his tracks and thrown huge question marks over the rest of his season, and perhaps even beyond.

His long-held number one spot could also come under threat.

In the short term, it opened the door wider for Rafael Nadal to beat him to the 21 Slam milestone when the Australian Open started on



Head down: Novak Djokovic may well come to rue his decision not to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Photo: AFP

Monday. Roger Federer is also tied on 20 but is injured and not in Melbourne.

Before the debacle Down Under, Djokovic appeared almost certain to surpass Nadal and Federer. He won the Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon last year to assert his status as the world's top player.

But his stubborn stance could now also compromise his chances at the other three majors.

Under current guidelines he could go to France to play if he returns a negative PCR test,

although French President Emmanuel Macron recently said part of his COVID strategy was to "piss off" those who are unvaccinated.

Entering Britain and the United States for Wimbledon and the US Open could be more complicated, with much depending on the future course of the pandemic.

YOUNG CHALLENGERS

Djokovic is also facing the emergence of a new set of hungry and determined younger challengers.

While Nadal hasn't won outside the red clay of Roland Garros since 2019, Alexander Zverev, Russia's Daniil Medvedev and Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas are all knocking on the door.

Medvedev denied Djokovic the US Open and a calendar-year Grand Slam last year to win his maiden major and is favourite in Melbourne to win back-to-back Slams, now that Djokovic is out.

Djokovic has occupied the world number one spot for a record number of weeks, but that could also be in danger now.

Despite missing the Australian Open he will remain top of the ranking points even if Medvedev wins, but his position will be in jeopardy the more tournaments he misses.

The Serbian has yet to reveal his calendar for the early part of the year, but after Australia he often takes time off, then returns for the ATP Masters tournaments in Indian Wells and Miami – both in the US, where he could face similar problems to Australia. *AFP*

English Premier League Predictions

the Phuket News

QR Code

thephuketnews.com/predictions.php

Manish the main man at ACG

CRICKET

Continued from page 16
...final wicket of the RoW innings, dovetailing nicely with Rishi Sadarangani (45), before the latter skied a Deuskar delivery into the waiting hands of A. Ali to leave the score on 221 all out.

The 75-run partnership gave RoW momentum and a chance of victory although they still had a proverbial mountain to climb with limited resources on hand.

RoW immediately signalled their intent with Robertson finding an edge off opening batsman Sachdeva through to wicket keeper Van Blerk in the very first over.

Fonseka joined Manish Sadarangani in the middle and immediately looked for the fences with Sadarangani rotating strike and finding the gaps with precision. A chance to dismiss Fonseka was dropped in the 6th over and it seemed as if the game had slipped away.

RoW's woes were compounded further when Wood went down with an ankle injury and was carried from



Man of the Match Sadarangani (left) pictured with the Hugo Hub Umpire Sajal Gaur. Photo: Michael Flowers

the field. His team mates then began to feel the game was effectively over as they were forced to battle the heat and chase leather for what seemed like the rest of the afternoon, merely completing the formalities of the Asia victory.

Man of the match Manish Sadarangani (98*) played a superb innings, batting all the way through to the conclusion of the match, only giving one chance in the final over of the innings while Fonseka (66) and Asia Captain Seemant Raju (21*) also played important roles in the run chase.

Ali Kahn (8) made a return to Phuket Cricket although he was missing the now damaged bat that had previously unleashed

so much destruction to the surrounding parts of the neighbourhood and so many Phuket bowlers' hearts. Despite the game being out of reach, slow bowler R. Sadarangani took much joy in bowling Kahn and taking his prized wicket.

Asia completed the victory by 6 wickets with 7.2 overs to spare, dishing out punishment to all of the RoW bowlers and, after being handed a heavy defeat in Game 3, will be quietly confident of victory in the upcoming Game 5 decider, the date of which is yet to be confirmed.

If you are interested in joining Phuket Cricket in any capacity, please contact Phuket Cricket on Facebook.

Michael Flowers

Rafa no longer the gaffer

FOOTBALL

AFP

Rafael Benitez was sacked as Everton manager last Sunday (Jan 16) after just 200 days in charge of the struggling Premier League club.

Benitez was an unpopular appointment in June last year after his long spell with Everton's Merseyside rivals Liverpool.

The Spaniard paid the price for a dismal run of nine defeats in Everton's last 13 league matches, culminating in a 2-1 loss at lowly Norwich on Saturday.

"Everton Football Club can confirm the departure of Rafael Benitez as first-team manager," a club statement said.

"Benitez, who joined Everton in June 2021, has left the club with immediate effect.

"An update on a permanent replacement will be made in due course."

Former Everton forward Wayne Rooney, currently impressing as manager of second tier Derby, is the bookmakers' favourite to replace Benitez.

Rooney is a boyhood Everton fan who had two spells at the club as a player either side of his successful time at Manchester United.

He has kept Derby competitive in the Championship despite dealing with a pair of points deductions and the club's descent in administration.

Rooney's former Everton team-mate Frank Lampard, sacked by Chelsea last year, is another contender for the job.

Brighton boss Graham Potter and



Rafael Benitez lasted just 200 days in charge of Everton. Photo: AFP

Paulo Fonseca, whose last job was with Roma, could also be in the running.

Under Benitez, Everton earned just 19 points in 19 league matches, their lowest tally at the halfway stage of a season since 2005-06.

Everton fans had made clear their desire for Benitez to be axed during the limp loss at Norwich. They chanted for his dismissal and held up a banner reading 'Benitez get out of our club', while one supporter invaded the pitch in an attempt to confront the former Real Madrid boss.

Everton held an emergency board meeting on Saturday evening to discuss Benitez's future, with the talks leading to his departure the following day.

Benitez's controversial appointment to replace Carlo Ancelotti after the Italian's move to Real Madrid was a major gamble by Everton owner Farhad Moshiri.

Benitez had infuriated Everton fans by describing them as a "small" club during his time at Liverpool

Merseyside police investigated a threatening banner near Benitez's house which read: 'We know where you live, don't sign' before his appointment.

Last month, Moshiri stood by Benitez, claiming the 61-year-old would be given time to get things right with new signings and injured players coming back.

But Everton's results have shown no signs of improving and, with the mood among the fans increasingly toxic, it was clear Benitez would have to go.

Benitez leaves Goodison Park with Everton languishing in 16th place, just six points above the relegation zone.

Busanan and doubles sisters win BWF titles

FOOTBALL

BUSANAN ONGBAMRUNG-phan claimed the women's singles title at the BWF India Open in New Delhi last Sunday (Jan 16).

The second seed overcame fellow Thai Supanida Katethong 22-20, 19-21, 21-13 in one hour 16 minutes to win the her first title of the year at the World Tour Super 500 event to claim the \$30,000 (B1,002,000) winner's cheque.

Earlier Sunday, fourth-seeded Thai sisters Benyapa Aimsaard and Nuntakarn Aimsaard won the women's doubles title when they eased past third seeds Anastasiia Akchurina and Olga Morozova 21-13, 21-5 in just 34 minutes in the championship match.

The duo received \$31,600 for their first World Tour 500 title.

Thai badminton boss Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul congratulated the winners.

"It was a great start to the year for Thai shuttlers for winning two titles in India," said Patama.

"I would like to also congratulate Supanida for her huge victory over [Pusarla



Benyapa (left) and Nuntakarn. Photo: Bangkok Post

V] Sindhu, who is a former world champion and the Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist."

Supanida had upset top seed Pusarla V Sindhu of India in the semi-finals on Saturday.

The men's singles title went to Lakshya Sen as the Indian upset world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore 24-22, 21-17.

In the mixed doubles final, Singapore's Terry Hee Yong Kai and Tan Wei Han defeated third seeds Chen Tang Jie and Peck Yen Wei 21-15, 21-18 to claim the gold medals.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty of India won the men's doubles title after beating Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan of Indonesia 21-16, 26-24.

Bangkok Post

Government to plug Muay Thai

MUAY THAI

PRIME MINISTER PRAYUT CHAN-o-cha has confirmed plans to promote Thailand's soft power through Muay Thai.

Gen Tunwakom Tipayajan, an adviser to the Culture Ministry and president of the World Muay Thai Alliance Association, met Prayut on Jan 11 to ask to help add value and promote Muay Thai among young people and further develop its reputation as a world-class martial art.

Gen Tunwakom said Muay Thai can generate income for Thailand as many people overseas are interested in it, adding the government should have a platform offering information and services such as Muay Thai schools, contests, books and equipment.



Photo: AFP

He also proposed the government introduce Muay Thai curricula in all schools and organise regular events to promote the martial art and to boost the domestic economy. The plan requires cooperation from various parties including the tourism and sports, culture, commerce, foreign and labour ministries, he said.

Bangkok Post

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Sport



COVID drama clouds Aussie Open > p14

HISTORY MAKER

Phuketian wins the first female MMA contest at Lumpinee Stadium

Jada Ketley is declared the winner after just 52 seconds of her bout last Sunday (Jan 16). Photo: Fairtex Fight Promotion

MMA

JP Mestanza
tv@classactmedia.co.th

How long does it take to make history? For Phuket resident and fighter Jada Ketley, one minute was already too long.

In just 52 seconds, Ketley was able to submit Apidet Fairtex in the first-ever mixed combat sporting event at the venerated Lumpinee Stadium, one of the legendary homes of Muay Thai. Ketley was also part of the first women's MMA fight at Lumpinee, a venue that has long shunned women from

taking part in Muay Thai until last year.

"I don't even have the words for it. I really feel like I get to make a small piece of history and carve a path for other up-and-coming women in MMA," she told *The Phuket News* prior to the bout. "It's such an honour. I believe the last couple of years of my life have been leading up to this moment. Just shows that if you work hard and stay committed and patient, your opportunity will come," she added.

For many, the sight of watching fighters wrestle and go after submissions on the floor of the Lumpinee

boxing ring was satisfying, given how much push-back there was against MMA in Thailand. For years, the authorities and promoters who controlled Muay Thai, and combat sports at large in Thailand, had demonized MMA. Peak anti-MMA sentiment in the Kingdom came in 2012, when the head of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) banned professional MMA events in the country, since, according to him, the sport went against the 1999 boxing law.

At the time, the deputy governor of the SAT, Sakol Wannapong, commented that

"[MMA] is brutal and it is not boxing."

Fast-forward 10 years and the sport is not only allowed but is now hosted in one of the inner-sanctuaries of Muay Thai in Lumpinee Stadium.

The Fairtex Fight Promotion, an offshoot of the Fairtex fight brand and gym based in Pattaya, hosted their first bi-monthly combat sporting events that included a mix of Muay Thai and MMA fights last Sunday (Jan 16). The show was the promotion's first of many they plan on hosting for the foreseeable future.

Not only is Ketley's submission victory the culmination

of years of hard work, but it's a dream come true for a fighter whose original passion was Muay Thai. But, with Lumpinee's longtime stance on refusing to host female Muay Thai fights, Ketley was resigned to the fact that this would never happen.

Ketley then transitioned into MMA, training out of the new Bang Tao Muay Thai & MMA, but with the pandemic interrupting her career plans, fights were pushed back and later cancelled altogether. So when the opportunity arose to fight at her dream venue, this time in a history-making MMA bout, she jumped at the chance.

"This opportunity means the world to me. I have it written in a goals diary from a while ago that I would love to one day fight in Lumpinee, but I didn't think they'd take women on board," she said. "It's also just great to see that times are changing, and women are, I feel, starting to really get their voices in martial arts too... although there is still a way to go."

"I've been dreaming about fighting in Lumpinee, but thought that my opportunity was gone when I knew my heart was no longer in Muay Thai. So the fact that I get to be one of the first to do it in MMA is overwhelming."

Asia blast RoW to set up Game 5 decider

CRICKET

AFTER WINNING THE TOSS at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) last Sunday (Jan 16), Jason Robertson and the Rest of the World (RoW) decided to bat first in arid conditions, looking to make Asia toil away for the full 30 overs.

Robertson sent out the previous weeks' successful opening partnership of Michael Flowers

and Anthony Van Blerk and the pair began where they left off, taking sharp singles and putting away the odd offline delivery from the Asia opening bowlers Sami Pir and Ashan Fonseka.

Just when it seemed the pair were set to put a significant partnership together, Flowers (9) was adjudged LBW in the 5th over from the bowling of Pir, leaving the score on 33-1.

Michael Rhys Thomas (8) fell

next as RoW slumped to 47-2 in the 8th over before Van Blerk joined him in the clubhouse in the next over, caught behind by Manish Sadarangani from the bowling of the young up-and-coming Shivam Sachdeva.

Next the hard hitting Paddy Ledebor (10) faced the extreme pace of Fonseka who delivered a ripping delivery to find the poles and leave RoW in some trouble at 4-117 after 14.4 overs.

Robertson (27) was then clean-bowled by Ahsan Ali which brought Aiden Wood to strike. Wood, who is the DJ for Phuket Cricket's new sponsor Hugo Hub, immediately got off the mark with a well-played boundary, delighting his supporting friends in the clubhouse.

However, Wood (10) soon fell to a full straight delivery from Fonseka, leaving RoW on 6-147 in the 19th over.

With 68 balls of the innings



The stylish Manish Sadarangani on top form as he blasts his way to an impressive 98 not out at the ACG. Photo: Michael Flowers / file

still to face and unfortunately short-handed due a couple of late cancellations, the reliable Curt Livermore (28*) came to the crease as the...

Continued on page 14