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OPENING THE GATE



Officials at Phuket airport organise tourists entering Thailand on visas on arrival. Photo: TAC Phuket

OPTIMISM FOR TOURISM RECOVERY SHINES AS THAILAND PASS CANCELLED

The Phuket News
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Local hoteliers are feeling good about Phuket's tourism revival prospects after the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) in Bangkok last Friday (June 17) announced the easing of major restrictions that were highly criticised for deterring tourism arrivals.

The easing of restrictions will, among other effects, see the Thailand Pass Certificate of Entry no longer required from July 1. Also to come into effect next month is the lifting of the requirement to wear a face mask in general public areas.

"Phuket is certainly seeing a gradual return of tourism, and we're seeing more corporate mega events and weddings returning to the island – this is encouraged by the ease of travel restrictions and increase in airlift and frequency of flights to the island," said Bjorn Courage, President of the Phuket Hotels Association.

"Phuket Sandbox was the first indication of positive international borders reopening in Southeast Asia. Our island is ready, businesses are back to normal business capacity and we're ready to have tourists back," Mr Courage, who is also General Manager of the InterContinental Phuket Resort, told *The Phuket News*.

"That said, our industry is facing a massive challenge in human resources. There has been a substantial talent flight out of hotels and shortages in skills hospitality is a clear and present danger," Mr Courage noted.

"Our focus at Phuket Hotels Association is now highly focused on upskilling of existing staff and education in college and universities to provide a sustainable future in the industry. Brand Thailand is the face of the nation and our hotels are at the forefront of a global brand, so it's a critical time for action." (See 'Hotels target skills shortage' on page 6).

Following the CCSA's announcements last Friday, which includes

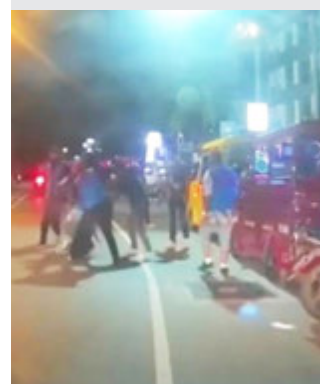
nightlife venues to return to normal trading hours from July 1 (see page 2), Tourism Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakan told reporters that the Thailand Pass system, where foreign tourists must seek prior approval from Thai authorities, will be halted from July 1, removing one of the country's last remaining travel curbs. (See page 7.)

"The Kingdom is one of the world's most popular travel destinations, but tourism businesses have long complained that its requirement for foreigners to submit multiple documents – from vaccine and swab test certificates to medical insurance and hotel bookings – was impeding the sector's recovery," Mr Phiphat said.

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Motorbike taxi drivers in Patong street brawl



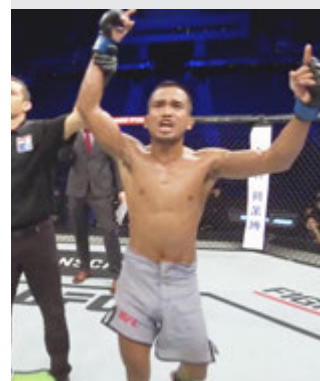
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Sustainability on show at One Phuket event



SPORT PAGE 16

Top Noi delivers a dazzling UFC debut victory



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News



Officials aim to halve road deaths > p5

Nightlife hours to return to normal

The Phuket News
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With the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) resolving to have all provinces in Thailand declared 'Green' areas effective July 1, operating hours of pubs, bars and other entertainment venues will return to normal, a senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs official announced last Friday (June 17).

The CCSA has resolved to declare all 77 provinces of Thailand "surveillance areas", or "green areas", in its COVID colour-coded zoning, Marathi Nalita Andamo, News Division Director of the Department of Information under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, explained this afternoon.

The centre said it will also abolish the Thailand Pass System from July 1 onward, she added.

"The recategorisation now allows some nightly entertainment venues to operate until midnight, while others can open until 2am," Ms Andamo said, reported state news agency NBT.

"Operators are advised to seek consultation from the local authorities on how to obtain appropriate permits for their businesses," the report added.

Under the further easing of COVID-prevention measures, temperature screening in most buildings is no



Police and other law-enforcement officers inspect bars along Bangla Rd, Patong, on June 16. Photo: PR Phuket

longer required. Mask wearing is still recommended in most cases, the report noted.

BACK TO THE BARS

Weerawit Kreuasombat, President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA), has noted a recent increase in trade among bars along Bangla Rd.

A report by Radio Thailand Phuket, which operates under the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PRD Phuket), attributed the increase in business to the easing of restrictions brought

into effect on June 1, which allowed specially registered nightlife venues to sell alcohol until midnight.

The "Cinderella rule" is still in effect, at this stage until July 1.

Regardless, according to the Radio Thailand Phuket report, the easing of nightlife venue trading hours and restrictions has resulted in "almost 100% of the area's entertainment venues to be back open".

Mr Weerawit pointed out that most of the patrons currently enjoying the nightlife available are tourists from India and from Australia.

"However, the spending behaviour

of this group of tourists still may not be as much as tourists from Europe, who have not yet arrived because it is in the off season," Mr Weerawit said.

"But it's better than no tourists coming in," he noted.

"The overall atmosphere is considered to be good. Entertainment venue operators in Soi Bangla, Patong, are strictly following the measures that the provinces and the government have set," Mr Weerawit said.

"It has been a hard lesson, but we are ready to provide services in accordance with the measures of the

state for business operators in the tourism sector to take full advantage of the opportunity to open up the country by being a good host to welcome visitors of all nations and languages," he said.

BANGLA CHECKS

Despite the major announcements by the CCSA, nightlife venues are for now to continue operating under condition that they comply with Thai Stop COVID 2 Plus (TSC 2+) measures.

Kathu District Chief Siwat Warangkul, along with officers from the Patong Police, Tourist Police, Patong Municipality and local health officials on June 16 conducted inspections of nightlife venues along Bangla Rd for compliance with the COVID-prevention measures.

Leading the foray, which began at 7:30pm, were Maj Gen Saksira Phuak-am, Deputy Commander of Region 8 Police along with Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Col Chaikiat Wiriyasathitkul, Lt Col Ekachai Siri of the Phuket Tourist Police.

No legal action was reported to have been taken against any persons, whether they be business operators, staff or tourists.

The stated goal of the inspection was to ensure compliance and to inform people on the popular nightlife street of the COVID-prevention measures still in effect.

More easing of restrictions required to help economic recovery

Continued from page 1

Thailand was visited by nearly 40 million people in 2019, but received less than 1% of that number last year despite easing its quarantine requirements, Mr Phiphat noted.

"Though tourism has picked up in recent months, the industry is far from recovering, with huge jobs and business losses in a sector that typically accounts for about 12% of Thai gross domestic product," he added.

MOVE PRAISED

Sanan Angubolkul, Chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, said businesses are likely to breathe a sigh of relief as they can resume normal operations after the government announced the relaxations.

The battered tourism sector is expected to recover after the government ap-

proved the proposal to scrap the Thailand Pass requirement for overseas tourists. A tourism recovery will help boost the country's economy in the second half of this year, he said, forecasting more than 6 million foreign arrivals this year, reported the *Bangkok Post*.

According to Mr Sanan, the extension of service hours for bars, pubs and karaoke clubs beyond midnight will also be a sign for restaurants, taxis and other businesses to resume their services as normal.

"Income from nighttime businesses across the country is estimated at B30-50 billion per month. We expect B200-300bn worth of money circulation will resume in the second half," he said. "In combination with income from foreign tourists, as much as B500-700bn is estimated to circulate in the economy in



Tourism Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn praised the cancelling of the Thailand Pass requirement. Photo: MoTS

the second half, encouraging people to spend more in the remaining months of the year."

Chaichan Chareonsuk, president of the Thai National Shippers' Council, said the government's decision will help resuscitate service and tourism businesses.

"Many countries already eased their strict control measures and reopened to foreign tourists, such as Vietnam. It was time for the Thai gov-

ernment to scrap such strict requirements to boost the economy," he said.

FURTHER EASING

However, tourism businesses have urged the government to further relax restrictions to stimulate the economy.

Marisa Sukosol Nunbhakdi, President of the Thai Hotels Association, said at the recent 'Thailand Moving Together' seminar held in Bangkok that

the greatest concern following the reopening of the country is a lack of workers, as many former employees are hesitant to return due to the instability of tourism demand.

Ms Marisa observed that many nations have already eliminated mask requirements, and Thailand should adopt the same policy, allowing businesses and individuals to decide for themselves whether to don a mask, she added.

Phuket Tourist Association's Vice President of International Marketing, Nantida Atiset, stated that Thailand's air connectivity must also be improved to increase capacity and provide support for chartered flights, particularly from India and major international destinations.

Of note, the PTA is organising a tourism road show to Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore in early August.

Echoing Ms Nantida's

sentiments, Somsong Sachaphimukh, Vice President of the Tourism Council of Thailand, noted that as many as 300-400 Indian couples are currently planning wedding ceremonies in Thailand for 2022.

He added that the Diwali festival in October, as well as the 75th anniversary of India-Thailand diplomatic relations, will also drive this market.

Meanwhile, Sanga Ruangwattanakul, President of the Khao San Business Association, proposed extending the closing time for nightlife businesses in Bangkok and major tourist destinations such as Phuket and Pattaya beyond the closing times that were in effect before the COVID-19 pandemic, and which come into effect again on July 1, to help operators increase their revenue.

South African caught smuggling cocaine

Eakkapop Thongtub
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Customs officers at Phuket International Airport have arrested a South African man caught smuggling 1.49kg of cocaine, estimated to be worth B4.47 million, in 155 capsules in his stomach.

Customs spokesman Chaiyut Khamkun last Friday (June 17) confirmed that Customs officers had seized a total of 17.19kg of cocaine worth about B51.47 million in two incidents in the preceding two weeks.

The 29-year-old South African man was traveling from the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa and landed at Phuket airport at about 12:30pm on June 9, Mr Chaiyut explained.

A baggage inspection found nothing illegal, but officers were suspicious that the man might be smuggling drugs into the country by passing through Customs after swallowing the contraband.

No explanation was given as to why Customs officers thought this.

The man was taken to Thalang Hospital, where an x-ray confirmed the officers' suspicions. Many foreign objects of a round, oval shape were identified to be in his abdomen.

The man subsequently admitted to swallowing capsules containing drugs.



The South African man arrested at Phuket airport was found to be smuggling 1.49kg of cocaine in 155 capsules that he had ingested. Photo: Customs Dept

At that time which drug had been consumed had not been confirmed, Mr Chaiyut continued.

However, the patient Customs officers later confirmed the man had swallowed 115 capsules altogether containing 1.49kg of cocaine, estimated to be worth B4.47mn, he said.

The South African man has since been taken to Sakhu Police Station, located just south of Phuket airport, and charged accordingly, Mr Chaiyut confirmed.

Then on Monday last week (June 13), Customs officers at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok arrested three people arriving from Brazil who

were caught with 15.7kg of cocaine hidden in the bottom lining of their pieces of luggage.

The drugs seized was valued at about B47mn, Mr Chaiyut said.

The three entered the country with five items of luggage, which officers searched and scanned by x-ray, he said.

The inspections discovered the cocaine in packages that were wrapped with plastic as the inner layer and then wrapped with black carbon paper used for copying documents.

All three were charged for attempting to smuggle the drugs into the country, Mr Chaiyut confirmed.

Foreigners wanted for hit and run

POLICE ARE TRYING TO track down a grey Toyota Vios driven by a foreign woman that struck a woman beside the road in Cherng Talay on June 16 and failed to stop, leaving the woman in hospital with broken ribs and head injuries.



The car police are trying to track down. Image: visa Eakkapop Thongtub

According to CCTV near the scene, the incident happened on the Bang Tao Rd at 4:17pm. The car was heading towards Surin Beach when it struck the woman.

The car has been described as a brand-new grey Toyota Vios bearing Bangkok licence plates with the number 8767.

Police and the owner of Pam's Relax Massage, where the woman worked, have so far asked not to name the woman injured.

Jarunee Kasurong, sister of the injured woman, filed a formal complaint of the hit and run at Cherng Talay Police Station on June 17. The complaint was received by Lt Col Worawut Sensob, Deputy Chief of Investigation at Cherng Talay Police.

Chayakorn Permpoon, owner of Pam's Relax Massage, explained that the woman was walking to a small shop nearby to buy a bottle of drink-

ing water when the Vios came around the bend at speed. The car swerved wide as it rounded the corner and struck the now-injured woman.

A foreign woman was driving, with a foreign man sitting in the front passenger seat.

The woman struck by the car was rushed to Thalang Hospital and later transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town.

She is in a stable condition but remains in care and under observation.

Police have checked CCTV in the area, though there is very limited coverage showing the actual impact. Officers are continuing their efforts. At time of press, Cherng Talay Police had yet to confirm any success in finding the car or its driver.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Police investigate Patong taxi drivers brawl

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING a street brawl involving motorcycle taxi drivers in Patong after a video of the incident was posted online raising questions about Phuket's tourism image.

The fight involving Patong 'public transport' drivers broke out at around 12:45am last Saturday (June 18), on Patong's renowned beach road, right in front of the Patong Immigration Office and some 200 metres from Bangla Community Police Station.

The incident was recorded by a dash-cam of a passing vehicle. The video was then posted online and went viral.

A 39-second-long clip shows a group of people beating another person right in the middle of the beach road. Some of the attackers can be clearly seen wearing blue vests, a typical uniform of Patong motorbike taxi drivers. The end of the fight was not shown in the clip.

It was later reported by local Thai media that several people presented themselves to Patong Police and confirmed that there



A motorcycle taxi driver was beaten by rivals in Patong last Saturday night (June 18). Screenshot: Supplied

was a conflict between local motorcycle taxi drivers and a competitor "not from their queue" who tried to pick-up a passenger in their area.

It was not revealed if the passenger was a Thai national or a foreign tourist. The unnamed victim had yet to report the incident to the police.

Phuket Provincial Police

Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong confirmed to local media that he had been informed of the incident and ordered Patong Police to investigate the case in due manner. Yet at the time of press no official statement has been released so far by either Phuket Provincial Police or Patong Police.

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Low: +27°
Wind 11 m/s

MON JUNE 27

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Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

TUE JUNE 28

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Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

WED JUNE 29

High: +30°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

THU JUNE 30

High: +30°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

Phuket enters bid for Expo 2028

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Governor Narong Woonchiew arrived in Paris last week ahead of Thailand entering its bid to host the World Specialised Expo in 2028 at the 170th General Assembly of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) held on Monday and Tuesday (June 20-21).

Governor Narong was joined in his visit to Paris by Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) President, TCEB Southern Regional Office Director Pattanachai Singhavara, Phuket Tourist Association President Bhumikitti Ruktaengam and even Vachira Phuket Hospital Director Dr Weerasak Lorthongkham.

The Phuket delegation met with Thana Veskosit of the Thai Embassy in Paris last Friday (June 17) before the BIE General Assembly, during which six countries delivered their presentations in their bids to host Expo 2028.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha submitted a formal letter of support for Phuket to host the World Specialised Expo. The undated letter, shared by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) on June 15, was submitted to the BIE in English, French and Thai.

“As one of the most visited coun-



The Phuket delegation met at the Thai Embassy in Paris before the bid was presented to the BIE on Monday and Tuesday (June 20-21). Photo: PR Phuket

tries in the world, Thailand has been honoured to warmly welcome many international friends to share our cultural heritage and enjoy the unique Thai ways of life in every different region of our country... Thailand has cherished seeing many international travelers in our country who have correspondingly kindled a unique spirit of friendship with the Thai people,” the Prime Minister wrote.

“With this long history of connectivity with peoples of many cultures, Thailand has very much appreciated the spirit of global citizenship and, therefore, the importance of reinvigorating globalization for the benefit of all countries. In this regard, Thailand relishes the opportunity to accelerate international cooperation on the many global issues that require an enlivened spirit of global citizenship, whether

it be for sustainable growth, climate change, the promotion of peace, or access to sustainable development,” he continued.

“It is with this essence that I am pleased to affirm my support for the candidature of the island of Phuket to be the host for a Specialised Expo in 2028, with the theme of ‘Future of Life: Living in Harmony, Sharing Prosperity’. I believe that with Thailand’s experiences in sustainable development, world-class tourism, and hosting many international meetings, Phuket Expo 2028 will be a successful event that contributes to our shared commitment to the SDGs and indeed, a renewed spirit of internationalism through productive and innovative cooperation between our government, business, and civil society sectors,” PM Prayut wrote.

“Thailand stands ready to welcome the world to Phuket Island for Phuket Expo 2028, and is looking forward to this excellent opportunity to promote a refreshed appreciation of global connectivity and solidarity that will contribute to our shared aspirations for development, progress, and prosperity for all,” he concluded.

A notice posted with the letter marked that the expo is hoped to be held from March 20 - June 17, 2028.

The three-month event is expected to attract 4.9 million visitors to the fair, generating cash flow spending of B49 billion, altogether adding B39bn to the national GDP. Income from tax collection generated from Phuket hosting the event is estimated at B9.5bn

Hosting the event is expected to create some 113,000 jobs, with the event itself enjoying 9x ROI (return on investment).

The event is to be held on 141 rai of state land near Tha Chatchai in Mai Khao, at the northern tip of the island. The project plan is to build a “world-class health tourism city”, with a 5,000-seat conference centre and research facility at the site, said the notice.

The Cabinet in January approved a budget of B4.18bn for Phuket to host the expo. The BIE is currently expected to arrive in Phuket for a four-day inspection tour, from July 25-28.

Man, 81, killed in motorbike collision amid dark roadworks

AN 81-YEAR-OLD MAN HAS died after the motorbike he was riding collided with another motorbike at speed on a dark road undergoing repaving in Tambon Thepkasattri.

Police and rescue workers were called to the scene, near the Thalang Kung Kat restaurant on Don Chom Thao Rd in Moo 4, Thepkasattri, at about 7:45pm on June 16.

Rescue workers provided emergency first and CPR to Jaron Taranattanakul, 81, before rushing him to Thalang Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Also seriously injured was the other motorbike rider, Myanmar national Kyaw Naing Oo, 37, who was also transported to Thalang Hospital.

According to the preliminary investigation into the accident, Mr Kyaw Naing Oo was riding his black-red Honda Wave motorcycle from Baan Don towards Thepkasattri Rd when the accident happened.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Mr Jaron, a resident of Anuphas Phuketkarn Rd in Phuket Town, was riding his black Honda Dream motorbike towards Wat Ban Don.

Local residents at the scene said that the road had become dangerous at night with no lighting while the road resurfacing continues, with more and more accidents occurring.

“It has been a long time, nearly a year, but the construction still has not yet been completed,” one resident said.

“At night, especially during rainy nights, it is very difficult to see any other vehicles, and more and more accidents are happening,” she added.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Search continues for young whale caught in marine trash

SEARCH TEAMS FROM THE Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) have yet to find the young sperm whale spotted swimming through marine trash off Koh Racha Noi last week amid concerns for the whale’s health.

The search was launched after photos of the whale were posted online last Thursday (June 16), with the Navy joining the efforts through patrol boat TC 107 and surveillance drones scouring the area.

The DMCR reported last Sunday (June 19) that concerns were raised when it was noticed that the whale was repeatedly turning on its side while swimming. The whale was able to right itself to breathe, but marine life researchers in the area are concerned for the whale’s safety.

The search is continuing with all fishing and other commercial boat operators in the area urged to report any sightings to officials immediately.

However, so far no sightings have been reported, the DMCR noted.

The sighting of the young sperm whale in distress while swimming through a flotsam of marine trash in



Photo: DMCR

waters near Phuket came just eight days after Varawut Silpa-archa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), on June 8 presided over a major event at Loma Park in Patong to mark World Oceans Day that was broadcast to more than 30 countries worldwide.

The event was held under the theme “Revitalization: Collective Action for the Ocean”, with the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) hosting similar events in 10 coastal provinces.

The event was to encourage Thai people to conserve and take care of marine resources, Mr Varawut said.

The Phuket News

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Officials aim to halve deaths on Phuket roads

The Phuket News
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Phuket officials have announced a policy to try to halve the number of deaths on Phuket's roads within the next five years.

Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodwan Yodrabam revealed the goal during a meeting of the Phuket Province Road Safety Administrative Center Committee at Phuket Provincial Hall on June 14.

The goal is to reduce the rate of road accident deaths to 12 people per 100,000 population by the year 2027, Vice Governor Anupap told the meeting, held at the Phuket office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket).

The lofty goal would see Phuket's current resident population of over 500,000 suffer "only" 41 road deaths a year.

However, Phuket has already suffered 42 deaths and 7,079 people injured in road accidents so far this year, according to the Thai Road Safety Council.

Last year, while under severe travel constraints greatly hampering the arrival of tourists on the island, Phuket suffered 70 deaths and 13,138 people injured in road accidents.

In 2020, Phuket suffered 106 deaths and 16,859 people injured in road accidents.

Vice Governor Anupap pointed out that achieving the goal would require a



Vice Governor Anupap announced the lofty goal at a meeting held at the DDPM Phuket office on June 8. Photo: PR Phuket

concerted effort by all agencies involved.

"Operations such as strict enforcement of the law by responsible officers and the prosecution of violators for non-compliance with the law to receive the maximum penalty so that drivers strictly comply with the law," was one of the key requirements, he said.

Other actions included making road crossing areas safe, such as by ensuring drivers have reduced speed before reaching the crosswalk, as well as providing clear traffic markings on the road surfaces.

More clearly visible traffic warning signs were required, for both drivers and

pedestrians, to be able to see clearly, were also required.

Road safety awareness activities at schools were needed to ensure safety, especially at school crossings, V/Gov Anupap said.

"Awareness campaigns are needed to educate drivers of the losses that may occur from undisciplined driving and not following traffic rules," he added.

All local municipalities are to hold such activities every month, and inform the committee of their efforts to improve road safety over the past month on the fifth day of each month, V/Gov Anupap said.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Two injured as hanging cable downs motorbike

A 51-YEAR-OLD WOMAN and her 10-year-old granddaughter escaped serious injury after a communications cable hanging loose from a roadside pole brought down the motorbike they were riding on Chao Fa West Rd near Chalong Hospital last Sunday (June 19).

Local rescue workers were alerted to the accident by a passer-by who reported that two people had been injured in a motorbike fall at the entrance to Soi Pramote off Chao Fa West Rd, in Moo 8 Chalong.

Rescue workers arrived to find Soraya Angsanam, 51, and her granddaughter Rattana Charoensap, 10, on the road with minor injuries. The pair were administered first aid at the scene before being taken to Chalong Hospital nearby.

Ms Soraya explained that she and her granddaughter were returning home after buying some lunch when she

rode over the loose cable and they were brought down.

The two had travelled about 100 metres past the pole before it pulled taut, snapping up her left arm and across her throat, causing her to lose control of the motorbike, Ms Soraya said.

Ms Soraya suffered only minor injuries along her left arm and across her throat, along with scrapes and bruises to her legs sustained when she fell onto the road.

Nong Rattana also escaped the incident with only minor injuries to her arms and legs, and a bump to her left temple.

It was not reported whether the two were wearing helmets at the time of the accident.

After treating their injuries, doctors released both Ms Soraya and Nong Rattana.

At time of press Chalong Municipality had yet to recognise the incident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Cannabis use brings health risks and benefits, warns health chief

DR KUSAK KUKIAT-tikoon, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO), has spoken out on the use of cannabis and the availability of cannabis products in Phuket, especially consumables.

People should not think that marijuana has been approved for recreational use, Dr Kusak said during a radio interview on June 15.

"Marijuana has been decriminalised since June 9, but it is for medical use only. It is not for recreational use," he said.

Dr Kusak noted at the time that the Cannabis and Hemp Act had yet to be legislated. "There will be definitions for the use of cannabis," he said.

"While marijuana is restricted for patients, it should not be used by people such as those with symptoms of heart disease, lung disease, pregnant women and mothers who are breastfeeding. If necessary, consult a doctor," Dr Kusak said.

"Cannabis is useful if not used too much. It will



Photo: Radio Thailand Phuket

help with insomnia, loss of appetite and pain. It will have a medical effect that can help. But if you eat too much, there will be side effects. It can seriously affect the body, especially for those who have never eaten it before at all," he added.

Some people are allergic to cannabis, Dr Kusak also warned.

"Negative side effects include dizziness, trembling, dry mouth, drowsiness, nausea and vomiting. A drop in blood pressure is also a common side effect," he said.

Dr Kusak urged people dining at restaurants to first

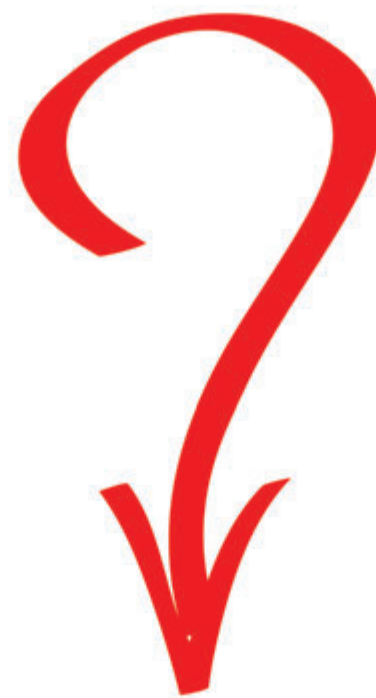
ask if what they are ordering contains cannabis. "It is especially important for people who are allergic to marijuana," he said.

"I have ordered PPHO officers to visit restaurants in the area to inform the operators of these issues, and to check whether foods are clearly labelled for containing cannabis.

"Although there are currently no legal restrictions on the use of cannabis leaves as a cooking ingredient, we need to be aware of the safety of people and the real benefits of cannabis use," he said. *The Phuket News*



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Hotels target skills shortage

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

As Phuket looks toward a revival in the tourism sector, hoteliers are struggling to find qualified staff to provide the level of service returning tourists are looking for.

Time is of the essence, Michael Zitek, Area General Manager at Angsana Laguna Phuket, said at an event on June 10.

“The skills shortage in hospitality in Phuket is dire. There are people who are very willing to come to work, but it is the next generation,” Mr Zitek said at an AustCham event hosted at the resort that focussed on providing vocational training to plug the skills gap.

“As we have just finished the TTM 2022 [Thailand Travel Mart], we did not have enough full-time associates to deliver that level of service [required].

“We go out for recruitment and hire casual employees and the bodies are there. The desire to work is there, but there is a big gap to catch up to get it back to the skill levels people are expecting,” he said.



TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn and Tourism Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn arrive for the TTM+ 2022 event at Angsana Laguna Phuket earlier this month. The resort hosted thousands of guests for the event, but is just one hotel on Phuket struggling to hire experienced, skilled staff. Photo: MoTS

“As an industry, we are pressed for time. We have high season looming in September and October,” Mr Zitek noted.

The battering of the tourism industry during the COVID pandemic saw an exodus of skilled, experienced staff, Mr Zitek explained.

“Before COVID, from say 2017-2019, our supervisors and mid-level management were in their 40s and already had 20 years of experience. At the moment our supervisors are

maybe mid-20s.

“It has been this attrition of the previous professionals. They have had their own families to take care of and their own industries that they have commenced during the downtime. They have gone away from the industry and established comfortable lives, and they are not running back to Phuket and so on,” he added.

“The bodies are there, the people are there, but the actual skills and experience

are not,” he said.

Mr Zitek’s comments came at a presentation of a vocational skills training framework provided by the Hunter Education Group in Newcastle, Australia, working with the Nurture Higher Education Group (Nurture HE), which originated in Bangkok but also now provides international-level education in Indonesia and Vietnam.

The Nurture HE programme offers students a

hospitality degree issued by the University of Newcastle through the Thai Chamber of Commerce campus in Bangkok, which is home to some 24,000 students.

Stephen Healy, Co-Founder and Managing Director of Nurture Higher Education Group, explained that the degree is a fully qualified Australian degree, benchmarked against Australian university education standards. The skills and competencies taught must pass those standards, or the accreditation and certification cannot be provided.

Dary Milani, CEO, Hunter Education Group, noted that course units of competencies (skills) – anywhere from cocktail making to financial budget creation – are taught as separate subjects, but can be clustered together to deliver intensive training in specialised areas.

“The units can be taken in bite-sized pieces. Each of those unit competencies could be delivered in an accelerated cluster or intensive cluster over a weekend,” Mr Milani said.

Even when fast-tracking courses, the quality of education for the overall degree is not compromised, Mr Milani

noted. “Students must still meet a volume unit credits in order to complete the qualification in full,” he said.

Mr Healy raised the possibility of pop-up training sessions to be held locally in order to help hotels fast-track the upskilling of their staff.

The competencies taught and tested do not change for small or large hotels. They remain the same requirements for certification, he said.

This provides for uniform skills validation and helps with transferability, Mr Healy noted.

“We’re now really in a situation of rebuild and restore. I think it is important to address this in terms of the hospitality reputation of Thailand. It is important to give opportunities to grow and develop, and have certification that is transferable between hotels,” Mr Zitek noted.

“The younger generation are quite confident to change jobs quite often, but if there were the opportunity to transfer that quality of education or skills to the next place and continue learning, as much as we compete, we could collaborate for the redevelopment of skills that represent Thailand,” he concluded.

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The Phuket News wins APAC Insider Award

THE PHUKET NEWS HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED as winner of the Best Online News Platform 2022 - Thailand at the APAC Insider South East Asia Business Awards.

“The events of the last two years have proven to be a challenging gauntlet for businesses of all sizes across the world. For new businesses looking to build and settle on robust foundations, the global pandemic proved to be a baptism of fire defined by uncertainty and overcome only through sheer creativity and adaptability,” APAC Insider said in its release announcing the award winners.

“Of course, online businesses fared better overall, and it is here that many South East Asian companies gained ground that would have otherwise been lost. All in all, South East Asia, as a region, has showcased a steadfast ability to find success. It is with this in mind that APAC Insider Magazine launched the 2022 edition of the awards programme,” the announcement read.

Awards Co-ordinator Victoria Cotton commented on the success of the deserving winners, “It has been a delight to reach out to those selected in this year’s programme. I offer my heartfelt congratulations to all of those recognised, and I wish you all an amazing rest of the year ahead.”

The Phuket News, and its sister newspapers Thai-language *Khao Phuket* and Russian-language *Novosti Phuketa*, are published by Class Act Media, in print and online,

The Class Act Media house is also home to the popular Live 89.5 radio station broadcasting across the island and JP Mestanza’s Phuket News TV ‘Phuket Xtra’ video reports. The IMAGE asia brand, under the same media ownership, produces the popular Window



Image: APAC Insider

on Phuket magazine and the Where to Eat dining guide.

Class Act Media & IMAGE asia General Manager Jason Beavan commented on receiving the award, “Wonderful recognition to the hard work from our team. With all the hardships the last 24-plus months has brought, they never once faulted in their commitment to keep Phuket and the world updated on everything Phuket, thank you team.

“Special thanks to all our advertisers, supporters, readers and listeners – without your support and feedback, we would not have been able to win this award. This award really highlights the importance of a local media company, keeping the local community informed and talking to each other. Clear communication is the key to a healthy society,” Mr Beavan added.

APAC Insider has a circulation of 161,000 leaders and decision makers. With 22% of the circulation being from the South East Asia region, APAC Insider acts as an invaluable resource that informs its readership of all major developments in this vibrant and plentiful location.

The Phuket News

Emergency decree to remain for now: Prayut

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Monday (June 20) insisted the government has not yet cancelled the emergency decree as there remain concerns that the special law is still needed, although easing of restrictions will continue and the Cabinet will reassess the situation when the time is right.

Prayut's remarks came after Move Forward Party (MFP) MP Rangsiman Rome urged the government to stop renewing the decree, which has been extended 18 times in two years despite the drop in COVID-19 cases and easing of restrictions.

The premier said the emergency decree was invoked to facilitate government efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 and the special law has been an effective tool in helping to achieve that target.

He said the government would have to examine the COVID-19 situation and decide if the emergency decree



PM Prayut Chan-o-cha said the government has not yet cancelled the emergency decree. Photo: Chana Katanyu

was still necessary. If the emergency decree is lifted, the government will have only the public health laws at its disposal, he noted.

On Sunday, Mr Rangsiman demanded the government lift the special law which he claimed has been used to take legal action against anti-government protesters rather than curbing the spread of the virus.

He said the government had eased several COVID-19 restrictions including allowing people to take off their face masks in open-air spaces, so there was also no need to

maintain the decree.

Introduced on Mar 26, 2020 to control the spike in COVID-19 cases, the emergency decree gave the prime minister full control of anti-virus measures as head of the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA).

Despite saying the economic outlook after the reopening of the country was positive due to an increase in the number of international tourists, Prayut admitted the government had several issues still to tackle including the overcrowding problem at immigration checkpoints.

He said that some COVID-19 restrictions would have to be maintained to keep the chances of a resurgence in cases to a minimum.

"The people are in [economic] hardship. Don't you think the prime minister is troubled by that? We're trying to help to the best of our ability without causing more problems," he said.

Bangkok Governor Chadchart Sittipunt said he had instructed City Hall officials to contact the Indian embassy and hold talks on how to attract more tourists from the country.

He said the move came after he learned that Indian tourists were now the country's top arrivals and that the talks should help City Hall determine policies that can help stimulate the local tourism industry.

Mr Chadchart also urged people to get a third booster shot after the CCSA postponed relaxing regulations on their use in the capital due to the low number of people who received a third shot against COVID-19.

Thailand Pass, COVID insurance to end, face mask rules eased

BANGKOK

THAILAND PASS registration and compulsory COVID-19 insurance will be lifted for all people arriving in Thailand from July 1, a senior government spokesman said last Friday (June 17).

Taweasilp Visanuyothin, spokesman for the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration, said arrivals will need only show their vaccination certificates or COVID-19 test results.

Without such proof, arrivals will be given random, professional antigen tests at permanent border entry points. Random testing would continue until the government lifts all state-of-emergency measures to deal with COVID-19.

The Thailand Pass registration system will remain in place, but be used only for travellers to report suspected symptoms of dangerous diseases, as determined by the Public Health Ministry, Dr Taweasilp said.

Foreign nationals will



Face mask requirements are to be eased. Photo: Apichart Jinakul

not have to be insured for COVID-19, and thermal scanning will end at border checkpoints, he said. A certification of fitness for entry, issued by a Thai consulate, will also no longer be required.

The CCSA also agreed to ease the requirement for wearing a face mask, making it purely voluntary in low-risk areas, uncrowded areas or outdoors, across the country from July 1.

Face mask wearing will still be required in crowded and poorly ventilated areas such as public transport, and markets and concert venues.

The Department of Health director-general would provide guidance regarding the eased COVID-19 controls and the date for the new measures to take effect, Mr Taweasilp said. Bangkok Post

Bill to limit households to 10 cannabis plants maximum

BANGKOK

A NEW BILL BEING VETTED BY A House committee on cannabis and hemp will limit the number of cannabis plants which a household could grow to 10 and require large-scale cannabis growers to pay a progressive levy to the government which increases with the size of the operation.

A spokesman for the committee, Panthep Puapongpan, said on Monday (June 20) the majority of the committee's members agreed to cap the number of cannabis plants allowed per household to 10, in order to limit the potential for abuse in the wake of the plant's recent decriminalisation.

The cap will help ensure households could still benefit from the private cultivation of cannabis, which the government is promoting as a cash crop, Mr Panthep said.

At least 900,000 individuals have already registered to grow cannabis at home with authorities, according to the latest figures cited.

The bill also seeks to introduce progressive levies on commercial cannabis growers.

Under the proposal, growers with less than five rai of land will be subject to the least levies, while those whose plots are larger will be subject to a more stringent application process and higher levies, Mr Panthep said.

Those who cultivate cannabis and hemp for medical purposes will be considered as



Photo: AFP

an operator of a small-sized plantation and will have to comply with the same regulations when the bill becomes law, he added.

In related news, Associate Professor Chanchai Sittipunt, dean of Faculty of Medicine at Chulalongkorn University, revealed that three individuals were recently admitted to King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital after ingesting cannabis preparations beyond their tolerance.

They were all adults who had eaten products containing cannabis, such as cookies, without knowing exactly how much active ingredients were in said products, he said.

The doctor is optimistic that "overdoses" among consumers will decline as concerned authorities, including the Department of Health, have launched a campaign to educate the public as to how much cannabis can be safely added to food preparations without causing adverse effects and/or harm to consumers. Bangkok Post

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Photos: Supplied

Music to our ears

By Gary Crause

Last Saturday (June 18) saw One Phuket stage the island's first Sustainability Fair and second Lean On Me Live Fest at Phuket Boat Lagoon's White House. The 12-hour affair started at 11am and offered patrons a variety of things to do. Many vegan and regular food stalls were offering well-priced, tasty meals throughout the day, with Phuket Boat Lagoon and The 9th Degree serving up a wide variety of beverages well into the night.

The sustainability fair's focus was based around all things sustainable. Outside of the venue, Sustainable Maikhaio demonstrated how easy it is to compost your leftover food. Recycling waste was the order of the day, and participants and visitors alike were encouraged to bring along their own shopping bags, cutlery and reusable water bottles. Vendors served all of their food in recyclable packaging and visitors were encouraged to make use of the different trash bins available for the separation of recyclable material generated by the fair.

Inside the hall, many charities, foundations, schools, local companies and artists displayed and chatted to patrons



about the ways in which each were focusing their products, services and efforts around eco-friendly and sustainability.

Outside of the venue Sunova generously staged a skating area for willing skateboarders to try some of their new boards, or use the area with their own skateboards.

One of the busiest activities of the day was the Phuket Swapshop, which attracted many donations, and much in-



terest in the growing swap culture.

During the morning session, the concert hall hosted a variety of speakers from schools and foundations, all speaking about ways that we could all very easily increase our participation in becoming more sustainable and eco-friendly.

Three o'clock marked the start of the Lean On Me Live Fest 2 in the concert hall with no less than nine bands offering up their time to entertain the vendors and fair visitors. The early afternoon slots were reserved for the participation of some of Phuket's most talented young musicians, which included the Junior Choir and Junior Band from UWC Thailand.

The highlight of the afternoon was undoubtedly the jaw-dropping performance by the Ozone Kids Band, who churned out a string of perfect heavy metal covers. The disbelief still ringing in our ears days later as to how accomplished an 8-year-old, two 11-year-olds and a 12-year-old could be in rocking a venue!

As night rolled in, some of Phuket's most loved professional and part-time

bands rocked the very appreciative and responsive crowd late into the night. Every band delivered outstanding performances in a variety of genres, with standout performances from Moody Paul, Rockin Angels, Dark Fiber and Curious Itch, who had the crowd dancing until they dropped.

With all that went on during the day and night, it was almost easy to overlook the root cause that this landmark event was staged for. One Phuket used the occasion to raise funds in support of Sustainable Maikhaio, Phuket Has Been Good To Us, The Good Shepherd Phuket Town and The Scholars of Sustenance. The spinoff, or by-product, of all of this, if you will, was the information, demonstration and passion imparted to the community about living an eco-friendly lifestyle, and how each and every one of us can collectively make a massive impact by making small changes in our lifestyles.

If you would like to make a difference to our community, please consider joining the One Phuket group on Facebook and let us know how you can become part of the change.



HeadStart students making waves around the World

As I sit here on the eve of my final production as Director of Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) at HeadStart International School I can't help but reminisce over the past 7 years I have been part of this family.

I have seen so many incredibly talented students pass through our doors, taking on major roles in productions such as Into the Woods Jr, Fame, Welcome to the Moulin Rouge and, most recently, Aida. Our students have since gone on to top music, art and performing arts universities world wide and are making waves in the world outside Phuket.

AIDA



aerial hammock, contemporary, cheerleading and hip hop. Our last dance production, the Circle of Life, was a true testament to the hard work and dedication of our talented students and teachers and we are excited to see this year's production, The Glitch, on stage on the 25th of June. This year also saw Mali Bell crowned as HeadStart's first category winner at the prestigious ATOD competition held in Bangkok.

Our musicians have proven their worth by claiming two Top in Thailand awards for AS Music (Julianna Mester, 2020 and Ben Caspi, 2021). In July 2021 we had our first set of outstanding LAMDA results. In LAMDA students from 5-18 years can study public speaking, acting and musical theatre through a syllabus provided by the oldest Drama school in the UK.

Our slogan reads: *Inspiring a love of learning*. This really is true about our CAPA faculty and can be seen from our Art and Design department, where students come in droves to hone their talents, to our Design and Technology department where students develop skills such as working on our state of the art equipment including printing out their own designs on 3D printers. Dance at HeadStart is very popular with over 150 students as young as 2 years old enrolled in ballet, jazz,

When asked what makes HeadStart, but especially CAPA, so special I have to answer that it is our wonderful students. It has been such a privilege working with them all and I can't wait to see where their talents lead them next.

- Ms Erika Cramp,
Director of Creative & Performing Arts



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POP QUIZ

- 1. Moon Unit, Dweezil and Diva are the children of which late musician?
- 2. Which is longer: the coastline of Africa or the coastline of Europe?
- 3. Can you contact the International Space Station using 'ham radio'?
- 4. What are the first three words of the Bible?
- 5. Which animal nearly killed Johnny Cash in 1981?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

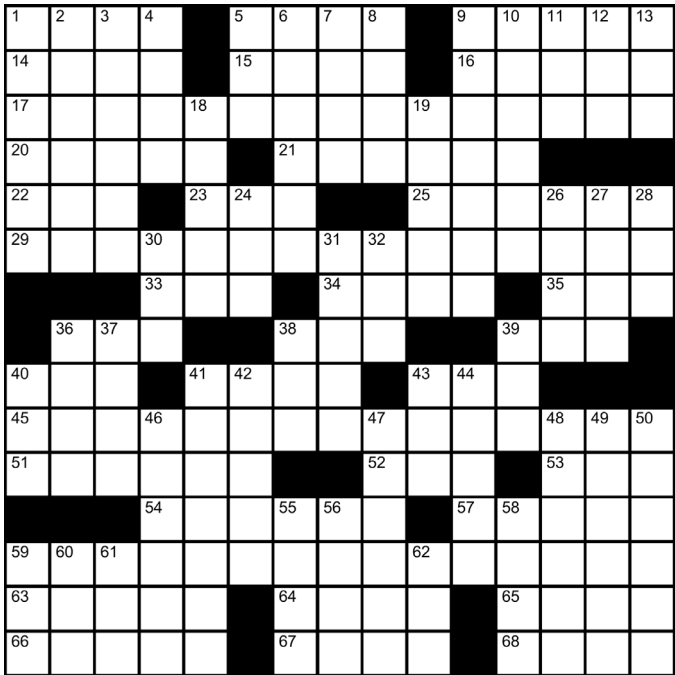
- Across

 - 1. Dovetail
 - 5. Ankh feature
 - 9. Sweetly, in music
 - 14. Montreal player
 - 15. Retin-A treats it
 - 16. New Jersey county
 - 17. Turturro and Bacon, e.g.
 - 20. Ancient horn
 - 21. Horse handler
 - 22. Dance, e.g.
 - 23. Elephant grp.
 - 25. Bivalve shells
 - 29. "Enter" and "left"
 - 33. Can you dig it?
 - 34. Clumsy boats
 - 35. Tags
 - 36. Legal org.
 - 38. Govt. agency
 - 39. Layer
 - 40. Back
 - 41. Berry
 - 43. Gasteyer of "Mean Girls"
 - 45. Camera chief
 - 51. Synagogue singer
 - 52. Cousin of an ostrich
 - 53. Bar order
 - 54. Encourage
 - 57. Cameos, e.g.
 - 59. Hollywood honcho
- Down

 - 1. Centers of activity
 - 2. Give a pep talk
 - 3. Ancient military hub
 - 4. Phone, slangily
 - 5. Fond du ____
 - 6. Marine mollusks
 - 7. Addition column
 - 8. Chipper
 - 9. Lecturers
 - 10. Sovereign's privilege
 - 11. "Seinfeld" uncle
 - 12. One for the road
 - 13. Dash widths
 - 18. Bit
 - 19. "Wellaway!"
 - 24. Catullus composition
 - 26. Churn
 - 27. May event, for short
 - 28. Bubblehead
 - 30. ____ few rounds
- 31. Call
 - 32. It's full of periods
 - 36. "Tosca" tune
 - 37. Beethoven's birthplace
 - 38. Blubber
 - 39. Twaddle
 - 40. TV monitor?
 - 41. Love devotee
 - 42. Freight
 - 43. Coat part
 - 44. Pacific island
 - 46. Short musical pieces
 - 47. Swiss canton
 - 48. Binary compound
 - 49. Big roll
 - 50. Move audience members
 - 55. Fish caught in pots
 - 56. Beasts of burden
 - 58. Suffix with psych-
 - 59. Blubber
 - 60. Central truth
 - 61. Can. neighbor
 - 62. Minor player

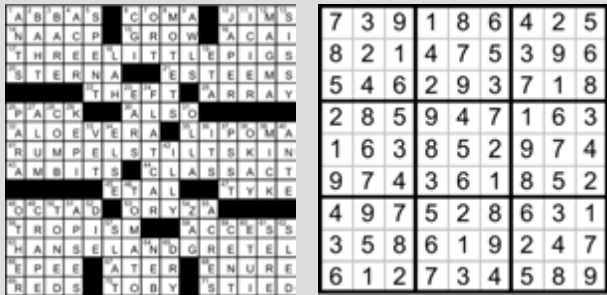
Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

- 1) Frank Zappa; 2) Europe; 3) Yes; 4) In the beginning; 5) An ostrich in the woods.



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



GOT YOUR NUMBER

3

years in prison – or a S\$10,000 fine, or both – is how much you can get in Singapore for using someone's WiFi without their permission.

71

grammes of sugar are consumed by the average American each day, 46 more than recommended.

1997

is when Netflix was founded, a year before Google.

33,000

years ago, dogs evolved the specific muscles needed to raise their inner eyebrows in order to manipulate humans with 'puppy dog eyes'.

51 million

trees have been planted in Kenya in the past 42 years by the Green Belt Movement, a grassroots organisation.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Bang Tao flotilla. Photo by Natalia Shamina

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

This week in history

June 24, 1374

A sudden outbreak of St. John's Dance – a dancing mania and social phenomenon – causes people in the streets of Aachen, Germany, to experience hallucinations and begin to jump and twitch uncontrollably until they collapse from exhaustion.

June 25, 1978

The rainbow flag representing gay pride is flown for the first time during the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade.

June 26, 1906

The first Grand Prix motor racing event is held.

June 27, 1898

The first solo circumnavigation of the globe is completed by Joshua Slocum from Brier Island, Nova Scotia, later writing the best-seller, *Sailing Alone Around the World*.



June 28, 1919

The Treaty of Versailles is signed, ending the state of war between Germany and the Allies of World War I.

June 29, 2007

Apple Inc. releases the first iPhone. It took 74 days after its market release for Apple to record its millionth iPhone sale.

June 30, 1937

The world's first emergency telephone number, 999, is introduced in London after a man who was held in a call queue while reporting a deadly fire wrote a letter to *The Times* that prompted a government inquiry.

Source: Wikipedia

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Paella at The Nai Harn

For two days only visiting Chef Lluís Cantons Pesarroddona is preparing a variety of seafood paellas. This combination of saffron-flavored rice, verdant vegetables and juicy seafood is a synonym to Spanish cuisine and best enjoyed with friends and family. Don't miss it! 14th and 15th July 2022. For further information please contact us under 076 380 200, fbreservation@thenaiharn.com or our social media channels

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6 PM onwards: Belgian style mussels served with French Fries. All you can eat. Your choice, Your style: Marinere, White wine, Provencale, Garlic & cream, Creamy curry, Blue cheese or Thai style. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 325 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

Sunday roast

12PM – 9PM: All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet Beef, Pork, Chicken & Lamb – Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, Fried mushrooms, Grilled Tomatoes – Yorkshire pudding – Roasted Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes – Apple sauce, Gravy, Mushroom sauce, Horse radish, Mint Sauce. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 350 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 175 baht P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

Wednesday BBQ night

6 PM onwards: All you can eat BBQ buffet cooked to order. Beef, Pork, Chicken, Burgers, Ribs Sausages, Fish, Prawns & Squids, salad buffet and veggies, Choice of potatoes, cold and hot 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 Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

SAT 25 JUN

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COSMO CULINARY CONVERSATIONS

This month at The Nai Harn we're heading to the Land of the Long White Cloud. Famed for its lush grasslands and its crystal clear rivers, it is home to two ingredients featured in this month's menu. The first is "New Zealand King Salmon", rightly so named for its incredible flavour. We have been using it in our Japanese Sushi Bar Hansha and Mark has always wanted to get it also into a pan! Also being a massive fan of the Game season and not wanting to have to wait until the glorious 12th marks the beginning of the season in Europe, we decided to get this "Pure South Venison Tenderloin" from New Zealand." The price of the menu this month is THB 3,250 net and - remember - bring your own bottle. There is no corkage. For further information please contact us under 076 380 200, fbreservation@thenaiharn.com or our social media channels.



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Grow Boating Evening

We look forward to seeing you at the next Grow Boating Evening at the Isola Restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina from 5pm on Friday the 1st of July. The next Grow Boating will follow after the AGM of the TYBA and we are delighted to announce that our drinks sponsor for the evening will be the Royal Phuket Marina. There will be a delicious free buffet for all attendees and as always all of your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. 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

SUN 31 JUL


10th Anniversary of Phuket Drum Circle

The Phuket Drum Circle celebrates 10 years of age! It's about drumming and dancing on Sundays in Naiharn beach, always a free event. Join us on this unique occasion as we celebrate with Bubbles! After all, the Phuket Drum Circle has made history in Thailand and Asia as the only public drum circle with a 12-month calendar and a Facebook page. Marco Monti, marcomonti@yahoo.com

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MIND THE GAP - WOMEN IN HOSPITALITY

Phuket Hotels Association conducted a Women in Hospitality workshop last Saturday (June 18) at the Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket resort. Over 100 people were entertained by the presentations from the speakers from a cross section of the hospitality industry.

WINDOW ON PHUKET

The August/September 2022
hard copy issue goes to print very soon

Distributed in resorts/hotels lobbies, in a high number of restaurants and coffee shops, plus inserted in one issue of *The Phuket News* each month, it is a great way to Talk to Phuket.

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Max's magnificent Montreal drive

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Nine-tenths of a second has never looked so comfortable, but Max Verstappen made his defence against the faster Carlos Sainz look easy in a masterful victory at the Canadian Grand Prix last Sunday (June 19).

Verstappen is in full championship mode. We're nine rounds into the 2022 Formula One season and there's little doubt with whom the campaign momentum rests. The reigning world champion has extended his points lead for the last six races and now sits 46 points clear atop the standings, perilously close to two clear race victories with almost half the season gone.

Victory in Canada was the Dutchman's fifth in six rounds and sixth for the season. He's yet to finish a race off the podium.

It's true to say that his lucrative championship charge has come at the same time Ferrari has suffered the worst of its power unit issues, with Charles Leclerc twice retiring from the lead in the last four



Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen with the winner's trophy after his Canadian Grand Prix victory in Montreal last Sunday (June 19). Photo: AFP

races and starting from the back of the grid with a new motor in Montreal.

Sergio Perez also retired in Canada after just seven laps with gearbox trouble, muting his unexpected recent title tilt.

But even these incidents can't explain away the rate of knots at which Verstappen is pulling away at the head of the field. Perez and Leclerc, 46 and 49 points adrift respectively, have the same number of retirements as the Dutchman, with two apiece.

This isn't a story of reli-

ability or pure car speed. Verstappen is making the difference, as his Canadian Grand Prix-winning performance attests.

Red Bull Racing didn't have the fastest car in Canada, just as it hasn't for most of the season, but a masterful display of wet-weather driving squeezed the maximum from the RB18 to deliver Verstappen pole ahead of Fernando Alonso and outside title hopeful Carlos Sainz by more than 0.7 seconds.

In gloriously dry condi-

tions he turned that one-lap performance into race-long domination.

But this wasn't domination in the typical sense. Verstappen never led Sainz, his afternoon-long pursuer, by more than 10 seconds, and even when his advantage was at its largest around the pit stops he was being reeled in by the chasing Spaniard in his faster Ferrari.

And then their strategic duel turned into a 15-lap battle after a late-race safety car. Sainz had lost track position

but had gained fresher tyres, and when the pace car returned to pit lane and the race resumed, the faster Ferrari immediately began harassing the leader.

EFFORTLESS

Corner after corner and lap after lap Sainz tested and prodded Verstappen's defences, but the Dutchman seemingly effortlessly absorbed every advance. His positioning through the hairpin leading onto the long back straight was centimetre perfect to neutralise Sainz's straight-line speed, leaving the Ferrari tantalisingly short of runway to try a late-braking move into the final chicane.

Every blow was parried until Sainz's tyres lost their edge. His winning margin was just 0.993 seconds – perfectly judged and never really in doubt.

That's no slight on Sainz, who enjoyed his best weekend of the season, as was clear by his aggression late in the race. It's just recognition of the reality that Verstappen is operating on such a high level that he's taken the season completely into his own hands.

The Dutchman hasn't nec-

essarily got quicker year on year – in fact this season's Red Bull machine is a lesser match with his driving style compared to last year, muting some of his strengths – but whereas aggression had been his trademark in previous campaigns, this year it's his composure.

True, he's no longer locked in career-defining toxic title fight with a seven-time champion, but having deposed the establishment last season, his self-assuredness in the car this year is clear.

Even when he's been flustered by technical problems or bad luck – his radio outbursts in Spain were a reminder of the hot-headedness that used to be his calling card – it no longer translates into petulance on the track, where control is now overwhelmingly defines his craft.

It made the difference in Canada, and it's been making the difference all season.

Ferrari has problems with reliability and at some tracks problems with speed. But its biggest problem is Max Verstappen, and its challenge is to break his seemingly impervious title defence. And it needs to do so as soon as possible.

Thai spikers go down fighting

VOLLEYBALL

THAILAND ENDED week two of the 2022 FIVB Volleyball Women's Nations League with a defeat in Quezon City, the Philippines, on Sunday (June 19).

The 14th-ranked Thais lost to world number one team USA 3-1 (17-25, 25-13, 25-23, 25-18) as they concluded the second week of action with one win and three losses in Pool 4.

Thailand, hit hard by COVID-19 which has sidelined several key players, are one of the two teams that took a set from the Tokyo Olympic champions and three-time VNL winners in this year's campaign.

Ajcharaporn Kongyot was Thailand's top scorer with 25 points. Chatchuon Moksri had 13 points and Pimpichaya Kokram scored eight.

Thailand begin their third week of action in Bulgaria with their first game against South Korea on Wednesday (June 29).

They will meet the Dominican Republic the day



Photo: volleyballworld.com

after before meeting Brazil on July 2 and Italy on July 3.

The opening match against the Koreans will be shown live on GMM25 at 9pm.

The top eight teams from the 16-team tournament will qualify for the final phase in Turkey between July 13-17.

Thailand are currently eighth with 12 points from four wins in the standings.

The Americans lead the standings with 21 points while Japan, who beat Thailand last Friday, are second with 20 points. Italy are third with 17 points.

Bangkok Post

Thai women cricketers making a mark

CRICKET

THAILAND'S NATIONAL WOMEN cricketers have become one of the most rapidly improving teams in the world of cricket, with their string of accolades including a historic win on Nov 29 last year over Bangladesh at the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifiers.

The result encapsulated years of hard work and dedication with talented bowler Nattaya Boochatham taking five wickets to restrict Bangladesh to 176 from 50 overs, while the prolific opening batting partnership of Sornnarin Tippoch and Natthakan Chantham produced 90 runs, laying down a foundation for a 16-run win for the Thai side.

The feat led to the Cricket Association of Thailand being awarded the coveted ICC Association Women's Performance of the year title.

While the senior team continues to make their mark in world cricket, the junior side also recently showcased their skills at the ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup Asia Qualifiers in Malaysia, which ran June 3-9.

They made their debut at the inaugural cricket event under the guidance of Indian coach Nitish Salekar and Thai coaches Ratana Saengsoma and Peerawat Duangchit. Despite beating Qatar, Malaysia, Bhutan and Nepal, a loss to UAE meant they finished second in the group and were unable to qualify for the World Cup in South Africa next year.

However, the progress is encouraging. The 14-member team has an average age of 17 and hails from provinces across Thailand. They were recruited by the Cricket Association of Thailand's academy and offered full scholar-



Opening batter Sornnarin Tippoch at the crease. Photo: Peter Lim

ships to study until university and train.

Shan Kader, the association's director of cricket development, said the players have been with them since the age of 13, and have dedicated themselves to following in the footsteps of their seniors by practising a strict programme that calls for discipline and perseverance.

"Cricket is a team sport, and monetarily the cost is very high. Coming this far with the team has been nothing short of a miracle for a sport such as cricket in Thailand. There has been a lot of dedication and passion put into making the players excel," remarked Kader.

"Finances are a huge part of sustaining ourselves, just like any other sport, so to get all the help we can is important. I would say there are many ways to support national cricketers, apart from following their achievements. Sponsors can look into cross-marketing to promote their goods and support the team's progress to the next level of their cricket journey."

Thai cricketers have shown their potential at global events time and time again. At the rate they are going, Thailand qualifying for the ICC World Cup is no longer a pipe dream.

Bangkok Post

US Open to allow players from Russia and Belarus

TENNIS

AFP

Players from Russia and Belarus will be allowed to compete in the 2022 US Open under a neutral flag, the US Tennis Association (USTA) announced on June 14.

"The USTA will allow all eligible players, regardless of nationality, to compete at the 2022 US Open," it confirmed.

The move comes after the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) stripped Wimbledon of ranking points after the grass-court Grand Slam tournament banned Russian and Belarusians.

Ukrainian former player Sergiy Stakhovsky immediately condemned the decision.

"You cannot put a price tag on being able to live with yourself," tweeted Stakhovsky, who retired from tennis earlier this year and has joined Ukraine's reserve forces in Kyiv.

"I salute Wimbledon, the only entity which has a moral code."

The International Tennis



World number one Daniil Medvedev will be able to compete at the US Open despite missing Wimbledon. Photo: AFP

Federation (ITF), the ATP and WTA Tours have all condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine, supported by Belarus.

They banned the countries from international team competitions and issued directives that players from those nations compete under a neutral flag in other competitions.

"The USTA will work with the players and both tours to use the US Open as a platform to further the humanitarian effort of the 'Tennis Plays for Peace' program," said USTA president Mike McNulty.

The USTA also said it would introduce initiatives to help ongoing Ukrainian humanitarian efforts.

"Unfortunately, the need for help only continues to grow," said McNulty.

"The USTA will be responding very soon with a broad set of initiatives that will include significant financial assistance and other programs to further support humanitarian relief and the people of Ukraine."

Wimbledon's ban has ruled out a swathe of top players, including Daniil Medvedev,

the men's world number one and the reigning US Open champion, as well as last year's women's US Open semi-finalist Aryna Sabalenka and two-time major winner Victoria Azarenka.

However, one player has taken a drastic step to ensure that she is eligible to compete at the All England Club when play commences on Monday (June 27).

Natela Dzalamidze, a 29-year-old Russian doubles player ranked number 44 in the world, has avoided the Wimbledon ban by changing her nationality to Georgian.

Dzalamidze will compete in the women's doubles with Serbia's Aleksandra Krunick.

An All England Club spokesman said they were powerless to interfere in Dzalamidze's change of nationality, as this was a matter for the WTA and ITF, and that she had satisfied the entry requirements.

"Player nationality, defined as the flag they play under at professional events, is an agreed process that is governed by tours and the ITF," the spokesman said.



Date set for Bangtao Beach Run

RUNNING

PHUKET AUTHORITIES have confirmed that the Bangtao Beach Run 2022 is to take place on Sunday, July 10.

Racing on the day will commence at 4:30am at the renowned beach location, which has been featured on the popular Great Runs website, and will consist of a 5km Fun Run and a 10km Mini Marathon.

Participants will be classified based on age across three categories: 30-39 years old, 40-49 years old and 50 years and over.

All age classifications cover both male and female runners and there will be trophies given out in each category for the top three best placed finishers.

Additionally, all partici-

pants will receive a commemorative medal and a T-shirt from the occasion.

Numbers are limited with only 500 runners in total permitted to register.

Registration opened at 1pm on June 13 and there is no application fee for participants to register.

If there are still places available come the day of the race, runners will be able to turn up and register in person on-site directly.

The organisers stated that all are welcome to come along and support the runners although spectators will not be liable to receive any race-related items such as shirts, bibs, medals or trophies.

Those interested in registering can do so at: www.soft.events/run/bangtao-beachrun-2022

The Phuket News

Fitzpatrick wins US Open with sensational finish

GOLF

ENGLAND'S MATT FITZPATRICK captured his first major title on Sunday (June 19) by winning the US Open in dramatic fashion, making spectacular shots as rivals crumbled under final-round pressure.

After a thrilling three-man fight down the back nine at The Country Club, Fitzpatrick fired a two-under-par 68 to finish on six-under-par 274 and defeat Americans Scottie Scheffler and Will Zalatoris by one stroke.

World number 18 Fitzpatrick, who won the 2013 US Amateur at The Country Club, matched Jack Nicklaus as the only US Open and US Amateur winners on the same course, the US legend doing the double at Pebble Beach.

"It means the world," Fitzpatrick said of the achievement.

The 27-year-old from Sheffield, who shared fifth last month at the PGA Championship for his best prior major result, sank a stunning 48-foot birdie putt at the 13th hole to grab a share of the lead.

At the 15th, Fitzpatrick blasted out of the right rough to just inside 19 feet and rolled in a tension-packed putt to reach 6-under and lead by two thanks to a Zalatoris bogey.

After birdies by top-ranked Masters champion Scheffler at 17 and Zalatoris on 16, Fitzpatrick clung to a one-stroke lead at the 18th tee.



Fitzpatrick with the US Open trophy. Photo: AFP

The Englishman sent his tee shot into a left fairway bunker, but blasted a magnificent approach to 18 feet and two putted for par.

Zalatoris had a 14-foot birdie putt to force a playoff but when he missed, the record US\$3.15 million (B111mn) top prize went to Fitzpatrick.

"Matt's shot on 18 is going to be shown probably for the rest of US Open history," Zalatoris said.

"I walked by it and thought that going for it was going to be ballsy, but the fact that he pulled it off and even had a birdie look was just incredible. So hats off to him."

Japan's Hideki Matsuyama, the 2021 Masters champion, fired the best round of the week, a bogey-free 65, to finish fourth on three-under 277.

Four-time major winner Rory McIlroy and two-time major champion Collin Morikawa shared fifth on 278. AFP

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Thai women's cricket flying high > p14

KICK IT OUT



Football comp headlines new anti-drug campaign

Photo: PR Phuket

FOOTBALL

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Kathu District Office has announced they are staging a football tournament next month as part of a new anti-drug campaign within the local community.

The tournament, which will be hosted on July 20 in Patong at a yet unannounced venue, will see teams made up of residents from three sub-districts in the Kathu area contest a total prize pot of B700,000.

The announcement came last Tuesday (June 14) at a press conference hosted at the Patong Bay Hill Hotel

overseen by Kathu District Chief Siwat Wangkunkul.

Mr Siwat was joined by Phakarat Tamchu, Chairman of the Patong Development Foundation, as well as senior representatives from related agencies.

Mr Siwat explained the tournament is being developed as part of a three-pronged community campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal drug abuse and to help alleviate poverty in the local area.

"Youths in the Kathu area need to have the necessary knowledge and awareness as to the dangers of drugs in how they can negatively affect one's body, health and mental state which has a knock on effect on society and national

security," he said.

"The football tournament aims to develop people's skills, knowledge and abilities to encourage them that a clear and healthy lifestyle can help them achieve excellence in future.

"A drug-free environment can help improve the quality of life for everyone within the local community and build a more sustainable future for all," Mr Siwat added.

The campaign also strives to highlight the importance of drug surveillance activities in communities, schools, religious sites and tourist attractions in the Kathu area in line with the national government's policy on illegal drug use.

Mr Siwat advised that further details on teams, the

venue and times will be released closer to the event.

SLOGAN COMPETITION

The campaign also sees a competition for local children to devise an appropriate anti-drugs slogan where the best suggested mottos will be awarded with prizes from the district office and Patong Development Foundation.

The slogan competition is open to boys and girls aged 12-18 years who study in Kathu schools. To participate, students are invited to visit the Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education in Kathu on any day (except public holidays) between June 15-27.

The authors of the best

slogans will be separately awarded in two age groups: 12-14 years old and 15-18 years old. The Kathu District Office did not provide any guidelines on what a perfect slogan might sound like.

The prizes are as follows: Grand prize: B10,000 in cash and a voucher for accommodation and food at Patong Bay Hill Resort Hotel worth B5,000; 1st runner-up prize: B5,000 in cash and a voucher for accommodation and food at Patong Bay Hill Resort Hotel worth B5,000; 2nd runner-up prize: B2,500 in cash and a voucher for accommodation and food at Patong Bay Hill Resort Hotel worth B5,000. There are also consolation prizes worth B500 in cash

for 40 participants.

For additional information, people are asked to call 076-21896 or scan the QR Code which can be found on event promotional materials.

"Join the campaign to help create a trend to enhance people's health and keep children and youth in Kathu away from drugs. And don't forget to submit your work to join the contest and share it with all the kids around," the official announcement from the district office said.

Finally, there is a charity drive as part of the anti-drugs campaign which will see B300,000 worth of survival bags distributed to over 500 poor households in the area, officials confirmed.

Phuket's Top Noi a UFC star in the making

MMA

ON JUNE 10 IN SINGAPORE, Phuket's Top Noi Kiwram (8-3) not only became the first male Thai fighter to enter the UFC cage but also to have his hand raised as champion in the world's biggest MMA promotion.

The 29-year-old beat Yuma Horiuchi of Japan via unanimous decision in the first round of the 'Road to UFC' tournament at the Singapore Indoor Stadium, after going a full three rounds in the flyweight (56.7 kg) matchup.

The 'Road to UFC' event is part

of the UFC's efforts to showcase, and sign, high-level MMA prospects from across Asia, with Top Noi being the only representative from the Kingdom.

The Buriram-native has been honing his skills for the better part of the last decade in Phuket, under the tutelage of George Hickman and Alex Schild, training out of the new Bang Tao Muay Thai & MMA gym alongside the first Thai in the UFC in Loma Lookboonmee, a female strawweight fighter.

A lifelong Muay Thai fighter, Top Noi was able to showcase his elite striking skills during the fight, landing strong punches and kicks

against the Japanese fighter, setting up traps with his movement, and utilising his clinch to fend off much of his opponent's attacks. He was also able to show his improved grappling defense, which has been a focal point of his training over the last few years.

But what turned heads for many fans and media was the entertainment factor, as Top Noi danced while walking out to the cage, continuously playing it up for the cameras, and was noticeably talking to his opponent during the fight. For him, fighting is fun, and he enjoys playing mind games with his opponent, even before

the bout. During the weigh-ins and staredown the day before the fight, Top Noi refused to shake his opponent's hand just to get in his head.

"I do this and he is then never sleeping. He's thinking 'oh, this guy is crazy'. I'm having fun bro," he said during the post-fight press conference minutes after the bout. "You want to put on a show, to entertain," he added.

The win ensures Top Noi moves on to the semi-finals of the 'Road to UFC' flyweight tournament, for which a date has yet to be set. At the moment, he's slated to take on Park Hyun Sung (6-0) from

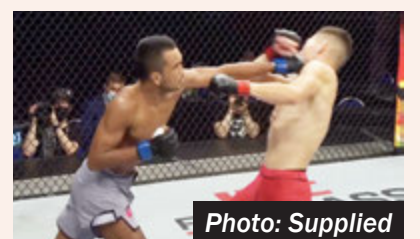


Photo: Supplied

South Korea, whom Top Noi has previously trained with.

It's a dream come true for a fighter who is part of the next generation of Thais moving the sport of MMA forward in Thailand. From fighting in local and regional promotions, he's climbed up the ranks to potentially join his fellow Thai Loma Lookboonmee in the UFC.

Right now the future looks bright for Thailand's MMA scene.

JP Mestanza