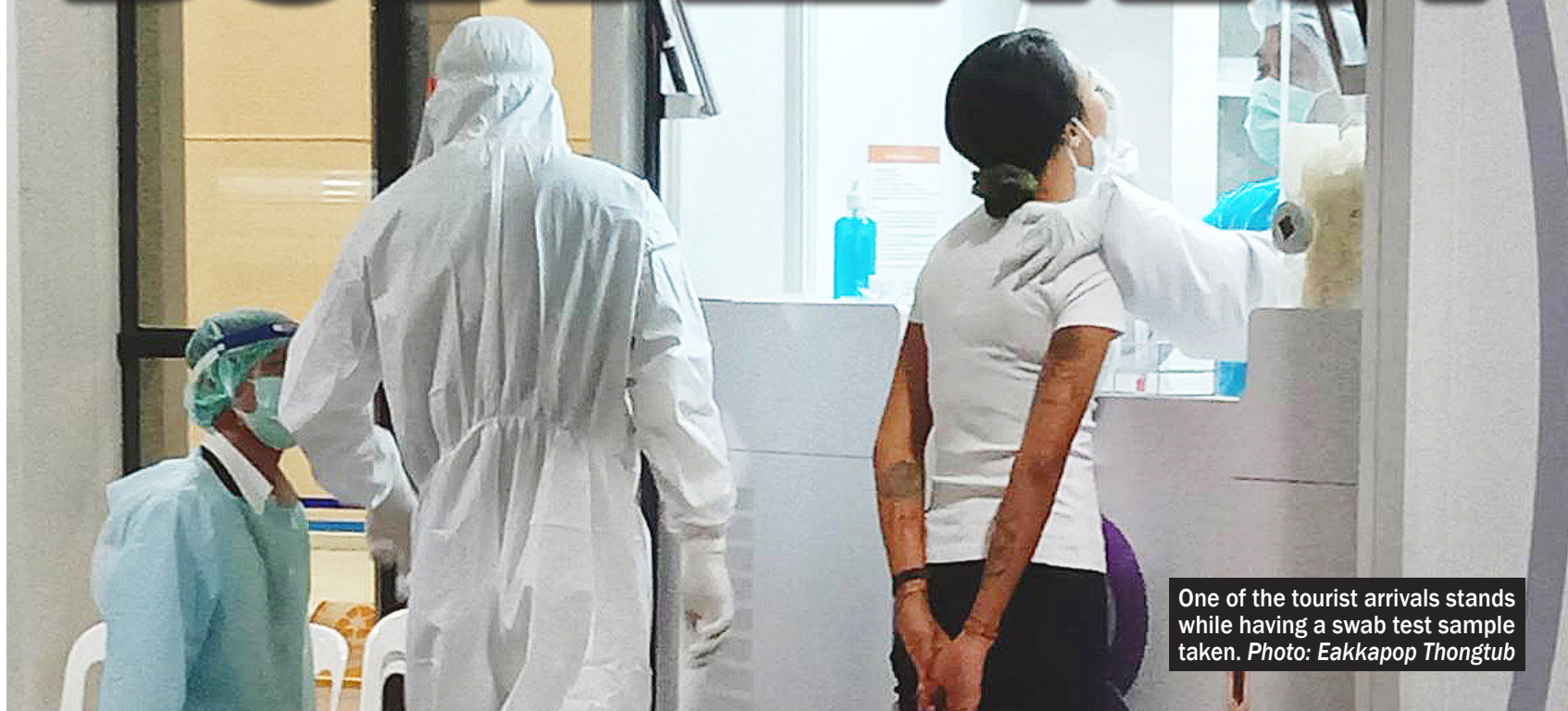


**PHUKET HEALTH CHIEF MOVED TO CHON BURI > PAGE 3**

## BUBBLE TEST



One of the tourist arrivals stands while having a swab test sample taken. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

### FIRST TRAVEL BUBBLE 'VILLA QUARANTINE' TOURISTS ARRIVE, PHUKET MODEL HOPED TO BOOST CONFIDENCE

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket's first 'travel bubble' tourists, who are now observing a 'villa quarantine' at the five-star Sri Panwa resort on the island's east coast, landed at Phuket International Airport last Sunday night (Feb 21).

The tourists were to be the first to observe 'villa quarantine' in Thailand, explained Dr Taweasilp Visanuyothin, spokesman of the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA), when announcing the expected arrivals on Feb 17.

The move is hoped to successfully test Phuket's ability to host tourists, and hence open the door to allow

more foreign tourists onto the island.

The tourists, 59 in total, arrived via Indonesia on two flights operated by Indonesian national airline Garuda Indonesia.

The first flight, with 13 of the tourists on board, landed at 8:20pm. The second flight, carrying 46 tourists, landed at about 11pm.

Present to welcome the tourists were Phuket Vice Governor Phichet Panaphong, joined by Patong Hospital Director Dr Muenphrae Boonlom, who is now the acting chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO).

Also present were officers from the Disease Prevention and Control Region 11 Office, based in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, to oversee the swab testing procedure.

"When they entered the international terminal, we first checked their body temperature," Vice Governor Phichet explained.

"We had immigration officers at 25 counters to check their documents. Then they walked to the Customs area to declare their belongings," he added.

"After that they got in a van to be taken to the X-terminal building to have swab test samples taken there. They were tested by the disease control officers at the mobile COVID-19 test van parked in front of the building.

"The swab test process took less than one minute each. Then the tourists later were directly taken to Sri Panwa resort," Vice Governor Phichet said.

"We had two police vans, one in

front and one behind the tourist van, while the tourists were en route," he added.

The arrival process went smoothly, Vice Governor Phichet noted.

"I have to thank all officers for their good cooperation to take care of the tourists and create an impressive image of Phuket as their good, safe host," he added.

However, no explanations were given as to why only 59 tourists arrived as the 'travel bubble'.

Dr Taweasilp, in announcing the impending arrival of the tourists on Feb 17 during the CCSA's daily update on the COVID-19 situation broadcast from Government House in Bangkok, said that the total number of tourists arriving would total 70.

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### Heavy hitters push Phuket for reopening



**LIFE** PAGE 8

### 'Lean on Me' artists step up for COVID relief



**SPORT** PAGE 16

### Touch rugby for kids gaining momentum





exeditor@classactmedia.co.th

# News



**Complaint over noise spurs bar raids > p5**

## Divided on taking vaccine

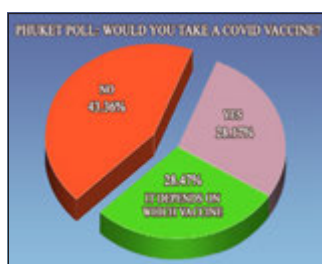
PEOPLE LIVING IN Phuket or with an otherwise vested interest in the island are divided over whether or not they would take a COVID vaccine at this stage, according to responses to an online poll conducted by *The Phuket News*.

With Phuket amid a big push to attract domestic tourists to the island and the call by all major Phuket businesses associations, not just tourism industry representatives, for the island to re-open to international visitors from Oct 1, all eyes are turning to COVID vaccinations as Phuket's big hope to restart the island's economy.

As such, while recognising that many factors affect the decision, *The Phuket News* launched an online poll on Feb 10 asking the simple question: "Would you take a COVID vaccine?"

The poll closed at midnight last Friday night (Feb 19).

Overall, 28% of respondents voted an outright "Yes" to taking a COVID vaccine, and a further 28% voted "It depends on the vaccine".



The remaining 43% voted an outright "No" to taking a COVID vaccine.

Of the 28.47% respondents who voted "Yes", 10.88% were Thai nationals, 67.36% were local expatriate residents and 21.76% were foreign visitors to Phuket.

Among the 43.36% who voted "No" 49.32% were Thai nationals, 39.46% were local expatriate residents and 11.22% foreign visitors to Phuket.

Hanging in the balance were those who voted "It depends on which vaccine" (28.17%), of whom 15.18% were Thai nationals, 74.87% were local expatriate residents and the remaining 9.95% were foreign visitors to Phuket.

*The Phuket News*

## Police shooting on Bangla

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A 25-year-old noodle vendor from Trang was shot and beaten by a Phuket Provincial Police officer on Bangla Rd, Patong, before dawn Tuesday morning (Feb 23).

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Pornsak Nuannoo later on Tuesday confirmed that the noodle vendor, Aroon Thongplab, was alive but remained in intensive care at Vachira Phuket Hospital.

Maj Gen Pornsak explained that police together with Kosuldharm rescue workers were called to the scene at about 6am.

Officers arrived to find Mr Aroon on the road in front of the 7-Eleven store on Bangla Rd. He had been shot once in his left side of his stomach.

Mr Aroon was rushed to Patong Hospital and later transferred to Vachira hospital, Maj Gen Pornsak explained.

While rescue workers were administering CPR to Mr Aroon, police found the shooter, Cpl Pornthep Channarong of the Phuket Provincial Police, standing nearby.

The officers took Cpl Pornthep to Patong Police Station for questioning.



Cpl Pornthep Channarong of the Phuket Provincial Police is caught on CCTV firing at close range at Mr Aroon. Image: CCTV / Eakkapop Thongtub

Police also found at the scene a 9mm handgun, as well as nine bullet casings and two live bullets.

Witnesses told police that Cpl Pornthep was drunk and wanted to enter the Illusion nightclub, but the guard did not let him in as he was carrying a gun.

While the guard was blocking him from entering the club, Cpl Pornthep pointed his gun at the road and shot the noodle vendor who was walking past.

CCTV footage showed Mr Aroon suddenly fall to the ground and call out for help. Cpl Pornthep walked up to Mr Aroon, pointed a handgun at him and fired at close range.

By Mr Aroon's injuries, it appeared that shot did not hit him.

After firing the gun, Cpl Pornthep walked back to in front of the nightclub, but returned to slap and kick Mr Aroon as he begged for help.

Maj Gen Pornsak said on Tuesday that police were investigating the incident.

Maj Gen Naphanwut Liamsa-nguan of the Region 8 Police explained that Cpl Pornthep was among several officers who already had been ordered to transfer from the Phuket Provincial Police to Region 8 Police before the shooting on Tuesday.

They were to report to region 8 Police at 1pm on Tuesday, he said.

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## 'Villa quarantine' tourists arrive

*Continued from page 1*

... "They will be arriving as a 'travel bubble' and will have already been swab tested [for COVID-19] five to six times before they arrive here," Dr Taweessilp said.

"They are rich and coming to Phuket on a charter flight on Feb 21 [this Sunday], as the Communicable Disease Committee of Phuket has already approved their arrival," he added.

Of note, before Dr Taweessilp's announcement of the Phuket 'travel bubble test', Phuket officials had made no mention of the tourists' approved arrival.

"We have all information about them including their names and nationalities. Members of the group come from America, Canada, Denmark, Brazil, France and Ukraine," Dr Taweessilp explained.

The tourists will observe 'villa quarantine' for 14 days at the Sri Panwa resort, on Phuket's east coast.

"The tourists had asked Sri Panwa management to allow them to quarantine in their rooms for five days and after that to allow them to



The tourists make their way through Phuket International Airport. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

observe the quarantine in the resort areas, as they wanted to use the resort facilities.

"They [Sri Panwa management] in turn asked us if this could be allowed. The CCSA has approved this kind of quarantine for a long time, but we never had any group of tourists coming like this. This will be our first time," Dr Taweessilp said.

However, Dr Taweessilp also explained, "We have already warned the representative of the resort to be strict on enforcing the [COVID-19 preventative] measures that they have presented to us."

"This quarantine will be similar to the players who joined the international volleyball competition that

we held recently, and found no players infected," Dr Taweessilp said.

"This villa quarantine will be a good example. The CCSA has already reviewed their [COVID control] measures and given feedback to the resort representatives in order to make the measures as good as possible," he added.

"Welcoming this group to a 'villa quarantine' will boost confidence in our tourism among the tourists around the world.

"If there are no infected, or if some of them are infected but receive good treatment in our country, Thailand will become a popular destination in this New Normal world," Dr Taweessilp concluded.



# Heinecke punts for Phuket reopening

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket is the perfect testbed for allowing vaccinated tourists who undergo rapid testing on arrival to enter the country on holidays, Bill Heinecke, founder and chairman of the Minor Group, told a seminar held at Laguna Phuket last Friday (Feb 19).

Allowing the return of vaccinated tourists who undergo rapid testing is the only way to safely reopen the country to tourism, Mr Heinecke said, noting that quarantine was “killing” any prospects of restarting tourism and helping to reboot the economy.

Mr Heinecke said he was “very honoured” to be at the ‘Phuket Roundtable’ event, chaired by Phuket Tourist Association President Bhumikitti Ruktaengam, and joined by a host of leading representatives from Phuket’s tourism and other industries, as part of the united push to reopen Phuket to international tourists by Oct 1, under the campaign #PhuketfirstOctober.

The campaign aims to have 70% of the island’s population vaccinated for COVID-19 as



Bill Heinecke (left) with Sarayuth Mallam (centre) and Bhumikitti Ruktaengam at the Phuket Roundtable event last Friday (Feb 19). Photo: The Phuket News

the key primary step in reopening the island to foreigner tourists.

“I think it is very important right now that you, through seminars like this, try to reopen up tourism safely,” Mr Heinecke noted.

“I think we are all aware now of the success of some of the initial vaccines and it’s quite encouraging. I hope we can build confidence to open to people when they are

vaccinated and when they arrive and be tested negatively – so that means they can’t be asymptomatic or carrying the virus when they land.

“If we can do that we can dispense with quarantine,” he said.

“Quarantine is the thing that is killing tourism. There is no way we can possibly reopen while we have quarantine,” Mr Heinecke said plainly.

“Even today the govern-

ment is trying to highlight the fact that everyone is trying to make quarantine easy. Quarantine is not easy. It is difficult,” he added.

By example, Mr Heinecke pointed out that Thailand was “the only country in the world with no drinking in the room while in ALQ or ASQ quarantine”.

“That is understandable if you are in a hospital or state quarantine, but not if your

paying for five-star or six-star accommodation,” he added.

Mr Heinecke also highlighted the slowness the Thai government has proceeded in securing vaccines for the country, and the lack of a clear outline – and timeline – for vaccinating the population.

“It behooves the government to encourage the private sector to move forward and allow the private sector to source vaccines that have been approved. We should allow people to import vaccines that have been approved without interference from the government,” he said.

“We hope that we can do this – through meetings like this – and get Phuket thriving again. Phuket is the perfect example because Phuket is an island. It would be relatively simple to enforce, and when everyone is being tracked as is already happening.

Mr Heinecke highlighted the success now being enjoyed by the Maldives in reopening tourism.

“From what we know from the Maldives, I would expect that Phuket in its first year [after reopening] could have as many as 10 million people coming,” Mr Heinecke explained.

“The Maldives is already back to pre-COVID levels even though it is a pretty small island and has a limited air traffic,” he said.

“Phuket airport can handle direct flights from Australia, London and all through the Middle East, so we could truly make an impact,” he added.

“The latest I have heard is that the government is looking at 3-5mn tourists only in the first year [after allowing tourists to return], which means we would go through another year of what we have just had this past year – and I don’t think many of us could survive that sort of outlook,” he said.

“So I sincerely hope we can together get the government to move quicker, transparently and try to get help from as many people as they can – especially the private sector, which is generally much more efficient than the government as we lack the bureaucracy that the government is so famous for.

“Thank you very much. I hope we can support you. We appreciate the importance that Phuket that has in turning tourism around for Thailand,” Mr Heinecke concluded.

## Phuket health chief moved to Chon Buri

DR THANIT SERMKAEW, who has long served as the Chief of the Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO), has been officially transferred to take up a supervisor post at the Region 6 Health Provider office based in Chon Buri.

The Region 6 Health Provider office is responsible for Ministry of Public Health responsibilities in eight provinces in the central and eastern part of the country, namely Chonburi, Rayong, Chanthaburi, Trat, Samut Prakan, Chachoengsao, Prachin Buri and Sa Kaeo.

After serving as the PPHO Chief for two years, including all throughout the COVID-19 pandemic so far, Dr Thanit was scheduled to report himself at the office in Chon Buri on Monday (Feb 22).

By that time, the Region 6 Health Provider office already listed Dr Thanit as on their staff.

Patong Hospital Director Dr Muenphrae Boonlom has been named as the PPHO Acting Chief until the new PPHO Chief has been announced.



Dr Thanit enjoys his farewell last week. Photo: PPHO

An officer at the PPHO, who asked not to be named, told *The Phuket News* on Monday, “At this stage, we have not received any confirmation who will come to be the new chief.

“However, we believe that the new chief will come in March,” the officer said.

Phuket health officials held a farewell for Dr Thanit at the PPHO office in

Phuket Town last week.

The farewell event, on Feb 16, was attended by PPHO senior officers, hospital directors, public health officials, people who have volunteered to assist health officers throughout the COVID epidemic as well as representatives from private health businesses on the island.

*The Phuket News*

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Wind 14 m/s

SAT FEB 27

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Wind 11 m/s

SUN FEB 28

High: +35°  
Low: +25°

Wind 7 m/s

MON MAR 1

High: +34°  
Low: +25°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE MAR 2

High: +35°  
Low: +26°

Wind 11 m/s

WED MAR 3

High: +35°  
Low: +27°

Wind 18 m/s

THU MAR 4

High: +35°  
Low: +26°

Wind 11 m/s

## Debt blamed for suicides

Eakkapop Thongtub  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Local police have confirmed that heavy debt played a key role behind two separate cases of suicide, that of a Thai man and a Kyrgyz national, late last week.

The 28-year-old man from Kyrgyzstan (name withheld at the request of the family) was found hanged in an abandoned hotel building in Moo 4, Thepkasattri, early last Saturday morning (Feb 20).

Lt Thitiwat Asasing of the Thalang Police was called to the scene at about 1:30am and was joined by Kusoldharm rescue workers.

They discovered the man's body hanged with a rope on the third floor of the building. From initial examination there was no evidence of assault or a struggle and no marks were found on his body, police confirmed.

The man's body was first found by his wife after he had sent her a video prior to taking his life. She went to find him and eventually found him hanged.



Police attend the house where the Thai national was found. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

The man's younger brother told police that his brother had left the house early last Friday evening and nobody was able to make contact with him after he left.

"He had debt problems," the younger brother confirmed. "I believe that is the main motive for him deciding to commit suicide."

The man's body was taken to Thalang Hospital for further examination.

Meanwhile, Lt Phattarakorn Pongpaiboon of the Thalang Police has confirmed a further case of suicide after being informed of a Thai man found hanged last Friday morning (Feb 19).

Police and Kusoldharm rescue workers went to a house which was still under construction in Baan Muang Mai, Moo 5, Thepkasattri, around 7:20am.

They discovered the body of Saman Mongkhalasiri, 53, originally from Phang Nga, hanged with a nylon rope from the house beam. Mr Saman's neck was wrapped with a piece of cloth. No fighting or evidence of assault or a struggle was found on his body.

Local people living nearby the scene told police that Mr Saman had a lot of debt that he was unable to pay and that this was believed to be the motive for his suicide.

Mr Saman's body was taken to Thalang Hospital for examination and later handed over to relatives to allow them to hold a religious remembrance ceremony.

*The name of the Kyrgyzstan man has been withheld at the family's request. If you or anyone you know is in emotional distress, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their 24-hour hotline 02-713-6791 (English), 02713-6793 (Thai) or Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai).*

## Raid halts illegal construction in Sirinath National Park

OFFICERS FROM SIRINATH National Park last Thursday (Feb 18) moved in to stop construction on a 12-rai site within the park that is being claimed as privately owned.

The team of officers were led by Sirinath National Park Chief Pramote Kaewnam and joined by officers from the Royal Thai Police Crime Suppression Division for Natural Resources and Environment and from the Office for Defense and Suppression Support 4 (Southern Region) under the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation.

The raid followed a previous order for the workers to cease clearing the area, and felling trees, Chief Pramote explained.

"But they did not follow our order," he said.

Chief Pramote also explained that a person had claimed private ownership of the 12 rai through a SorKor 1 land document.

"In front of the site is a vinyl sign with text, 'This land is owned by Mr Pau Phetcharat under land document (SorKor 1) No. 283, covering 12 rai. This land is under the process to be issued a land ownership document. Anyone who enters the area without permission will be prosecuted under the law'."



Park officers raided the site, which is being claimed as private land, last Thursday (Feb 18). Photo: PR Phuket

However, Chief Pramote noted, "We have already asked the Land Office to check, and they have confirmed to us that the land is a public area covered as a part of the national park."

At the site, officers found a backhoe and a group of workers building shacks as onsite accommodation for themselves, Chief Pramote said.

"We also found signs of other large equipment used to cut down trees," he said.

"A person presented to officers and showed the SorKor 1," Chief Pramote noted.

Regardless, he added, "We seized the equipment found and took the person [who presented the SorKor 1] and all workers to the park office for questioning... If we find any other offenses have been committed, then we will proceed in accordance with the relevant laws for those also," Chief Pramote said. *The Phuket News*

## Completion of Provincial Hall already ahead of schedule

THE LATEST ATTEMPT TO complete Phuket's still-unfinished new Provincial Hall is off to a good start, Phuket Vice Governor Vikrom Jakthee reported last Thursday (Feb 18).

Provincial officials met with representatives of the new contractor – named only as "the Wall and Tesco joint venture" (literal translation from the Thai กิจการความร่วมมือ วอลล์ แอนด์ เทสโก้) – at the currently used century-old Phuket Provincial Hall on Feb 17. Vice Governor Jakthee explained.

"Already the project is 1.9% ahead of schedule," he said.

V/Gov Vikrom explained that the meeting was the second one to occur between the contractor and officials to confirm the progress made in completing the construction contract, which he now revealed stood at B196 million – down from B198mn as reported by Phakaphong Tavipatana, Phuket Governor at the time, on Sept 6, 2019.

At that time, with Governor Phakaphong in Sept 2019 requesting an extra B38mn to complete works unfinished by the initial contractor Chun Eaw Co Ltd, the total cost of the project had blown out to B647mn.

The original contract for building the new Provincial Hall, signed on Sept 9, 2014, stood at B450mn.

V/Gov Vikrom last week also confirmed, as if without question, that under the contract with "Wall



The B196mn contract to complete the new Phuket Provincial Hall is already ahead of schedule, said Vice Governor Vikrom Jakthee. Photo: PR Phuket

and Tesco" the new provincial hall is expected to be completed by next year – not this year as touted in only December.

"The contract starts from Dec 14 last year and lasts until June 22, 2022," he said.

"At this stage, about 18.12% of the work [to be done by "Wall and Tesco"] was scheduled to be complete, but about 20.02% has been done, so the work completed is about 1.9% ahead of schedule," V/Gov Vikrom said.

"Sixty-four of 555 days of the construction [under the "Walls and Tesco" contract] have been completed so far without any problems," he added.

"The contractor came on the construction site Dec 21 last year, and the [construction] foreman went to examine the hall building on Dec 24. There will be another examination in accordance with the project schedule in the future," V/Gov Vikrom said.

*The Phuket News*



# Top cop complaint spurs bar raids

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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Phuket Town Police launched a series of late-night raids on bars in Phuket Town last Sunday (Feb 21) just hours after the Phetchaburi Police Chief, who has a house on the south side of town, went public over the lack of action by police in preventing loud music from disturbing the peace.

Maj Gen Uthai Kawindechathorn, Chief of the Phetchaburi Provincial Police, called 191 to complain about loud music from three nightlife venues on Soi Limsui Zhu, on the south side of town, at 4:30am last Sunday (Feb 21).

He also posted a video on his personal Facebook page last Sunday, with a long post calling for police in Phuket to step up their efforts to prevent such public disturbances.

"Let a picture tell the story, on holiday at my house in Phuket and tomorrow I have to wake up early to go back to Phetchaburi, trying to sleep while hearing loud music with a heavy bass sound," Maj Gen Uthai wrote.

"Actually, I thought it should stop at 3am. Come



Phuket Town Police last Sunday arrested three bar operators, but not anyone involved in the noise complaint filed by the Chief of the Phetchaburi Provincial Police. Photo: Phuket City Police

on, I understand [that during] this crisis time sympathy is important to all people but until 4:30 am, I could not stand this anymore.

"I rode my kid's bike to take a [video] clip and called 191 in the event of an offense. The music stopped at 4.45am. I wonder whether next time I come home [to Phuket] if I would better to bring my officers from Phetchaburi here to investigate and arrest venues as in cases like this that [where venues are] open until 4-5am in the morning, with loud music disturbing residents in

the area, not concerned about disturbing anyone.

"It is obviously an offence and police will catch the owner as well as their supporters. Let's see who will answer for this... Please do not let people be disturbed [like this], you [the police] get salaries from the citizens' tax so please be concerned about the public," Maj Gen Uthai noted.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Pornsak Nuannoo and Phuket City Police Chief Col Teerawat Liamsuwan responded just hours later through a Facebook

post by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

"Police have been arresting entertainment venues in Phuket for disturbing people, in accordance with the policy of the Royal Thai Police," Maj Gen Pornsak said.

"In particular, the owner of the bar named as H20 in Phuket Town has been arrested two times (Feb 18 and 19)," he said.

Of note, the H20 nightlife venue, located on Soi Limsui Zhu, was highlighted in the video posted by Maj Uthai.

The Phuket News contacted the three venues seen in the video. The operators of all three venues said they provided music at night, but also said that they stopped the music at midnight and closed their venues at 2am in accordance with their entertainment licences.

Phuket City Police Chief Col Teerawat said that officers had inspected entertainment venues last Friday (Feb 19) in accordance with the Phuket order that entertainment venues must close by the specified time.

"Officers found that a bar named as 'H20 Club 552' violated the Phuket provincial order regarding the COVID-19 control measures, operating without a license and selling or providing services for baraku and electric baraku," said Col Teerawat.

"The Phuket Provincial Police will have Col Akit Darnpitaksart as an investigator to examine further the facts of the incident, and will proceed with legal action as soon as possible within three days," Maj Gen Pornsak said.

Later that night (Feb 21), a "task force" was deployed, comprising members of the Phuket Provincial Narcotics

Control Management Center (PNCMC) and Territorial Defense Volunteers (OrSor, or Kong Asa Raksa Dindaen).

Also present in the raids, carried out from 11:30pm to 5:30am, were Phuket City Police led by Chief Col Theerawat Liamsuwan, as well as officers from Region 8 Police.

The police party raided the "Kim Yong" bar and "16 Bar", both located on Phuket Rd, and arrested the operators for selling alcohol outside the permitted hours. At the 16 Bar officers also seized nine baraku (shisha) and associated paraphernalia, including bills for providing baraku to customers.

The task force also raided "Sin Seng Long" bar on Yaowarat Rd, and arrested the operator for selling alcohol outside the permitted hours.

None of the bars were found disturbing the peace with loud music.

The "task force" also inspected the three nightlife venues on Soi Limsui Zhu central to the complaint filed by Maj Gen Uthai.

However, officers found that the three venues – Maldives, H2O and Ther – all closed at midnight.

## Police hunt on after Wichit shootings

POLICE LAST FRIDAY night (Feb 19) began a search for a suspect who shot and wounded two men in front of Soi Hua Hom, off Sakdidee Rd in Wichit.

Capt Natthee Pichit chainithimet of the Wichit Police was called to the scene at about 7:30pm.

Investigation police, led by Lt Col Thammasan Bunsong, went to the scene where they were informed that those injured in the shooting incident had already been taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital.

The injured were confirmed



Police survey the scene of the shootings as part of their ongoing investigation. Photo: Phuket Police

as Phuket natives Thammaboot Prachumphan, 46, who suffered a gunshot wound to his head and his son, 28-year-old Anusit, who suffered shots to his leg and stomach. Both are under medical supervision

although no further details on the severity of their injuries were released at time of press.

Police blocked off the areas surrounding the crime scene to investigate further and found four shells of 9mm bullets and another unused bullet on the ground.

As of Tuesday (Feb 23) no details had been disclosed as to the potential identity, gender or age of the shooter, likewise the possible motive behind the act.

Investigations are ongoing and further details will be released in due course, police confirmed. Eakkapop Thongtub

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Autcharawan Pratumwan (Gay)

Many people know me through Island Technology, others as a lawyer and some as a provider of Renewable Energy with “Smarter Energy Solution”, my latest business, started in 2019.

I have lived in Phuket for over 20 years and witnessed many increases such as population, energy use to cope with improved lifestyle, pollution, but also undeniable climate changes with very dry seasons leading to reservoirs being completely dried out.

The older I grow, the more I remember and miss the “good old days” I spent in my grandparent’s village. I have memories of this simple life, eating fish fresh from the sea, picking up eggs from the henhouse, drinking water directly from the source, picking up vegetables from my grandmother’s garden. I am nostalgic of that period. My grandparents were not rich but they lived a happy and healthy life... a sustainable life.

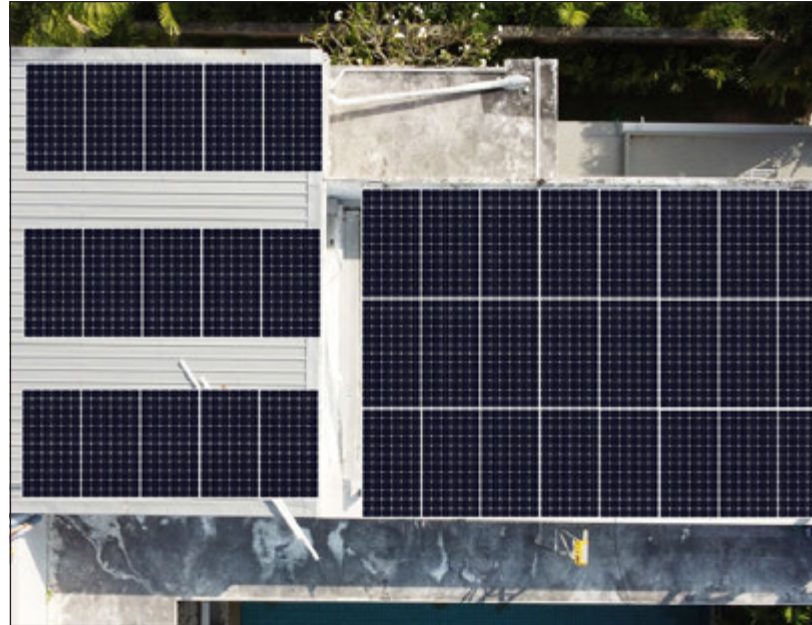


Autcharawan Pratumwan (Gay)

I wanted to rediscover this sustainability and start helping our environment, and understand why we continue to destroy our environment.

The world is changing, and we must live in line with our time. I am not asking to go back 100 years ago. I just want people to realise that they can continue to live the same way by only adjusting a bit.

I first looked at the solar technology 12 years ago, but the cost was too high. In 2019, I studied clean energy again for my home and realised that I could not only substantially decrease



my electrical bills, but also help the planet by reducing CO2 emissions. I then decided to go further and attended seminars and exhibitions until I was convinced and ready to employ specialists for this fantastic technology.

Today’s solar panels provide good efficiency and a very quick return on investment, sometimes as quick as three to four years! This is like putting your money in the bank and doubling it in four years... that’s a 25% p.a. interest rate. So, when investing in a solar rooftop, you not

only help our planet, but you also help your wallet. After four years, the electricity generated by the solar panels is completely free!

“Smarter Energy Solution Co., Ltd.” is a new company, with newly employed solar energy specialists and engineers, and a large part of the team comes from Island Technology.

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and inverters suppliers and work very hard on our costs to make this renewable energy affordable to all. Our installations are systematically checked by independent engineers and approved by government agencies, such as the PEA (Provincial Electricity Authority) or the Energy Regulatory Commission.

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Autcharawan Pratumwan (Gay), Managing Director, Smarter Energy Solution Co Ltd. e: [gay@smarterenergysolution.com](mailto:gay@smarterenergysolution.com). m: 081-897-4180. t: 076 322 095-7. f: 076 322 098. w: [www.smarterenergysolution.com](http://www.smarterenergysolution.com)



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## New events launched to boost tourism

PHUKET’S BUSINESS community launched a new tourism campaign last Saturday (Feb 20) to help attract more young people to the island as part of the efforts to help struggling tourism businesses to survive.

The campaign, “Amazing Thailand Phuket Surf skate Series 2021”, was launched at Queen Sirikit Park in Phuket Town, with surfskaters taking to the streets – namely along Thalang Rd and Phang Nga Rd – from 5pm to 7pm.

Present at the launch were Vice Governor Phichet panaphong, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket office Deputy Director Thapanee Kiatpaiboon, Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) President Bhummiti Ruktaengam and Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO, or OrBorJor) President Rewat Areerob.

The surfskating campaign is just one of the first of its kind to be held this year under the banner “#HaveYouEver”, an initiative launched earlier this month to help boost domestic tourism to Phuket.



Photo: PR Phuket

The sport surfskating was chosen due to its rising popularity, Mr Bhummiti told the *Bangkok Post*.

“After domestic tourism took another hit from the second wave of COVID-19, we thought about adding more vibrant activities to revive the sector,” he said. “There is strong demand for surfskating, and the island has just the right places for such activities.”

The surfskating initiative was launched with support specifically from the PPAO and Thailand Surfing Federation.

The PPAO was announced at a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on Feb 8 as now taking a proactive role in helping to launch a slew of domestic tourism campaigns to help restart Phuket’s battered tourism industry.

More events are to be held under the #HaveYouEver campaign, with the focus moving to support businesses struggling in key beach resort towns along the island’s west coast.

Karon Beach will host the next event on May 23, Patong Beach on Aug 14, and Surin Beach on Nov 13, it was announced last Saturday.

Before those events, the PPAO will host a Seafood Festival on March 26-28, and the Phuket Night Run on April 4-6.

With vaccines being rolled out worldwide, businesses in Phuket hope that the government will allow vaccinated foreign tourists to enter without having to quarantine by October, Mr Bhummiti said.

*The Phuket News*



# Vaccine passport crucial to reviving tourism: TAT

Bangkok Post

There should be a clear-cut plan on a vaccine passport by June if plans to reopen the international market by the fourth quarter are kept, according to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, TAT deputy governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, said the government policy would have a tremendous effect towards international market plans, particularly on the long-haul market, which is progressing rapidly in terms of mass vaccination programmes.

The opinions of overseas agents and recent surveys in key markets showed tourists are ready to be inoculated or participate within a vaccine passport policy if this would allow them to travel abroad once again, he said.

"TAT plans to bring back international tourists by the fourth quarter but that will depend largely on our policy development too," Mr Siripakorn said.

In order to achieve the target, the country should start soft launches in two phases – marketing campaigns launched before the third quarter, followed by the introduction of an area quarantine policy within the third quarter, he said.

The two phases have started to take shape as the first batch of arrivals landed in Phuket and went into "villa



A health-care worker records a vaccination on an International Certificate of Vaccination at a hospital in Germany. Photo: AFP

quarantine" last Sunday (Feb 21). This quarantine concept is similar to the area quarantine proposal.

He said Qatar Airways requested the relaxation of the 14-day quarantine at beach destinations during the third quarter and is ready to operate international flights to Phuket if mandatory quarantine is loosened by March.

But the policy on vaccinated tourists is seen as a more critical condition as the survey TAT conducted among 4,127 British people found that 75% agreed to be inoculated if it became a mandatory requirement among destination countries.

However, 41% of them disagreed with inoculation if a quarantine policy remained in place.

A similar result showed up in a survey among Finnish people as 99% said vaccines were important in relation to traveling abroad, while 68% indicated they would not take any trips if a country still had a mandatory quarantine policy.

"Those surveys clearly told us that the government must accelerate a concrete plan for a vaccine passport by June in order to receive inoculated tourists, or else we could miss a huge opportunity as some countries have already started quarantine-free programme for vaccinated travellers," said Mr Siripakorn.

He said many long-haul markets still rate Thailand as a preferred destination, with 62% of the Finnish people choosing it as their ideal winter destination.

## PM volunteers for first COVID shot

PRIME MINISTER PRAYUT Chan-o-cha on Monday (Feb 22) announced he is ready to be the first Thai to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in a bid to boost public confidence in the China-made Sinovac vaccine.

"I will if I can... and I'm ready for the jab," the prime minister said in response to media questions if he would be the first to be inoculated.

His wish may not be granted, however, after health experts announced that priority will be decided according to age.

Dr Sapon Iamsirithaworn, deputy director-general of the Department of Disease Control, said on Monday that Sinovac's vaccine is only recommended for those aged 18-59 due to insufficient data to support its efficacy among those who are younger or older. The Prime Minister is 66.

He did, however, warn that Sinovac's formula is not recommended for pregnant women or those who have had adverse side-effects from other vaccines in the past.

The first delivery of 200,000 doses from Beijing landed at Suvarnabhumi airport on Wednesday with an-



Front of the queue: Prayut. Image: Government House / Facebook screenshot

other 800,000 due in March and 1 million more in April. The government has also purchased 26 million doses from AstraZeneca, a British-Swedish pharmaceutical company.

The PM said that as more supplies arrive, the National Vaccine Institute will decide who is in line for each round of shots.

This follows a briefing by the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) last Thursday which confirmed everyone, both Thais and foreigners who are living in Thailand permanently, will have access to quality and safe vaccines. Migrant workers from neighbouring countries will also be covered, it added.

They will receive their vaccination during phase 2 of the drive, which is scheduled from May onwards.

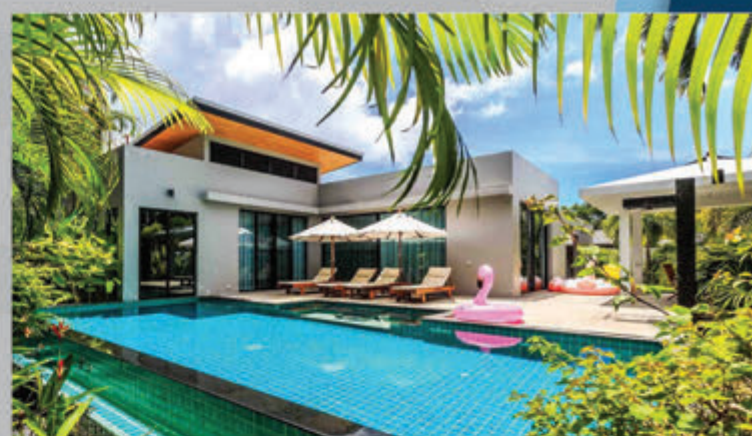
Bangkok Post

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# Local Musicians Supporting Their Local Communities



## SPONSORED

**E**leven local bands will take to the stage at Blue Tree Phuket on March 20 to take part in the Lean On Me Live Fest. The event is being staged to help raise awareness and funding for the food-relief programs that are feeding thousands of families in Phuket and the surrounding areas.

Whilst some industries have started up again, the lack of tourists to the region have meant that a large majority of the closed businesses have remained shut, and as such, many people are still left unemployed and destitute.

The local music industry is one of the sectors that have suffered severely in the wake of the COVID pandemic. Many musicians have lost their jobs, and many have relied on, and continue to rely on, relief programs to survive. Despite the hard times, throughout the pandemic, groups of musicians have lent their talents to various projects, events and charities in Phuket in aid of our local communities.

The Lean On Me Live Fest is one such project that aims to bring back the enjoyment of live music to all in Phuket, whilst maintaining a focus on the ongoing challenges that we are all facing. Centrally located, Blue Tree Phuket has agreed to host the event at its Arena. A few bands were asked if they would like to participate in the event, and once the word was out, many more offered up their services. With the organisers attempting to keep the event within manageable parameters, 11 bands were confirmed on a first-come basis.

The following bands have committed their time to the cause and they show the diverse depth of talent that lives on the island:

- N.E.E.T and Tidy (Midwest Emo / Pop Punk, original music)
- Colin Hill & Jimmy Fame (Acoustic rock, original music)
- Dark Fiber (Disco Rock, original music)
- Dasha D'Aria (Modern Pop and Rock, original music)
- Black and Blue (Blues Rock and Soul)
- Driven (Classic Rock, original music)
- FUZZtonez (Rock)
- BeBop Band (Neo Soul)
- Coconut Rawai's Naughty 5 Band (Pop, Rock and Soul)
- Curious Itch (Alt Pop, original music)
- Voodoo Daddy (Blues Rock, original music)

Furthermore, most of the bands participating in the event will be playing partial or completely original sets of music.

The event is free to all in Phuket and in addition to the live music, Blue Tree Phuket will also have a Garage Sale running on the day and there will be a variety of food vendors open around the arena and craft beverages will also be on tap. Patrons of the event will be able to enjoy the many other



facilities that Blue Tree Phuket and its tenants have to offer.

A limited number of VIP tables set up in front of the stage will be available for groups of people to pre-book for a B5,000 donation, and a limited number of B1,000 VIP tickets will be available to the public to access the VIP balcony overlooking the arena. Both options include food and beverages. Further details can be obtained directly from the organizers at the time of booking.

The Lean On Me Live Fest event kicks off at 2pm on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> of March at the Blue Tree Phuket Arena. For additional information on the event or to find out how to book VIP tables and tickets or to make a donation, you can contact the Phuket Academy of Performing Arts on admin@phuketacademyofperformingarts.com.

## International Women's Day Luncheon 2021

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**Karine Gauthier**, Body Temple, Singapore

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Mutton Rogan Josh



Paani Puri



Gulab Jamun

# Bollywood is back

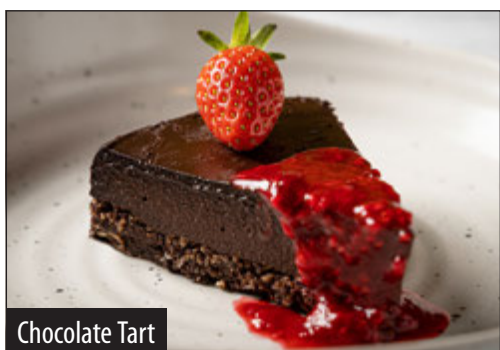


## THE CULINARY DETECTIVE

Chris Watson  
chriswatsonth@gmail.com

A quite common conversational ice breaker when out and about in Thailand is, 'Where do you live?' I love to answer this by informing those enquiring that I count myself as extremely fortunate in having the best of both worlds; both a home in Phuket and also one in Bangkok. The rationale for this, I continually remind myself, apparently gives me the benefits of city living for business combined with the regular opportunity to soak up sun, sea, sand and immerse myself in the slower lifestyle of the island.

Lately, I must confess to wishing I was more permanently based in Phuket as the so-called advantages of half my time in Bangkok are gradually dwindling away with air quality and certain difficult-to-understand restrictions being two key drawbacks. And food wise, whilst there are of course many more restaurants to choose from in the Big Mango, I find myself missing certain Phuket gems which, were I more island-based, would undoubtedly become my regular haunts. One such restaurant would definitely be Bollywood.



Chocolate Tart



On my regular trips south, whenever an opportunity arises, I have descended on Bollywood as incredibly reliable in delivering consistently comforting Indian food. As you all know, us Brits love a good Indian meal; Chicken Tikka, Dahl, Mutton Rogan Josh and a number of varied Naan breads to dip and ultimately mop up!

During these visits, I have inevitably ended up chatting over a butter chicken with the effervescent Sam Sethi, the owner and head of the family business which covers a multitude of differing ventures. The restaurant was his brainchild and actually launched nearly 30 years ago to enable him to have a convivial location in which he could meet his business community.

The restaurant, as one might expect, has been redecorated over the years. However, as I entered recently I was initially surprised not to see Sam himself at the door and find myself in a quite stylish and contemporary restaurant, not as I have become accustomed. I re-check my surroundings to ensure I am in the right place... Yes, this is the new Bollywood!

I am greeted by Priya, one of Sam and Chin's daughters who returned to Phuket last year to oversee a comprehensive refurbishment of the restaurant and introduce a reimagined updated menu. I must say that the interior is a significant change with striking ochre walls adorned with simply framed Bollywood posters, a fond nod to its past, and rattan-backed seating lends the whole room a very cool vibe. Comfortable sofas with themed cushions pull me inside and Priya shares her new vision.

Even the menu presentation and layout has been changed to reflect new, perhaps younger tastes. I do notice that Bollywood is now referred to as an Indian bistro – I am intrigued. Yes, pleasingly, the menu still has the stalwarts as one might expect but also includes a number of more fusion dishes with Indian themed dishes given a modern twist, such as mutton rogan tagliatelle and Amritsari fish and chips, the latter with Punjabi spice coating. I also see prawn tacos and a tempting egg curry truffle risotto.

I order several recommended dishes. Rather than regale you here, I would prefer you visit and try for yourself, suffice to say you will not be disappointed.

The traditional dishes have been given a more modern presentation and a touch of class, whilst the new dishes will certainly delight the more adventurous among us. I must highlight the aloo tikki burger and butter chicken panini as worthy of attention!

I bid my farewell and briefly reflect, relaunches are a sensitive beast, particularly those affecting successful timeless restaurants as reinvention can create confusion, alienating regulars. However, I am delighted to note that Bollywood bistro, I am confident, will

not be one of those. The newly created identity is both a welcome facelift to the original and totally on trend. I look forward to my next visit and when I relocate permanently, to becoming a Bollywood Bistro regular! This might well be my new best of both worlds!

*Chris is a former Michelin Guide Inspector who following an international career in hospitality spanning 30 years in both the Middle East and Asia, has now settled in Thailand and contributes a monthly restaurant column.*

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL UWCT MASTER PLAN



### PROJECT PRIMARY OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFICATIONS

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The school is seeking proposals for the development of a comprehensive masterplan that involves developing and finalizing the concept, footprint, and building envelope plans and drawings of new and existing buildings.

### INDICATIVE TIMELINE

- RFP Released Feb 19 2021
- Pre-Qualification Deadline Mar 5 2021
- In Person Q&A Sessions Mar 10-12 2021
- Submissions and Presentations Mar 22-26 2021
- Selection Announcement Mar 31 2021
- Phase I Scope Complete Jun 15 2021
- Phase II and III Scope Ongoing

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# POP QUIZ

- 'Area 51' of Edwards Air Force Base, central to much conjecture over UFOs, is in which US state?
- Which scholar supposedly exclaimed 'Eureka!'?
- By what name is singer Alecia Moore better known by?
- Gymnophobia is the fear of what?
- What was the name of Bruce Lee's final film?

Answers below, centre

# SUDOKU

Medium

	5		6	3				
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Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

- Switch out
- Fantasy draft choice
- Gratify
- Hot drink in the winter cold
- Recipe instruction
- J, in fashion
- Combat gear
- Adele or Shirley Bassey, e.g.
- Fiona or Shrek
- Duke en croute?
- Beetle's victim, often
- Topples from power
- Informal vernacular
- Fast food restaurant giveaway
- Lotus sports car
- Battery for laser pointers
- Back up
- Dessert to die for?
- Understand?
- A president and a singer
- Sauce
- Soccer players protect them
- Metric heavyweight
- Starts the bidding
- Wine cask material
- Emperor's fave
- Fly, for one
- Wings for Pei



Down

- Rebel in a union
- Showed off
- Tip-top
- Magician's exclamation
- Song from David
- "\_\_\_ be a cold day..."
- Big name in credit cards
- Money in Malmo
- JK Rowling or Susan Boyle
- Insider's language
- Sea swallows
- Lamb's mom
- Aragorn's love in The Lord of the Rings
- "Falstaff" composer
- Fruit used in smoothies

- Swing around
- Kind of resort
- Neosporin, e.g.
- What Brady tries to avoid
- Gross-weight deduction
- Heart chart
- Q \_\_\_ "Quebec"
- The Drifters' "\_\_\_ the Roof"
- Movie prefix
- Part of a bray
- Cultural, in combinations
- Abbr. on a business sign
- Specks in the sea
- Gumbo vegetables
- Baseball pioneer Buck
- No longer fashionable
- Beginning
- Its hub is Ben Gurion
- Cooker for the casa
- Reunion attendee
- It's dropped sometimes at parties
- Tedious affair
- Old disco song title
- Charitable ad

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63					64					65			

# Solutions to last week's puzzles:



# GOT YOUR NUMBER

## 5.6

to one is the sheep-to-people ratio in New Zealand.

## 25

percent of all mattress sales in the US in 1987 were waterbeds.

## 48

years after the invention of canned food, the "can opener" was created.

## 29,525

feet above sea level is the highest altitude bees have been recorded as flying – higher than Mt Everest.

## 5 billion

people will be nearsighted by the year 2050, and up to one in 10 people may be at risk of blindness.

Source: Uberfacts

# ISLAND VIEW



Morning over Chalong. Photo: Michael Lee

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to [exeditor@classactmedia.co.th](mailto:exeditor@classactmedia.co.th)


# This week in history

**Feb 26, 1993**  
A truck bomb parked under the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City explodes, killing six people and injuring over 1,000.

**Feb 27, 2015**  
Russian politician Boris Nemtsov, opposed to the government of Vladimir Putin, is gunned down dead on the Bolshoy Moskvoretsky Bridge in Moscow, hours after appealing to the public to support a march against Russia's war in Ukraine.

**Feb 28, 202 BC**  
Liu Bang is enthroned as the Emperor of China, beginning four centuries of rule by the Han dynasty.

**Mar 1, 1692**  
Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and Tituba are brought before local magistrates in Salem Village, Massachusetts, beginning what would become known as the Salem witch trials.



General Ne Win.

**Mar 2, 1962**  
In Burma (now named Myanmar), the army led by General Ne Win (b.1911-d.2002) seizes power in a coup d'état.

**Mar 3, 1938**  
Oil is discovered in Saudi Arabia.

**Mar 4, 1899**  
Cyclone Mahina sweeps in north of Cooktown, Queensland, with a 12-metre (39ft) wave that reaches up to 5 kilometres (3.1 mi) inland, killing over 300.

Source: Wikipedia



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## PIWC FEBRUARY LUNCH 2021 AT WYNDHAM GRAND PHUKET KALIM BAY

The Phuket International Women's Club held another great luncheon on Feb 18, 2021, where members and guests had the opportunity to meet up and enjoy the fantastic food and views overlooking Patong Bay. Looking forward to the next luncheon, details soon on the Phuket International Women's Club Facebook page. Pictures - Dianna Buerger & Ora Pimbley.



## HOLE IN ONE BAR GOLF EVENT

Held at Loch Palm Golf Club, the 2<sup>nd</sup> friendly golf event was hosted by Hole in One bar Kathu on Feb 16, 2021. Sixty golfers enjoyed the fabulous conditions at Loch Palm followed by the very tasty awards dinner at Hole in One bar, Kathu.



# Masters at work down under

## Djokovic and Osaka dominate the court at Aussie Open

### TENNIS

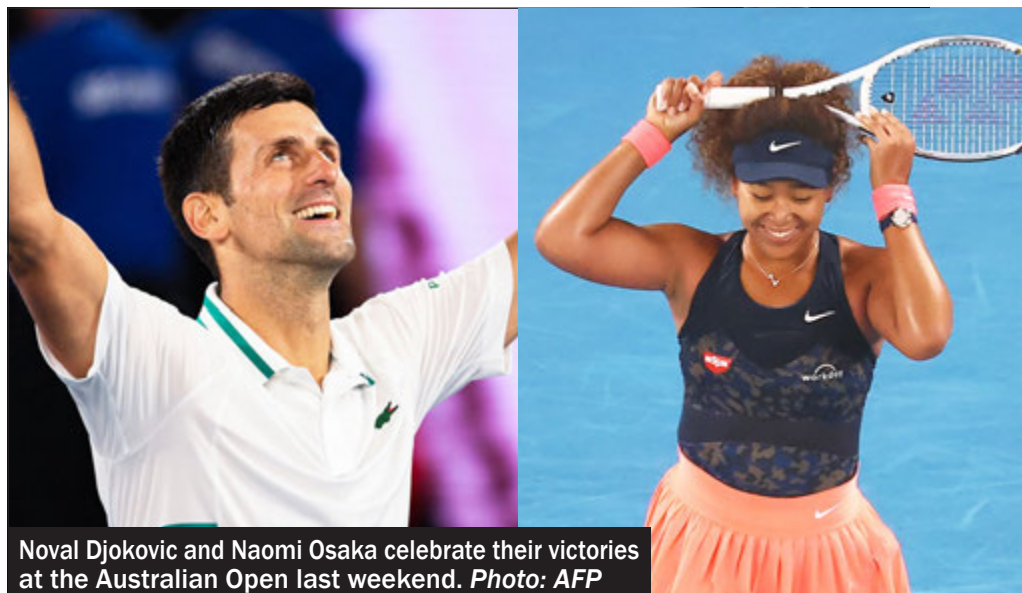
AFP

Peerless world number one Novak Djokovic demolished Russia's Daniil Medvedev in straight sets to win his ninth Australian Open title and extend his record-breaking reign at Melbourne Park last Sunday (Feb 21).

Djokovic's dominant display came a day after women's world number two Naomi Osaka dismissed Jennifer Brady in straight sets to win her fourth Grand Slam title and underline her new status as the dominant force in women's tennis.

Djokovic overpowered the fourth seed Medvedev 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 in front of 7,400 fans at Rod Laver Arena to end the Russian's unbeaten run at 20 matches.

In winning a third straight Australian Open for the second time, the Serb claimed his 18<sup>th</sup> Grand Slam title to move within two of Roger



Novak Djokovic and Naomi Osaka celebrate their victories at the Australian Open last weekend. Photo: AFP

Federer and Rafael Nadal who have 20 each, while denying Medvedev his first.

Rarely has a player been so dominant at a single tournament with the Serb's record-extending ninth title moving him past Federer's eight at Wimbledon but still a long way behind the 13 Nadal has won at Roland Garros.

But it was a rollercoaster ride to get there, with Djokovic dropping five sets en route

to the final and battling an abdominal injury that nearly forced him to pull out after the third round.

Despite admitting it was a gamble to keep playing, with a risk the injury could get worse and affect the rest of his season, the 33-year-old chose to continue and it paid off.

"I think emotionally it was one of the hardest tournaments that I've ever had, to be honest," he said.

"If there was a tournament where I want to risk any more damage, and try my hardest to battle, it's here, it's a Grand Slam."

The win reinforced Djokovic's status as world number one, his 311<sup>th</sup> week at the top of the rankings, surpassing Federer's record of 310.

Medvedev moved to a career-high three in the rankings, behind Nadal.

Djokovic's presentation

with the trophy came after Tennis Australia chair Jayne Hrdlicka was booed for mentioning the COVID vaccine and the Victorian government.

The unusual scenes came at the end of a tournament that was delayed three weeks over the coronavirus and had to bar fans for five days when state authorities ordered a snap lockdown.

### BACK-TO-BACK MAJORS

Osaka, 23, swept past America's Brady 6-4, 6-3 in 77 minutes to win her second straight major crown and extend a 21-match winning streak that stretches back more than a year.

The win took her to second in the rankings, becoming only the third player after Monica Seles and Roger Federer to win her first four major finals.

By clinching back-to-back majors for the second time, the reigning US Open champion has won half of the Slams she has contested since her breakthrough 2018 US Open victory

against Serena Williams.

After a tight first set, Osaka controlled the second to win 6-4, 6-3 in 77 minutes in front of 7,381 fans at Rod Laver Arena, operating at half-capacity over coronavirus concerns.

The Japanese survived a seesaw start to gain control, reeling off six straight games en route to the title.

It was a rematch of last year's epic, three-set US Open semi-final, described by some as the best match of 2020, but Osaka triumphed far more comfortably on this occasion.

After subduing Brady, a fellow big-hitter, Osaka lifted her racquet above her head in a muted celebration as the crowd roared.

"We played in the semis of the US Open a couple of months ago and I told everyone that you're going to be a problem," Osaka told Brady at the trophy presentation. "And I was right."

Despite the defeat, Brady rose to a career-high 13<sup>th</sup> in the WTA rankings.

# 'Fantastico' Luna Rossa qualifies for America's Cup

### SAILING

A JUBILANT LUNA ROSSA will race holders Team New Zealand for the America's Cup after completing an overwhelming 7-1 victory over Ineos Team UK in the challenger series final in Auckland last Sunday (Feb 21).

"Fantastico! Fantastico, Bellissimo," a delighted Luna Rossa helmsman Francesco Bruni said as the Italian entry sealed victory in race eight.

"This is a great day for us, a great day for Luna Rossa, a great day for Italy. We are very, very



Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli team celebrate after winning the America's Cup challenger series last Sunday. Photo: AFP

happy. We are in for a good fight for the America's Cup now."

Luna Rossa began the day with a 5-1 lead and – with the Team New Zealand crew keeping a close watch on

proceedings – they comprehensively won races seven and eight to take an unbeatable lead in the best of 13 series.

They won race seven by one minute 45 seconds and wrapped up

the challengers' elimination series with a 56-second margin in race eight to crush the hopes of Ineos skipper, British sailing legend Ben Ainslie.

For most of the series, the key difference was the ability of Luna Rossa co-helmsman Jimmy Spithill to outmanoeuvre Ainslie at the start and inevitably first across the start line was first to finish.

Ainslie won the start in race six and steered Ineos to its sole victory.

He also won the start of race eight, his last-ditch attempt to stay in the contest, but Luna Rossa produced superior speed to take the lead halfway down the first leg in the only over-taking manoeuvre in the challenger final.

"Sorry guys," Ainslie could be heard apologising to his crew at the end of race eight before later congratulating Luna Rossa.

"I've got to say well done Luna Rossa and well done Italy," Ainslie said.

"I know it's a big deal in Italy getting into the America's Cup final.

"We're obviously disappointed we didn't get through and we have to go away, go back to the drawing board and see what we can do."

The first race in the best-of-13 America's Cup between Team New Zealand and Luna Rossa is on March 6. AFP

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# Phuket bowls returns in style

## 'Hollywood Invitational' gets the bowls rolling again in Kamala

### BOWLS

Robert Knight

After a sustained period of inaction to allow green renovation and to mark the return from exile and quarantine of Greg "Hollywood" Holman, the Phuket bowls competition season finally returned in earnest to Kamala Bowls Club last Friday (Feb 19).

The Hollywood Invitational singles championship was a brand-new majors event curated by Greg himself that saw an impressive 18 entries into a league and knock-out-based tournament.

The decision was made to have six leagues with the winners plus the two best second-placed bowlers advancing to the last eight. Those who did not make it through the league format would contest a "plate" competition in pairs.

With a strong field and a random draw throwing up some tough leagues in the initial stages, it was going to take some exceptional and consistent bowling to lift the trophy.

Progressing to the final stages for the first time were "Rocky" (Dr Rock) Chalmers and two female Thai bowlers, Noon and Nidnoy Vorada.

Several previous champions



All the participants gather after the Hollywood Invitational singles championship at Kamala Bowls Club. Photo: Robert Knight

of note were early casualties and, with Dean Lambert only one of two previous majors winners remaining in the last eight, the chances of a new champion being crowned were quite high.

After two tough semi-finals, Dean and Noon made it through to the final, Noon being the first female

finalist for some years and Dean also making it to another final after a long period without singles success.

Despite Noon coming into the contest as an underdog, the form book during the competition thus far suggested no one was sure of the outcome of the final.

However, as the final progressed,

nerves appeared to affect her as Dean rolled back the years and used all his previous experience in finals to ease to a surprisingly comfortable 10-3 victory and become the first-ever Hollywood Invitational champion.

The consensus was that Dean had been the best bowler overall on the day, form that he maintained into the

final and therefore was a deserving winner. Noon performed admirably and will no doubt have benefited from the experience to stand her in good stead for future competitions.

Many others were unable to replicate their fine club day form and convert into trophies – something for them to work on perhaps for future competitions.

In the competition for those who dropped out in the first stage, a female Thai bowler did make it into the winners circle as Kunlawo Jaew teamed up with Ray Austin to beat Larry Fitzpatrick and Pierre Hammar to claim the inaugural Hollywood plate.

Major competitions in the pipeline include the Kamala Pairs Championships on March 15, the Phuket Open singles Championship on April 9 and the annual Veterans versus Youngsters, date yet to be confirmed.

Kamala Lawn Bowls Club is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday with all welcome to join the members on those days for a 3pm start. Private parties and other groups are welcome on other days by appointment. All equipment is provided.

For further details please contact the club on 099-1307299 or 094-8987476.

## Liverpool left feeling blue

### FOOTBALL

THE PRESSURE CONTINUES to mount on Liverpool and their manager Jurgen Klopp after fierce cross city rivals Everton inflicted another home defeat last Saturday (Feb 20) to sustain the reigning Premier League champions' free-fall.

Everton excelled from the first whistle, snapping into challenges and zipping the ball around the park with purpose on their way to a 2-0 victory courtesy of goals from Richarlison and Gylfi Sigurdsson. It was the first time the Blues had won at Anfield since 1999, ending what was Liverpool's longest-ever unbeaten run against a single opponent.

The defeat was also the fourth straight loss for Liverpool and the first time they have lost four successive home matches since 1923.

Klopp's frustration was evident through his body language on the touchline and his forced, almost tortured smile in the post-match interview. He seems at a total loss to explain how a



Lost: Jurgen Klopp. Photo: AFP

team so dominant in every regard last season has totally lost its way.

"We have to improve on the finishing stuff and then we will win football games," is all the usually effervescent German could offer post-match.

To compound his misery, captain and stand-in central defender Jordan Henderson appears to be facing a lengthy lay-off with an injury that forced Klopp to employ his 18<sup>th</sup> central defensive pairing of the season in Ozan Kabak

and Nat Phillips.

Everton now sit seventh in the table, one place behind their rivals but level on points with a game in hand.

Elsewhere, Manchester City continued their seemingly unstoppable charge to the title with a 1-0 win at Arsenal thanks to an early Raheem Sterling goal.

It seems only a matter of time before they are crowned champions with second-placed Manchester United now 10 points behind and games fast running out.

Ben Tirebuck



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# Sport



**Phuket Bowls returns to the greens > p14**

## DOM THE JUDGE AND JURY

### CRICKET

Neil Quail

Last Sunday's (Feb 21) invitational cricket match at the ACG between Goa Panthers and a PCG select XI saw a number of remarkable individual performances, but none more so than a maturely manufactured maiden half-century and triple wicket haul by PCG's 15-year-old talent, Dom Judge.

Untested as a batsman, Judge's reputation as a left-arm, pace swing bowler has however rapidly gained respect amongst Phuket's senior batting ranks, with regular coaching sessions hosted by club coach Ashan Fonseka clearly paying dividends. And following the young man's knock at the weekend, Phuket cricket can revel in the emergence of such a high-calibre all-rounder.

Jeremy Bootsy and Dan Nicholson opened the batting for PCG in oppressively hot conditions with both scoring freely from the outset to reach 60 by the 5<sup>th</sup> over.

However, Bootsy fell just 3 runs short of his 50 when he was dismissed by Gudu Yadav in the 8<sup>th</sup> over, Nicholson following shortly after for a solid 24 off 28.



Young cricketing talent Dom Judge, who scored his maiden half-century last Sunday against the Panthers at the ACG, seen here going through bowling drills with coach Ashan Fonseka. Photo: Neil Quail

Imtiyaz Mushtaq and Joe Ninan then set up a 48-run partnership before the latter was joined at the crease by Judge.

The next 12 overs brought a 107-run partnership with both batsmen producing a variety of textbook ground strokes and punishing pull shots.

A well worked final over saw Judge bring up his first, and well deserved, 50 not out, with applause from both teams ringing around the ACG.

In response, Seemant Raju clattered 35 off 22 deliveries in opening for the Panthers before he was caught by Curt Livermore in the covers.

Judge's three-wicket journey began with a searching in-swinging delivery that nipped the edge of Samir Khan's bat for Bootsy to collect behind the stumps for 14 with the score at 104 for 4 in the 11<sup>th</sup> over.

Judge took the wicket of Sami Pir LBW in the 13<sup>th</sup> over before his 11-year-old brother Ollie Judge impressed with two clean-bowled wickets to record 2 for 21 off 3 overs.

The game's result was not in any doubt for PCG as Wasim Manzoor joined Bhanu Pratap for the final wicket stand, and the pair certainly were not giving up in almost bringing up a 100-run partnership.

But it was Dom Judge who stepped up again in the 28<sup>th</sup> over, bowling Manzoor for his third wicket and the Panthers at 229 all out, giving PCG a three-wicket victory.

With the MVP award deservedly going to Dom Judge, it was otherwise an excellent showing from several players in both squads in producing an entertaining game of cricket.

Anyone interested in playing cricket or joining for coaching sessions, please contact via the ACG Facebook page.

## First Phuket touch rugby event of the year a big hit

### TOUCH RUGBY

THE FIRST TOUCH RUGBY tournament of the year kicked off at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalang last Saturday (Feb 20).

The day started with the children's coaching clinic and game which was led by local volunteers and rugby coaches and attracted over 30 enthusiastic children.

The main competition started at 3pm sharp, with eight teams from around the island competing for the title in very hot and sticky yet dry conditions.

Many skinned knees and bruised egos were the order of the day, with the unexpected final between the Vagabonds Academy Team and newly formed Can't Tag Sally.

It was a tightly fought game



All the children who participated in the 2pm game last Saturday in front of the ACG stand. Photo: Donna Toon

with Can't Tag Sally ultimately emerging as winners by the narrowest of margins 2-1.

A big shout out and thanks to Neil Quail from the ACG, Jeremy Bootsy from Vegan Booty, and Santi and Pavilions Phuket for

donating prizes for the raffle.

Thanks to the raffle, various donations and the kindness of all involved on the day B12,000 was raised to help fund the new lawn mower desperately needed to maintain the facilities at the ACG.



Harley Quinns team. Photo: Donna Toon

Tomorrow (Saturday, Feb 27) sees the next children's contact rugby academy taking place. It starts at 10am and is overseen by coaches from the Phuket Vagabonds rugby team.

The academy is free to join and

promises lots of fun for the family, so please feel free to come down and support the ACG and Vagabonds who are dedicated to promoting and teaching the future of rugby here on the island.

The Phuket News