

PHUKET GOES TO THE POLLS FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS > PAGE 2

TOO SLOW



A medical staffer at Vachira Phuket Hospital prepares to administer a COVID vaccine injection. Photo: PPHO

HEALTH MINISTRY CALLED OUT FOR SLOW MASS VACCINATIONS, HOLDING JULY 1 REOPENING IN JEOPARDY

The Phuket News
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A plan for Phuket to allow vaccinated tourists to arrive on the island without quarantine from July 1 is to be presented to the Centre for Economic Situation Administration (CESA) for approval today (Mar 26).

Tourism Authority of Thailand Governor Yuthasak Supasorn broke the news to the press on Monday (Mar 22). There were no previous mentions of the plan announced by Bhumikitti Raktaengam, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, or

by the association itself before then. Likewise, as of Monday no officials in Phuket had made any mention of the plan to reopen the island to tourism from July 1.

Mr Yuthasak said the plan, called the “Phuket Tourism Sandbox”, will depend largely on vaccine allocation to Phuket, as 70% of the island’s population must be vaccinated by that date in order to achieve herd immunity to the SARS-CoV-2 virus before allowing foreign tourists in.

The plan will include a vaccination rollout proposal, including the number of doses needed and a timeline of when the vaccinations are to

be administered in order to launch a safe reopening, Mr Yuthasak said.

According to the proposal, Phuket must vaccinate at least 466,587 people, which requires 933,174 doses. To reach the immunity goal within the time frame, the first round of vaccinations must start by April 15, followed by a second round from May 15, reported the *Bangkok Post*.

“Previously, Phuket set the ‘Phuket First October’ for quarantine-free entry. But the new sandbox with an earlier starting date will benefit the whole country as we can evaluate this programme first before Thailand reopens all its borders in October,”

Mr Yuthasak said.

He said long-haul markets were likely to visit Thailand in the initial stage. Post-pandemic travel needs extra requirements, such as a COVID-19 test and insurance, meaning travellers will choose to stay longer and spend more, he added.

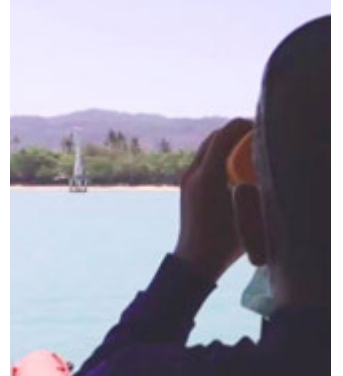
Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul also on Monday told the press in Bangkok that his ministry is speeding up vaccinations in Phuket and Koh Samui to prepare them both for the anticipated return of foreign tourists in July.

He confirmed that Phuket’s “private sector” had requested 900,000...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NEWS PAGE 3

Crocodile hunt moves to the west coast



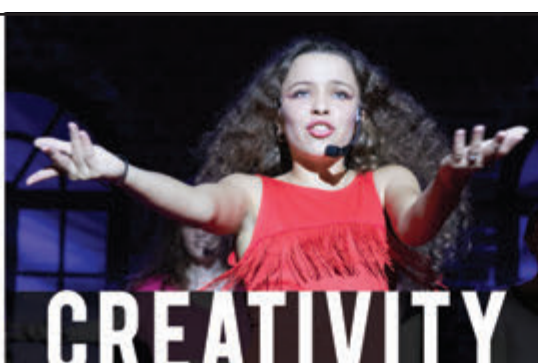
LIFE PAGE 8

Young stars shine at ‘Lean on Me Fest’



SPORT PAGE 14

Mercedes and Red Bull ones to watch in F1



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News



Patong algae bloom mired in denial > p5

Pressure mounts over vaccines

Continued from page 1

...AstraZeneca doses, saying the request would likely be approved since the government had secured 5 million doses for June and 10mn more each month after that.

Mr Anutin insisted there would be sufficient doses of the vaccine in the country and Thailand would have over 1mn doses if it could secure more doses next month.

The minister said the latest batch of 800,000 doses of the Sinovac vaccine had been allocated to at-risk provinces such as Samut Sakhon and "other" tourist destinations, but Phuket would receive 100,000 doses and Koh Samui 50,000.

Phuket Tourist Association President Mr Bhumikitti consistently declined to talk to *The Phuket News* about any such plan to reopen tourism in July before the news broke on Monday, but he did tell the *Bangkok Post* that the tourism sandbox will help contrib-

ute at least B84.3 billion to the island's economy, which he said was higher than the previous reopening plan set for October that expected to generate B55bn.

At present, the private sector and provincial government are confident about the plan, but the success factor is based on the vaccination programme which is the only unclear direction. Local operators still want the central government to make a decision, Mr Bhumikitti said.

Under the sandbox plan, tourists who want to join the quarantine-free programme are required to show a vaccine certificate, vaccine passport or IATA travel pass. They still have to take a PCR test at the airport and activate the ThailandPlus tracing application while in Phuket.

"Both the private and public sectors in the province are ready. But to proceed with the plan, we need vaccine



Health Minister Anutin assured there enough doses of the vaccine would be available. Photo: NNT

rollouts within the timeline," Mr Bhumikitti said.

In a pre-emptive strike last Sunday, PTA President Mr Bhumikitti through a post on his personal Facebook page criticised the Ministry of Public Health for its slow schedule for mass vaccinations, which he says is preventing Phuket from reopening tourism as soon as possible.

The post was in reaction to the CCSA in Bangkok last Friday (Mar 19) confirming

should be lifted for a July 1 reopening.

"From the meeting last Friday with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's economic advisor and the Secretary-General of the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), we all together shouted out to accept the challenge," Mr Bhumikitti wrote.

"The main factor is to vaccinate enough of our people to reopen the island. We need about 900,000 doses to vaccinate to 460,000 people on the island within three months by starting in April under the #phukettourismsandbox plan," Mr Bhumikitti said.

"Phuket medical staff, led by our new PPHO chief [Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office] and Vachira Phuket Hospital Director [Dr Chalermpong Sukontapol], together have made a plan to

set up nine vaccine centres across the island with 20 teams of staff.

"However, we still have to wait for clarity from the Public Health Ministry," he added.

Mr Bhumikitti admitted that mandatory quarantine was initially a reasonable precaution, but said that was no longer the case.

"Of 7,000 people living in Scandinavian countries surveyed by the TAT office in Stockholm, 48% said they wanted to come to Phuket. Of those, 68% said they would not come if they had to complete a quarantine, while 26% said they were okay to quarantine for 10-14 days.

"The question is, does our government want the 68%, or the 26%?" Mr Bhumikitti posed.

"The Ministry of Public Health has many smart doctors, so it may not be so hard for them to find the answer," he added.

Phuket goes to the polls

THE SALE OF ALCOHOL WILL BE banned in 12 municipal areas across Phuket from 6pm Saturday night through to 6pm Sunday night (Mar 27-28) as the island heads to the polls for its municipal elections.

The alcohol ban is required under election law, Phuket Election Commission (PEC) Director-General Passakon Siripakayapon explained to *The Phuket News*.

"Bars and nightclubs can be open, but they must not sell alcohol. Drinking at private homes is allowed, but not for big celebration events," Mr Passakon said.

"Whoever breaks the election law must face the penalty, which is up to six months in prison or a fine up to B10,000, or both," he added.

Phuket is home to 12 municipalities: Phuket City, Patong, Kathu, Wichit, Chalong, Rawai, Rassada, Srisoonthorn, Karon, Cherno Talay, Thepkasattri and Pa Khlok.

The alcohol ban will be in effect in each of 12 municipal areas.

All other provinces in the country will hold their own municipal elections on the same day.

More polling stations than in previous elections will be set up in municipal areas across Phuket to help ease congestion, in accordance with COVID-19 precautions, Mr Passakon noted.

"To also help reduce congestion [at polling stations], voters can easily check their name and the polling stations where they can cast their votes by installing the 'Smart Vote' app, which they can check for election law and other information," he said.

"This way they do not need to wait to have their name checked off the electoral roll



Volunteers promote the two ballot forms to be used in the municipal elections on Sunday (Mar 28). Photo: Kathu Municipality

as confirmed attending to vote before they actually cast their votes. The app also has information about the candidates running for office in each municipality," he added.

The 'Smart Vote' app also allows people who are unable to return to the municipal area where they are registered as living in order to vote to be able to electronically file the official form giving their reason for not voting, Mr Passakon said.

Under Thai election law, people who do not provide an accepted reason for not voting lose privileges in running for public office for two years.

Mr Passakon also expressed his concern about any confusion that may arise among voters over the two forms to be used as ballots.

"The purple one is cast a vote for the position of mayor, and the pink one to vote for councilors," Mr Passakon said.

"Voters can enter only one number on the purple ballot, but they can vote for up to six different candidates on the pink ballot," he explained.

"I have already ordered staff who will be at the polling stations to remind people before they vote," he said. *The Phuket News*

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Crocodile hunt hits west coast

Expert croc hunters call for local help in finding elusive reptile

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong on Monday (Mar 22) asked all people, especially local officials, to keep an eye out for the two-metre-long crocodile that remains at large more than a week after it was seen near the Chalong Pier marina on Mar 13.

V/Gov Pichet delivered his plea at a meeting held to come up with ideas on how to catch the croc. Present at the meeting was Nikhom Suksawat, leader of the 'Kraithong Lumnamtapi' of expert croc catchers from the Department of Fisheries in Surat Thani, which were called in to catch the croc.

The 'Kraithong Lumnamtapi' team have yet to locate the croc, which so far has yet to be given a nickname, V/Gov Pichet confirmed.

"The croc was last seen around Yanui Beach in Rawai. The team tried to keep track of the croc throughout both the daytime and the nighttime," he said.

"The Phuket Provincial Government has ordered local administration officers and village heads to inform local people about the crocodile and to ask them to help keep an eye out for it," V/Gov Pichet added.



The croc-hunting team is using any technology at their disposal. Photo: Kraithong Lumnamtapi

"The crocodile submerges quickly when it realises it has been seen, so we need help from local people to help coordinate and find it," he said.

"If you see the crocodile, please inform your village head or the Phuket Provincial Fisheries Office, so that the team will go to the area as fast as possible," he said.

"The Phuket government and relevant officers will catch the crocodile as soon as possible," V/Gov Pichet assured.

No 24-hotline numbers were provided to report any sightings of the crocodile. The Phuket News notes that the Phuket office of the Department of Fisheries can be

contacted during government office hours at 076-212460, and the Kraithong Lumnamtapi team can be contacted directly through their Facebook page.

Unlike in the hunt in 2018 for the female crocodile now named 'Yanui', no beaches have been closed while the search continues

for Phuket's latest crocodile at large.

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

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

The search for the crocodile shifted to Rawai, Nai Harn and Yanui on Phuket's southwest coast last Friday (Mar 19) after extensive efforts to catch the croc in Chalong Bay, including having team members walk out into the shallow waters with a large net in the hope of catching the croc, failed to snare the reptile.

The 'Kraithong Lumnamtapi' team are now using whatever cameras are available along the coast to help them with their search, and last Friday briefed lifeguards at Nai Harn and Yanui on what to look for when searching for the croc.

Where appropriate red flags have been posted on beaches to prevent people from entering the water, though at this stage none of the beaches have been closed entirely.

Experts confirm dolphin found slashed open died from illness

SIRINATH NATIONAL Park officers confirmed on Monday (Mar 23) that the spotted dolphin found dead with severe slash wounds across its body last week was actually dead before any cuts had been inflicted.

The body of the female dolphin was found on the rocks in the Sakhu section of the national park last Wednesday (Mar 17) with deep cuts across the back of its head and another long gash all the way to its tail.

Initially it was believed that the wounds and the subsequent death of the dolphin had been administered by humans, a suspicion enhanced when a local resident reported to police seeing four Myanmar nationals in the area, one of whom was carrying a blood-stained knife, who fled when he confronted them.

However, after further examination by the Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC) it was confirmed that the dolphin had already died of illness prior to being



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

washed ashore or cut.

Officers at the PMBC did not, however, confirm which illness exactly had caused the dolphin's demise.

It appears that the dolphin had then been discovered and the cuts administered – whether this was by the four the witness alluded to or not is unknown at this time.

"We have already informed Sakhu Police, and they are still investigating," assistant park chief Chaiphath Chuaidang told The Phuket News.

"At this stage we do not know who is responsible

for making the cuts and we must allow police to do their work," he added.

However, Mr Chaiphath did state that the suspects would no doubt face charges when found by police.

"In a case such as this, the suspect(s) will be charged with possession of the dead body of a protected wildlife species," Mr Chaiphath noted.

"Spotted dolphins are classified in Thailand as protected animals under the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act 2019," he added.

Eakkapop Thongtub

PM order halts govt vehicles abuse

OFFICIALS AT EVERY government office across the island have been ordered to not use government vehicles for private use, following an order from the Prime Minister's Office.

The message was delivered loud and clear by Phuket Vice Governor Piyapong Choowong at a meeting of the Phuket subcommittee on the implementation of the National Strategy on Anti-Corruption at Provincial Hall on Mar 15.

V/Gov Piyapong explained that the Office of the Prime Minister had issued an "official



Vice Governor Piyapong Choowong handed down the order from the Prime Minister. Photo: PR Phuket

notice asking for cooperation" from each government office in the country about the use of government vehicles.

The five-point notice, which asked officers to "strictly follow the rules", first and

foremost called for the chiefs of all government offices to "Control and check the usage of the government vehicles."

"The cars must be used only for officials' duties under the criteria set up by each office. Do not allow any officers to use the cars as their private car," said the notice.

Any use of a government vehicle must be first approved in writing, and officers are to check when the vehicles were actually used and to closely monitor petrol receipts for reimbursement, the notice added.

The Phuket News

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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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High: +35°
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Wind 11 m/s

SAT MAR 27

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Wind 11 m/s

SUN MAR 28

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Low: +27°

Wind 7 m/s

MON MAR 29

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Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE MAR 30

High: +33°
Low: +27°

Wind 7 m/s

WED MAR 31

High: +33°
Low: +27°

Wind 7 m/s

THU APR 1

High: +33°
Low: +27°

Wind 7 m/s

M-Society helps vulnerable families

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A total of 320 families with young children in Phuket and nearby provinces considered to be 'vulnerable' during the current economic crisis have received direct assistance from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (M-Society) under a project that has also assigned funds to support 30 shelters for homeless people in provinces along the Andaman coast.

The project involves 12 ministries and one government agency with the goal to provide vulnerable people assistance through the six provinces Phuket, Krabi, Trang, Phang Nga, Ranong, and Satun, Social Development and Human Security Minister Juti Krairiksh explained during a visit to Phuket on Mar 13.

The 12 ministries and one government agency involved



Minister of Social Development and Human Security Juti Krairiksh stands with leading representatives of the project in Phuket at the 'Early Childhood Promotion' event at Phuket Merlin Hotel in Phuket Town on Mar 13. Photo: PR Phuket

are the Prime Minister's Office; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Social Development and Human Security; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Tourism and Sports; Ministry of Higher Education; Science, Research and Innovation; Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives; Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Labour; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Pub-

lic Health; and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Mr Juti explained.

All local government administrations (municipalities and *OrBorTor*) had been asked to report the number of vulnerable people in their areas so that the information obtained is correct, and that effective action could be taken to help families, and especially young children, deemed to

be "at risk" of extraordinary hardship, Mr Juti said.

Phuket Vice Governor Piyapong said plainly that the COVID-19 crisis has had a huge impact on the economy nationwide.

He defined the people recognised as vulnerable as:

People who are suffering financial problems, having insufficient income to make a living;

People in need of special support as they are caring for children, disabled or elderly family members;

• Disabled people who have no caretakers, no jobs, and no income

• People who could not access to state welfare rights (as they have not been issued a government welfare card);

• Elderly from poor families who live alone with no work and no income;

• People who are physically unable to access free services provided by the government,

such as homeless, people with HIV, people with chronic illnesses, people with mental illness, and people who have no health insurance; and

• Indigenous people who are in dire need of help.

"The provincial government has collected information on vulnerable people, in a project that local government organisations across the island have coordinated with, so that relevant government agencies or other private organisations can provide them help with transparency," Vice Governor Piyapong said.

"The Thai People Map and Analytics Platform (TPMAP) has been used as an information resource for analysis and planning to help vulnerable people to receive welfare support from the government... According to TPMAP, Phuket has 4,551 people recognised as vulnerable according to the definitions provided," Vice Governor Piyapong noted.

Warehouse caretaker sells 20 tonnes of secondhand steel

A 41-YEAR-OLD MYANMAR man has been arrested for selling an estimated 20 tonnes of discarded steel items from a recycling warehouse that he was hired to look after while the company remains closed due to the ongoing economic crisis.

Wichit Police, led by Lt Col Thammasan Bunsong, arrested the Myanmar worker, Mao Win, at the Naka Recycle Co Ltd warehouse on Chao Fa West Rd on Mar 17.

Lt Col Thammasan revealed to *The Phuket News'* Thai-language sister newspaper *Khao Phuket* that Mao was hired to take care of the company warehouse, which had been temporarily closed as a result of the COVID-19 economic crisis.

The thefts came to light after a cleaner came to the warehouse and sent photos to the company owner as evidence of her work on Mar 9, Lt Col Thammasan explained.

"The company owner saw the photos and noticed that a lot of steel items were missing," Lt Col Thammasan said.

"A week later, on Mar 16, the owner came to the warehouse and confirmed that the steel items were in fact missing. The items missing were valued at about B100,000," he added.

"The owner asked Mao about



Photo: Wichit Police

the missing items, and he confessed that he sold them.

"Mao explained that he sold the items to an old customer of the company, most recently on Monday [Mar 15]," Lt Col Thammasan explained.

"Police have already questioned the buyer, who said that he had known Mao for a long time. He did not know that the warehouse owner had no idea about the items being sold," he said.

"Mao told us that he spent the money on drinking with friends and buying a gold necklace. Now he has only B40,000 left," he added.

Lt Col Thammasan confirmed that Mao was taken to Wichit Police Station and charged with theft.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Warning issued over Phuket wildfires

THE PHUKET GOVERNOR HAS issued a general burnoff ban and a general fire warning as dry conditions continue across the island. The warning came as fighters in Rawai were called to douse a blaze at a snake show storeroom on Mar 17.

"There are forest fires every year in the dry season, especially in national park areas, wildlife sanctuaries and protected forests. These fires can have a deep impact on the forest, animals and local people's health," Governor Narong explained in the warning.

"The government has spent a lot of money to resolve the fire problem," Governor Narong continued.

However, he pointed out, "Forest fires are mostly caused by people who burn trash and other waste, including agricultural burnoff, near natural forest areas, as well as those who go to find the wild things in the forest."

The warning marked that "To prevent forest fires and reduce the PM2.5 pollution, the governor will use the authority under the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act 2017".

As such, Governor Narong ordered a ban on all unapproved, and unsupervised, burnoffs.

"Those who need to burn some areas to prepare for another plantation must inform their village head [Kamnan or Phu Yai Ban] before conducting the burn," the order noted.

"They must also contact officers from the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation [DDPM]



Firefighters were unable to prevent a fire from gutting a storeroom at a snake show venue in Rawai on Mar 17. Photo: Rawai DDPM

to come and monitor the fire," the order added.

"District chiefs, subdistrict chiefs [Kamnan], village chiefs Phu Yai Ban], mayors and heads of tambon administrative offices [OrBorTor] are responsible to keep their eyes open for forest fires and are to inform local residents to follow this warning strictly from now on," the order added.

The order noted that any persons found guilty of starting a fire in a protected forest area stood to face four to 20 years' imprisonment or a fine of B400,000 to B2 million, or both.

The order also warned that any person caught starting an illegal fire also stood to be charged for arson under Section 220 of the Criminal Code, which can incur a penalty of up to seven years in jail or a fine of up to B14,000.

All people who see a forest fire were urged to first try to douse the fire by themselves, then inform the local DDPM office or Phuket Forest Fire Control Station by calling 081-2715949 or the national hotline 1362.

The Phuket News

Algae bloom claims dissed

Patong waste chief denies wastewater causing algae bloom

The Phuket News
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The chief of the Patong Municipality Sanitation Division has dismissed the notion that wastewater flowing into the bay in any way contributed to the macro algae bloom along the Patong beachfront that led to masses of red sea urchins being stranded washed ashore in past weeks.

It's a natural phenomenon, Nattawut Thepthon, Chief of the Patong Municipality Sanitary Works Division, told *The Phuket News*.

Marine life expert Dr Kongkiat Kittiwatanawong, Chief of the Phuket Marine Biological Centre (PMBC), which is operated by the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), on Mar 15 pointed out that the sea urchins were being attracted to the shallow beach water in Patong by an ongoing bloom of "macro algae".

"These algae are the food of the sea urchin. Algae thrive and are carried by the water currents, as well as sea urchins," he explained.



Photo: Patong Municipality

"The phenomenon of sea urchins stranded on the beach is explained by the phenomena of these algae blooms, together with this period being the spring tide with high tides," he added.

"For algae to be able to bloom, it needs food like fertilizer we use to feed plants," Dr Kongkiat said.

"These fertilisers do not come from just anywhere, but are elements of the wastewater that we release into the sea," he said.

Patong sanitation chief Mr Nattawut disagrees.

"I don't see untreated wastewater released to the sea. All the wastewater has been treated before being released," he said.

Mr Nattawut also assured that wastewater released into the bay is tested regularly for higher concentrations of contaminants.

"We collect and test samples of the treated wastewater every week, and the result has shown that the water has passed the standard required for treated wastewater," he said.

"After the COVID-19 pandemic began, only a small

amount of wastewater has been sent to our treatment plant, as we have only a small number of tourists. much smaller than normal," Mr Nattawut added.

"As for many urchins being washed ashore, I have searched the internet to find out the cause of the phenomenon. The algae need nutrition, good weather and suitable sunlight to grow well.

"Right now, it is summer season, so there is good sunlight for the algae. For the nutrition, I believe that Patong Beach is on a closed bay which is full of food for algae. This is

all my personal idea," he said.

"However, I can confirm that the wastewater that we release has been treated and tested. The wastewater has passed all standard tests," Mr Nattawut assured.

Asked again if he were certain that wastewater could not be a contributing factor in the ongoing algae bloom, Mr Nattawut said, "Yes. Maybe you have to ask the centre [the PMBC] again why they explained that way."

Of note, Mr Nattawut would only explain the wastewater that is treated by the Patong Municipality WasteWater Plant.

He did not entertain the impact of wastewater from homes and businesses in Patong not connected to the municipality's sewerage system flowing untreated into the bay.

Phuket officials at all levels for more than a decade denied that wastewater being released into Patong Bay was a consistent contributing factor to algae blooms at Patong Beach.

However, Patong Municipality health officials in 2016 finally admitted that during the heavy influx of tourists

during the pre-COVID tourism high season as much as 20% of Patong's wastewater flowed untreated into the bay.

The rise in effluent being released into the bay consistently led to algae blooms, the health officials admitted.

A mass clean-up operation led by Patong Municipality environmental health officers collected some 70 tonnes of algae at Patong Beach last Sunday (Mar 21).

An officer at the Division of Public Health and Environment told *The Phuket News* that a campaign now had been launched to clear the algae from the bay. "Our staff collect the algae two times every day. The first time is 8-10am and the second time is 2-3pm," she explained.

"If we do not collect the algae, it will start to rot and make a bad smell along the beach," she said.

The algae is collected from where it washes up onto the sand, and some officers venture out into the shallow water with a net and haul the algae caught up onto the beach, the officer added.

Woman dies after head run over by van

A 48-YEAR-OLD WOMAN from Phang Nga died after she fell from her motorbike and her head was run over by a van at a busy intersection on the outskirts of Phuket Town on Mar 17.

Capt Wichit Nokkaew of the Phuket City Police was called to the scene, the locally named 'Kwang Tung intersection' in Wichit, at about 7pm.

Police together with Kusoldharm rescue workers arrived to find the body of Dueanpen Leesakul on the road in the middle of the intersection.

Beside her body was the dark-blue Honda Click i motorbike she was riding at the time of the accident.

About five metres away was a white Phuket-registered Toyota van stopped in the middle of the road. The van driver, Prai Khamtok, 61, was waiting at the scene for police to arrive.

Dashcam video footage from a car at the intersection showed Ms Dueanpen on her motorbike stopped at the intersection alongside the white van being



The dashcam footage showed Ms Dueanpen veering lightly into the left side of the van before falling from the motorbike. Image: Eakkapop Thongtub

driven by Mr Prai.

Both were surrounded by other cars and motorbikes, waiting for the traffic lights to turn green so they could continue their journey north-bound along Sakdidek Rd.

After the lights turned green, as the traffic proceeded through the intersection Ms Dueanpen can be seen veering lightly into the left side of the van before falling from the motorbike. As she hit the road her head went under the back-left

wheel of the van.

The dashcam footage showed that Ms Dueanpen was wearing a helmet at the time.

Capt Wichit explained that police had yet to conclude their investigation.

The body of Mrs Deunpen was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital for further examination, as is due process in police investigations.

"We still need to question witnesses more," Capt Wichit said. Eakkapop Thongtub

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Quarantine ease starts Apr 1

CCSA moves to lift quarantine for some tourists from October

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

From Oct 1, quarantine will not be required from tourists arriving from specified countries, Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) spokesman Taweasilp Visanuyothin announced last Friday (Mar 19).

The news came at the national briefing on the COVID situation broadcast from Government House in Bangkok following a general meeting of the CCSA chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

"From October on, we will not have quarantine anymore, as most people will be vaccinated. However, we will 'close observation' which we will arrange a place to monitor.

"We will use the measure that we call 'bubble and seal', such as 'bubble areas' in airports, 'sealed routes' in transport, and 'bubble routes' to tourists attractions and communities nearby," he said.

Quarantine measures will begin easing from April 1, Mr Taweasilp announced, starting with the relaxation of certificates required to enter the country.

"At this stage, foreigners coming to Thailand need to have a 'Fit to Fly' and 'COVID Free' documents, but from April 1, they only need to have the 'COVID Free' certificate," he said.

The easing of quarantine measures will be rolled out in phases, with the quarantine venues available reduced in stages, Mr Taweasilp said.

While no changes will be made to quarantine venues available from April through June, from July 1 through Sept 1 "ASQ, LQ, ALQ [Alternative State Quarantine, Local Quarantine and Alternative Local Quarantine] will be removed from



the quarantine choice," he said.

The activities arrivals will be allowed to enjoy will be expanded from Apr 1, Mr Taweasilp said.

"For the activities during the quarantine, in Phase 1 from April to June, foreigners can use fitness centres, do outdoor exercise, swim, ride bicycles in the control areas, and order foods or products from outside to be delivered to them.

"In Phase 2, July to September, two more activities – having meals at the hotel restaurant and having a massage – are allowed. Those who come for a seminar or to operate a business will be allowed to join meetings in meeting rooms.

"In Phase 3, from October on, the quarantine will be only for those coming from the risk areas set by the Ministry of Public Health," Mr Taweasilp added.

"For the length of the quarantine Phase 1 and 2, both foreigners vaccinated and those not vaccinated

will have to face only 10 days in quarantine.

"In Phase 3, there will not be quarantine in some areas where more than 70% of the population has been vaccinated. At that time, those areas can welcome foreigners from low-risk countries," he said.

"However, those who come from the countries where there are the mutated strains of the COVID-19 virus must face the full 14-day quarantine,"

Natapanu Nopakun, Deputy Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the English section of the briefing explained that the mandatory 14-day has been approved to be reduced to 10 days for people coming to Thailand from countries with no cases of COVID variant strains.

People arriving from countries with the variant strains will be subjected to three RT-PCR tests while in quarantine, while those arriving

from countries not recognised as having the variant strains will be subjected to two tests during their 10-day stay, he said.

"Of course, the list of countries deemed to be classified as not having COVID variant strain has yet to be determined," he added.

Mr Natapanu was not as clear-cut as Mr Taweasilp in saying there will be no mandatory quarantine from Oct 1.

He would commit to saying only "possibly no quarantine" for people arriving from countries deemed to not have the mutated strains of the virus.

Further, the lifting of quarantine requirements would be "according to the criteria we will be setting at that time", he said.

"It depends on the situation at that time," he repeated.

VACCINES

Mr Natapanu also noted that Thai-

land had already received 200,000 doses of the Chinese-made Sino-vac vaccine, to be administered to frontline medical workers and "at risk" people already suffering from medical conditions by the end of April.

"A further 800,000 doses will arrive tomorrow," he said, adding that the delivery tomorrow is to be "distributed to provinces of economic importance".

Thailand is to receive 2 million doses of the Sinovac vaccine, he said, with 1mn to be administered by the end of April, and the remainder to be administered by Oct 1.

From June through Aug, Thailand is to receive 26mn doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, receiving 6mn in June, 10mn in July and 10mn in Aug.

A further 35mn doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine is to arrive from Sept through Dec, Mr Natapanu added, with 10mn arriving in Sept, 10mn in Oct, 10mn in Nov and the last 5mn in Dec.

NORMAL BUSINESS

The emergency decree has been extended for the 11th time "to allow interagency cooperation" in the fight against the spread of COVID-19, Mr Natapanu added.

The latest extension will be in effect from April 1 through to May 31, he said.

The upcoming Songkran festival to celebrate the Thai New Year will not include water splashing, powder smearing or foam parties, he added.

"The focus will be on merit making, such as pouring water on Buddha statues and on the hands of elderly people.

"Strict anti-COVID measures will still apply," he said.

New Krabi airport terminal to open in October

A THIRD TERMINAL at Krabi Airport is expected to open in October to double the airport's passenger han-

dling capacity, according to the Department of Airports (DoA).

Deputy Director-Gen-

eral Somkiat Maneesathit, who was briefed on various construction projects at the airport during an inspection

tour on Mar 18.

He inspected a newly-built airport apron equipped with a lighting system. The construction of the structure was completed on Jan 21.

The DoA deputy chief also monitored the progress of a new runway being built at the cost of B941.9 million. The construction contract runs from Oct 29 last year to April 16, 2023.

The runway project is expected to finish on time. Once completed, the new runway will accommodate 24 aircraft per hour, up from eight aircraft per hour, according to the department.

Also under construction is the third terminal building, an upgrade for the first and second terminal buildings as well as a car park building.



A third terminal at Krabi Airport is expected to open in October. Photo: KBIA / Facebook

These projects are estimated to be worth B2.9 billion.

The third terminal is likely to be up and running this October, in time for the recovery of the travel and tourism sectors affected by the COVID-19

pandemic and the start of the high tourism season.

The terminal is expected to double the airport's current handling capacity of 1,500 people per hour, or 4 million people per year. Bangkok Post

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Human trials of Thai-made COVID vaccine underway

Bangkok Post

Monday (Mar 22) signalled the start of the first human trials of a domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine, with the rollout expected to begin next year.

The vaccine, consisting of an inactivated virus to trigger immunity, is being developed by the Government Pharmaceutical Organisation (GPO) using egg-based technology.

The GPO has been working on the project with Mahidol University's Tropical Medicine Department, the Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), an American non-profit organisation, and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York. Together they have developed a pilot NDV-HXP-S vaccine and lab tests have been showing promising results.

Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said the development of the home-grown vaccine is a very significant step for the country's public health, as it would enable Thailand to be self-



A nurse administers a jab to a volunteer in the country's first human trials of a domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine on Monday (Mar 22). Photo: GPO

reliant and it would not need to depend on vaccines from foreign countries.

The information from the human trials will be used to apply for registration with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for industrial production at the GPO's vaccine production plant in Saraburi's Kaeng Khoi district.

The plant already has egg-based technology to make flu vaccines, which will be adjusted to produce COVID-19 vaccines, he said.

Banchong Mahaisavariya,

president of Mahidol University, said the first and second phases of human trials will be to test the safety of the vaccine and its ability to trigger immunity.

A total of 460 volunteers would be recruited for the human trials, 210 of whom are aged 18-59 and would take part in the first phase. They must be in good health and free of COVID-19. Volunteers will be screened and have their backgrounds checked and undergo health and blood checks.

Of the 210 volunteers, the first group of 18 would be given the smallest amount of vaccine which would be increased gradually while testing would be conducted on the other 192 volunteers, Dr Banchong said.

Phase two is expected to begin in July, with testing on 250 volunteers aged between 18-75. Results are expected to be known by the end of the year.

Dr Punnee Pitisuttithum, head of the Vaccine Trial Centre at Mahidol University's Tropical Medicine Department, said that the first human trial was conducted on four volunteers on Monday.

After 30 minutes of receiving the vaccine, they were observed for another four hours before being allowed to go home, Dr Punnee said.

Withoon Danwiboon, managing director of the GPO, stated that if the first and second phases of the human trials are successful, the third-phase trial would need more volunteers, which may include people in other countries.

Songkran hit with water splashing ban

ALL WATER FIGHTS have been banned during the upcoming Songkran festival for fears of COVID-19 being spread, it has been officially announced.

"Water splashing will not happen this Songkran. We must ask you to cooperate with us," Taweelap Visanuyothin, spokesman for the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CSSA), said last Friday (Mar 19).

Foam parties and powder smearing will also be banned, he added.

The Songkran festival holiday this year runs from April 12-15 inclusive, preceded by a weekend. This will be the second year that festivities have been curtailed after similar cancellations last year.

The decision was made after a Culture Ministry committee overseeing Songkran activities discussed the guidelines with the National Security Council and the Tourism and Sports Ministry.

Culture Minister Itthiphol Kunplome explained that this year would focus more on the traditional aspects of the festival such as merit-making, pouring water over the palms



No water splashing will be allowed this year. Photo: Bangkok Post

of older people and religious activities. Travel between provinces to visit relatives would be allowed, he added.

Bhumikitti Raktaengam, president of the Phuket Tourist Association, recommended the government come up with measures to encourage people to travel to the island during Songkran, because water splashing in Phuket usually takes place only on April 13. Sarayuth Mallam, president of the Phuket Tourism Council, said that people prefer to go out and enjoy the natural beauty of Phuket rather than engaging in water fights during Songkran. Therefore, a ban on water splashing would have no direct bearing on local tourism in Phuket, he said.

The Phuket News

Police defend strong-arm protest tactics

POLICE HAVE DEFENDED their harsh actions against protesters at Sanam Luang last Saturday (Mar 20) amid mounting criticism from activists and academics.

The violence left 20 people injured, including three reporters and 13 police, according to the Erawan Medical Centre. A reporter from Channel 8 TV was hit in the head with a rubber bullet. About 20 protesters were arrested for breaking public gathering laws and insulting the monarchy.

Police insisted on Monday that their operations using batons, rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannon were in accordance with international standards.

"Violence originated from the protesters' side and police have to defend the law and protect state assets," said a deputy commissioner and spokesman for the Metropolitan Police Bureau.

Police faced a firestorm of criticism after a video clip showing police chasing protesters and hitting them with batons to subdue resisting protesters went viral.



Police maintain protesters started the violence. Photo: AFP

One of the protesters was hit after he fell down with others fleeing police in riot gear. Some protesters abandoned their motorcycles. Another video showed people taking refuge from tear gas in a restaurant. Police said they fired tear gas after some protesters hurled Molotov cocktails at them.

However, protesters slammed police for causing the violence.

"Violence came from them [police] as they used tear gas and water cannons before protesters did anything," said activist Rukchanok Srinork, 27, who was at the rally. "They have helmets, shields, crowd control training. If there is a stone thrown, raise your shields."

Prinya Thawananarumitkul, deputy rector at Tham-

masat University who is a legal scholar, said authorities shooting rubber bullets "was problematic".

He said their method of shooting rubber bullets violated a universal guideline on deploying kinetic impact projectile weapons by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

On Monday, 16 protesters arrested during Saturday's Sanam Luang rally were each released on B35,000 bail.

The protesters had broken the law prohibiting the gathering of 10 or more people to cause disturbance. They defied police orders to disperse and instead obstructed police performing their duty, police allege.

The suspects have denied the charges. Bangkok Post

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Rockin' in the real world



PHUKET MUSIC SCENE

By Andy Tong Dee

Twelve local bands took to the stage at Blue Tree Arena last Saturday (Mar 20) to take part in the Lean On Me Live Fest, for which we need to thank Gary Crause of Legend Music for staging this charity event which served as a showcase for some of Phuket's leading performers. Funds raised by the concert went to the One Phuket effort to provide food relief to people across the island unable to support themselves.

I felt particularly sorry for my Thai friends in the opening act Gypsy Sun, playing Classic Rock. The arena was empty and the sun hot, but they played admirably well nonetheless. Things were not much kinder for the following acts until it cooled down and people started to arrive in numbers during Rob Cooke's band Black and Blue, perhaps to hear his fine, sizzling guitar solos. If this event is repeated, it should be a two-evening event rather than a one-day one to be fairer to such great musicians.

Colin Hill with Jimmy Fame were next, followed by the Bebop Bar Band where Khun Boy played what I believe to be the best rock guitar solo of the day – not a bad achievement for a jazz musician on his day off! Then it was Dasha D'Arai with a short, powerful set with Gary's son Blaze on guitar. Perhaps the band of the day was Gary Crause's own band Dark Fibre, playing an all-original set with strong vocals from Rannze Davies and terrific gritty guitar from Rob Cooke. My only disappointment was watching an empty drum stool and hearing electronic drums when there were so many fine drummers there that day! Blaze Crause was then up with N.E.E.T. and Tidy before the FUZZtoney took



Dasha D'Arai, just 17 years old, gives her all at the Lean On Me Fest last Saturday. Photo: Stephane Audiger

over, my friend and veteran rock guitarist Alf Hodges singing what I consider the best original song of the night, Millionaire. The NAUGHTIES wound up a great day with tight and exciting songs, their last just having to be 'Lean on Me', where they invited 40 people to sing along on stage, ending the day on a high but emotional note.

As it's just not possible to say something in any depth about so many bands here, I want to focus instead on just two promising young singer-songwriters at the event: Gary's 20 year-old son Blaze and Dasha D'Arai from Russia. Both have been groomed by The Phuket Academy of Performing Arts (PAPA), and both plan to move to North America in search of fame when studies here end, Blaze fancying Austin, Texas.

Blaze played 12 songs with N.E.E.T. and Tidy, all but one original. While his father encourages him to write commercially viable songs, Blaze prefers an "edgier, unhinged sound". His songs were mostly aggressive, tackling hard-hitting subjects of depression, self-doubt and abuse. This is not the kind of stuff you're likely to hear on a compilation of love songs.

The band started with a manic, one-minute song called 'Seasonal Depression'. You can't say much in a minute, so it was very much a wake up song. The songs that followed built in quality. It's normal, every band plays their best songs last! By the time I got to 'Melodrama' halfway through, I was getting drawn in. Some words stood out: "Judge me by the songs I write and not the person that I am."

This got me thinking, is Blaze somehow escaping from this world into that of his songs? Another heart-on-a-sleeve song was 'Holding Out Hope', a gentler song about

the angst of a teenage relationship breakup, the lyrics suggesting a lack of confidence: "Will I ever be good enough? I'm running around in circles again." Mmm... It's clear Blaze isn't holding back on his emotions in his songwriting.

Finally, we came to the grand finale. I loved 'Rockstar', which he started playing when just 17, with a glorious riff, the lyrics full of teenage rebellion and excess. Then I caught him backstage to ask a few questions.

So Blaze, who is the real you? The Blaze of your songs or the Blaze outside writing them?

Blaze: "It depends on the song. I started to write N.E.E.T. and Tidy songs as a therapeutic creative outlet, whereas earlier songs I've written in the past were more just to have some fun. In songs, you can write the situations to reflect yourself in any light you want."

Are you able to express yourself freely and genuinely while still assisted by your music producer father?

"There is still some distancing required, which I find healthy when songwriting. Lately, I have been writing songs by myself in my bedroom. Only after posting them online did I show them to my parents. This showed them I was going to start to take music more seriously."

Dasha D'Arai, today just 17 years old, has been ambitious to be a singer/songwriter from an early age, so her family moved to Phuket in 2015 so she could attend PAPA where she recorded her debut album in 2019.

Dasha has a terrific voice – warm, slightly dark and perfectly controlled, with faultless vibrato and pleasantly restrained when needed, powerful when not. It speaks of confidence and maturity; a singer needs to know when and where not to try too hard. She sang two excellent covers in her set, but I was particularly interested in her three own offerings.

'Venus Rising' is a slow number with a chorus with the lyrics, "Is there anybody out there to carry me home?" It's full of the melancholy of homesickness, perhaps for her native Russia in these times of COVID. I can easily imagine her looking wistfully into a darkening sky

"as Venus shines bright in the night."

And 'Then I found You' is another slow, sad song. It starts with the lyrics, "I was lost and alone on a lonely path, I was the only one." When it comes to the chorus we hear, "And then I found you," but without much sense of joy and empowerment. This is a song with potential, but in need of an uplifting chorus if it is to be more commercial.

'Circles in My Head', is a well-crafted song about love and inner confusion, full of tension and which ebbs and flows wonderfully between verses and choruses. Now we were hearing hit song quality. Then I met her after her set to ask her:

Did you collaborate much with anyone in writing these songs?

"I often collaborate with Gary in writing my songs."

There is a lot of sadness in your songs. Do you think you'll need to write some happier ones to balance things out?

"I have thought about writing happier songs, but I want my songs to reflect me and my state of mind."

Are you doing much songwriting at the moment?

"I started writing songs and song ideas for a new album during the lockdown in 2020. Whenever I get time, I write more songs."

As English is not her first language and she's just 17, it's not surprising she often needs some support lyrically from her mentor and co-songwriter Gary Crause. However, in everything co-written she makes the decisions on chordal choices and, presumably, melody.

To sum up a great day, it's said that you need three things to succeed in the music industry: Potential, motivation and good fortune. Young Blaze and Dasha undoubtedly have the first two, but the last is always uncertain. So I'll end by just thanking these two youngsters, soon to begin their musical careers, for their time, and by wishing them.... GOOD LUCK!

Andy Tong Dee is a live music enthusiast and musician living in Phuket. Follow him on his Facebook page Phuket Music Scene.

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BLAZING PADDLES

Baz Daniel
baz_gunner2000@yahoo.com

Yes, you read correctly, it's not a typo. This week Blazing Saddles is taking to the water, which as we live on an island surrounded by the stuff, isn't very difficult to do. Mixing cycling with other forms of exercise has proven to be the best way to maximise overall health and fitness, plus abundant scientific research supports the notion that exercising in, or near, water is excellent for both mental and physical wellbeing. So, combining a bike ride with activities which take advantage of our island home's proximity to beautiful maritime environments make a lot of sense.

Phuket's beaches are now cleaner, emptier and more relaxed than I've ever seen them and many local entrepreneurs seem to have set up kayaking, canoeing, snorkelling and paddle-boarding rentals around the island. The particularly beguiling corner of Phuket which, in my opinion, offers the most interesting topography around which to paddle, is from Yanui Beach in the deep south of the island adjacent to Promthep Cape, with Koh Bon island and Nai Harn Beach close by.

Reams of research supports the fact that training across many different types of exercise is the best way

to maintain optimal fitness, fight off the ravages of ageing, and avoid the injuries which come from the overly repetitive use of the same sets of muscles. A convivial bike ride primarily targets the legs and lungs combining aerobic and endurance fitness with the mental health benefits of being outdoors in Phuket's increasingly clean and regenerated environment, while being bathed in sunshine which promotes the production of Vitamin D.

Combine this with a kayak trip through a stunning maritime environment, followed by a sea swim to cool off and stretch out your well-worked body, then a superb breakfast in a lovely beachside location and you've probably discovered the Elixir of Life!

I recently cycled from my home at 6:30am up and over Promthep Cape, then down to charming Yanui Beach, where local entrepreneur Khun Wan sets out his kayak rentals from about 8am. A B100 for an hour will rent you a kayak, paddle, life-jacket and abundant local advice about prevailing winds and where to paddle. Out you go around the beguiling rocky headlands below the famous viewpoint and windmill, skipping around the abundant moored pleasure craft and sheltering squid boats which occupy the bays at this time of year.

An enlivening 30-minute paddle takes you around the headland below the Windmill viewpoint, then across Nai Harn Bay to the lovely beachside Rock Salt restaurant set a few steps



Baz ready for action.

away from the luxurious Nai Harn Resort. Here you'll find one of the best breakfasts in Phuket served in one of the island's most stunning waterside locations.

Pulling my kayak up onto the sands in front of the enticing white-walled portals of Rock Salt, I found a lovely beachside table, ordered my breakfast and enjoyed watching the happy throng of beach-goers, paddle-boarders, dog-walkers and sun-worshippers enjoying the beach.

The healthy breakfast menu is served from 7am to 10am and includes such favourites as wild Scandinavian salmon and creamy scrambled eggs on granary toast, or their signature Eggs Benedict, or the full Rock Salt breakfast comprising homemade English pork sausages, chargrilled bacon, plum

tomato, chestnut mushrooms, granary toast and fresh eggs, poached, scrambled or fried just as you like them.

Sitting at Rock Salt overlooking that wondrous beach looking south from whence I'd paddled, I rewarded myself with another cup of home-brewed cold drip coffee which Rock Salt bottle themselves – and which proved to be very refreshing on ice.

Then I set off for my leisurely paddle back to Yanui Beach and my trusty mountain bike. Nibbles, paddles, pedals and saddles had formed a perfect partnership to create an unforgettable start to an unforgettable day!

'Bicycling Baz Daniel' has been penning his Blazing Saddles column, chronicling his cycling adventures in Phuket and beyond, since 2013.



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POP QUIZ

1. In 1960, which country experienced the most powerful earthquake ever recorded?
2. A tablespoon measure in the UK contains a volume of exactly how many millilitres?
3. Carlos Irwin Estevez is better known by what stage name?
4. What was Mary Read famous for during the early 18th century?
5. The bombardment of which sea fort started the American Civil War?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Accord
6. Flub
10. Certain reptiles
14. Birthplace of Columbus
15. Parrot
16. Islamic division
17. Mary
20. "Mârout" baritone
21. ____ pendens
22. Gives up
23. Turn to crime?
26. " ____ Row"
27. Treat for the idle rich?
29. Singer Lenya
30. "Encore!"
31. Harmony
32. Andy Warhol painting
35. Jack and Jill
39. Affranchise
40. Clip
41. Whimpered
42. Beth's preceder
44. Misrepresents
45. Presidential favors
48. Traction aid
49. 2002 film
50. Baby's first word, maybe

51. Bow

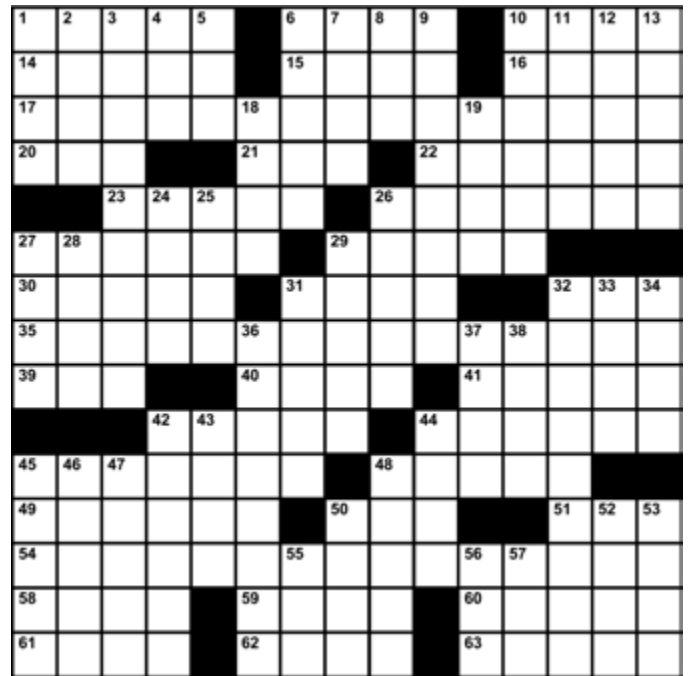
54. Little Jack Horner
58. Cave
59. ____-Altaic languages
60. Fiats
61. Meets
62. Gerbils, maybe
63. Senior member

Down

1. Eastern pooh-bah
2. Buffet
3. In a snit
4. "Sesame Street" watcher
5. Cry of disgust
6. Arctic
7. Wood sorrels
8. Law man?
9. Clock for the pocket
10. Radiant
11. Treat rudely, in a way
12. Pied one
13. Pert
18. Flamboyance
19. Lean to one side
24. Final notice

25. 007

26. Drawing medium
27. Reprimand, with "out"
28. Arch type
29. "Blue Velvet" director
31. Trades
32. Aggressiveness
33. Away from the wind
34. Goes with mobile
36. Cut surgically
37. Cutlass
38. Sinuous dance
42. Conforms
43. Balcony section
44. Alliance
45. Metallic sounds
46. Mites
47. Move, as a plant
48. Barbecue fuel
50. Beach nuisance
52. Ending for disc-
53. __berry
55. Fury
56. Like some socks
57. Duran Duran girl of song



Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1. Chile (9.4-9.6 on the moment magnitude scale); 2. 15;
3. Charlie Sheen; 4. Piracy; 5. Fort Sumter

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

-0.2

magnitude earthquakes release the energy equivalent to 30 matches being lit.

10

hours on average is how long people slept every night before the invention of the lightbulb.

15

US dollars is how much Robert Frost was paid for his first published poem in 1894 – the equivalent of \$458 today.

39

percent of people in their 20s achieve their New Year resolutions each year, while 14% of people over 50 achieve theirs, according to a study.

110,000

bees were removed from Rockwood Hospital in Cardiff in 2016 after honey started dripping from the ceiling.

4

billion years in the future, the Milky Way will merge with the Andromeda galaxy.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Sunflower near Tri Trang Beach. Photo: Sutharat Khaodee

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

This week in history

Mar 26, 1169

Saladin, a Sunni Muslim of Kurdish ethnicity, becomes the first sultan of Egypt and the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty.

Mar 27, 1915

'Typhoid Mary' Mallon, the first healthy carrier of the disease ever identified in the United States, is put in quarantine, where she would remain for the rest of her life.

Mar 28, 1979

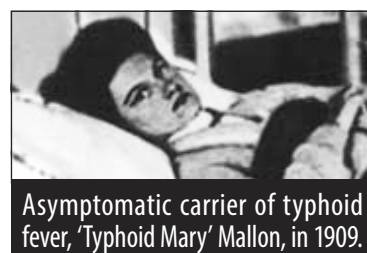
A coolant leak at the Three Mile Island's Unit 2 nuclear reactor outside Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in the US, leads to the core overheating and a partial meltdown.

Mar 29, 1973

Vietnam War: The last United States combat soldiers leave South Vietnam.

Mar 30, 1842

Ether anesthesia is used for



Asymptomatic carrier of typhoid fever, 'Typhoid Mary' Mallon, in 1909.

the first time, in an operation by American surgeon Dr Crawford Long.

Mar 31, 1913

Members of the Vienna Con-

cert Society riot during a performance of modernist music by Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Alexander von Zemlin-sky, and Anton von Webern, causing a premature end to the concert due to violence; the concert becomes known as the Skandalkonzert.

April 1, 1976

Apple Inc. is formed by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Ronald Wayne in Cupertino, California. Source: Wikipedia

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1 APR



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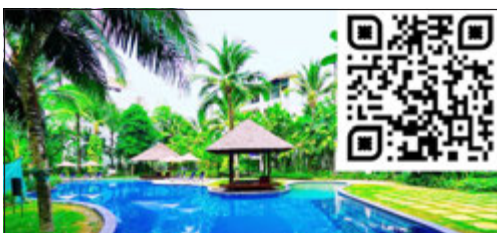
13 APR



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* For emergency cases, you must receive permission from an officer before leaving

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- Record your health status every day in the report system
- If you have a fever accompanied by at least one of the symptoms, **you are to inform of disease control officer immediately**

Date : 23/03/63

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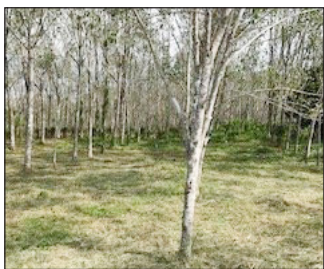
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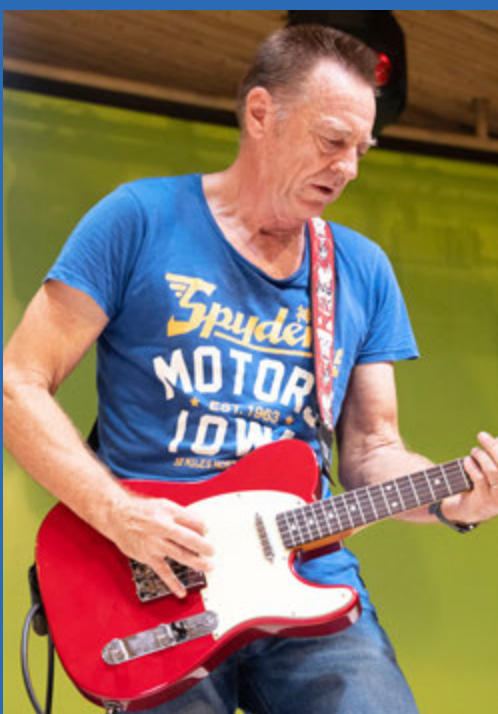
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SUCCESS FOR ALL



LEAN ON ME LIVE FEST FOR ONE PHUKET

Fantastic afternoon and evening of live music from 12 outstanding local bands. The event, on Saturday Mar 20, 2021, in support of One Phuket was held at Blue Tree Phuket and organised by the Phuket Academy of Performing Arts. Hundreds of Phuket people came together to help those in dire need. A substantial amount of funds were raised that will go a long way towards filling and delivering the daily Life Bags to those that need them all over Phuket and surrounding islands.



Red Bull get ready to rumble

Verstappen has Mercedes in his sights on eve of new season

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

After seven years of F1 domination, has Mercedes finally unveiled a car with a beatable weakness?

The pre-season is infamously fickle for forecasting season-long form in Formula 1, but Red Bull Racing will be hoping that for once it's bang on the money after ending testing atop the order ahead of the first grand prix in Bahrain this weekend.

Max Verstappen concluded the three-day test with the quickest time in what the Dutch prodigy described as his team's best-ever pre-season campaign. In stark contrast to this time last year, when Red Bull Racing started the season with a temperamental car prone to random slides and spins, Verstappen and new teammate Sergio Perez enjoyed three uneventful days behind the wheel.

The RB16B, a honed version of the machine that won



Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes go head-to-head once again as the Formula One season starts in Bahrain this weekend. Photo: AFP

the final race of 2020 in Abu Dhabi, handled sweetly out of the box and was rapid around Bahrain's testing desert circuit.

"Definitely I think it has been the best," Verstappen said of his preseason campaign relative to previous years. "I think from our side it was very smooth, and we are happy with our progress throughout the whole test."

The quiet confidence emanating from the Red Bull

Racing garage is worlds away from the quiet introspection next door at Mercedes.

The reigning constructors champion endured a torrid trio of days. Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton and teammate Valtteri Bottas completed the fewest laps of any team through unreliability, and when the car was running it was snappy and unpredictable. Hamilton even uncharacteristically beached himself twice

over the three days.

"Probably everywhere," Hamilton said when asked to identify the car's most serious struggles. "It just seems globally through the lap – there's not one particular point more than the other."

REGULATORY CHANGES

The team's trials come as a surprise given the stable regulations that have enhanced

Red Bull Racing's car should have seen Mercedes do likewise after winning all but four races in 2020 on the way to a seventh consecutive title.

However, some minor but meaningful regulatory changes have been enacted to slash downforce on safety grounds by reducing the size of the floor. One paddock theory suggests Mercedes' aerodynamic approach relies heavily on its long floor to generate performance, whereas Red Bull Racing has always operated with a shorter floor at a more aggressive attack angle and is therefore less adversely affected.

"I think Red Bull are looking particularly strong," Hamilton reflected. "They are going to be a different machine or animal this year."

But for some the excuse is too convenient for a team that has a habit of appearing undercooked in testing only to light up the track at the first race.

Verstappen, Hamilton's chief title rival and heir apparent, isn't buying it.

"You can see on the data

of course what they are doing," he told Dutch TV. "They did their fastest lap with less power... so they are fast, no doubt."

"So I still see Mercedes as the favourite."

Number crunching – inexact though it is – suggests the off-track mind games and on-track subterfuge are actually hiding a genuinely closely matched duel, with Red Bull Racing quicker at the ragged edge in qualifying but Mercedes more capable with tanks full for a race.

It is the dream scenario for Formula 1, and with team resources set to switch almost immediately to the seismic rule changes of 2022, what we see in Bahrain is likely what we'll get for the duration of this record-breaking 23-race season.

Never before have Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen gone toe to toe for a championship, and with Hamilton in the final year of his Mercedes contract and hunting for a record-breaking eighth crown, the stakes are as high as they come in 2021.

Heartbreak for Thai ace Pornpawee

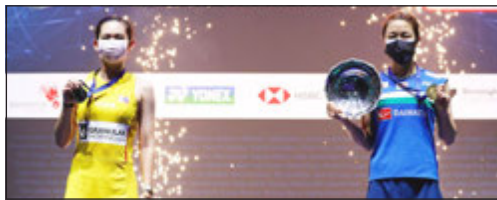
BADMINTON

PORNPAAWEE CHOCHUWONG'S BID for her first major title ended in disappointment as she lost to Nozomi Okuhara in the final of the All England Open Badminton Championships in Birmingham on Sunday (Mar 21).

The 11th ranked Thai, who was seeded sixth, went down to world No.4 Okuhara 21-12, 21-16 in the 44-minute women's singles decider.

It was Okuhara's fifth win against Pornpawee in six meetings.

With the victory, Okuhara, 26, claimed her second title at the sport's oldest tournament. She won her first All England Open crown in 2016.



Pornpawee Chochuwong (left) and winner Nozomi Okuhara. Photo: AFP

The Japanese also dominated the doubles events as Hiroyuki Endo and Yuta Watanabe defeated Takeshi Kamura and Keigo Sonoda to lift their second straight men's doubles title.

The women's doubles crown went to second seeds Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara who defeated top seeds and defending champions Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota. *Bangkok Post*

Overseas fans barred from Tokyo Games

OLYMPICS

OVERSEAS FANS WILL be banned from this summer's pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics, organisers confirmed on Saturday (Mar 20), in a bid to reduce virus risks and convince a sceptical Japanese public the Games will be safe.

The unprecedented decision will make the Tokyo Games the first ever held without overseas spectators, as organisers scale back their ambitions for the pandemic-decimated event.

The Games are shaping up to be largely a television event for most of the world, with little of the international party atmosphere that usually characterises an Olympics.

In a statement issued after talks between local organisers, Japanese officials and Olympic and Paralympic chiefs, Games officials said the virus situation in Japan and abroad remained "very challenging".

"Based on the present situation of the pandemic, it is highly unlikely that entry



Tokyo's National Stadium seen from the Shibuya Sky observation deck. Photo: AFP

into Japan will be guaranteed this summer for people from overseas," they added.

As a result, "the parties on the Japanese side have come to the conclusion that they (overseas fans) will not be able to enter into Japan at the time of the Olympic and Paralympic Games."

The International Olympic Committee and International Paralympic Committee "fully respect and accept this conclusion," the statement added, saying refund details would be released soon.

Authorities estimated that about 600,000 tickets have been sold to people outside of Japan. Just how many domestic spectators will be allowed in venues

this summer has yet to be decided.

"It has never happened that foreign spectators were banned from entering the host country at the time of the Games, even during the Spanish flu at the time of the Antwerp 1920 Olympic Games," said Jean-Loup Chappelet, a Lausanne-based professor who specialises in the Olympics.

The year-long delay and virus safety countermeasures have helped balloon Tokyo 2020's already mammoth budget to an eye-watering 1.64 trillion yen (B463bn), making the Games potentially the most expensive summer Olympics in history. *AFP*

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Foxes outwit United to reach FA Cup semis

FOOTBALL

AFP

Leicester City sent Manchester United crashing out of the FA Cup last Sunday (Mar 21) as Kelechi Iheanacho's double sealed a 3-1 win, while Chelsea will face Manchester City in the semi-finals after beating Sheffield United.

Brendan Rodgers' side can look forward to their first FA Cup semi-final since 1982 thanks to Iheanacho's predatory finishing at the King Power Stadium.

He put Leicester ahead in Rodgers' 100th game in charge before Mason Greenwood equalised late in the first half.

Youri Tielemans restored Leicester's lead and Nigeria striker Iheanacho wrapped up only their second win over United in 23 years and their first since 2014.

Leicester, who have never won the FA Cup and last reached the final in 1969, will head to Wembley to face Southampton in April.

"I'm obviously delighted.



Leicester striker Kelechi Iheanacho scored twice against Manchester United to help his side progress to the FA Cup semi-final. Photo: AFP

It was a great performance. Every aspect of the game was complete," Rodgers said.

"We showed courage to play against one of Europe's greatest teams. I told the players they were three games from history. Now it's two."

CHELSEA SET UP CITY CLASH

At Stamford Bridge on Sunday, Thomas Tuchel's much-changed side were below their best but still earned a

potentially thrilling showdown against quadruple chasers Manchester City by beating Sheffield United 2-0.

Oliver Norwood's 24th minute own goal and Hakim Ziyech's late strike were enough to see Chelsea advance to the FA Cup semi-finals for a fourth time in the last five seasons after losing last year's final against Arsenal.

Chelsea won the last of the club's eight FA Cups under Antonio Conte in 2018.

Since replacing the sacked Frank Lampard in January, Tuchel is unbeaten in 14 games in all competitions. Chelsea have kept 12 clean sheets in that period, shutting out the opposition in their last seven matches.

Pep Guardiola's team booked their semi-final berth thanks to late strikes from Ikey Gundogan and Kevin de Bruyne in a 2-0 triumph against Everton on Saturday that keeps the Citizens on course for an unprecedented quadruple.

"Manchester City is not a normal team, they are the best," said an exasperated Everton manager Carlo Ancelotti post-match.

Earlier on Saturday, Southampton beat local rivals Bournemouth 3-0 thanks to a Moussa Djenepo strike and a brace from Nathan Redmond.

It meant the Saints have reached the FA Cup semi-finals for just the second time in the last 18 seasons, last doing so in 2017-18 before being eliminated by eventual winners Chelsea.

Game changer for women's football

FOOTBALL

FOOTBALL CHIEFS ON Monday (Mar 22) announced a "game-changing" three-year broadcast deal for the English Women's Super League (WSL) that will inject millions into the game and boost exposure.

Sky Sports will show up to 44 games per season, with the BBC screening 22 matches free-to-air in a deal reported to be worth around £7 million (B300mn) per year.

The Football Association's director of the women's professional game, Kelly Simmons, said the deal was "a game-changing agreement that will transform" the WSL.

She said she believed it was the biggest domestic commercial contract ever agreed for women's football rights, describing it as a "landmark deal" for the whole of the women's game.

"When we look at the benchmarks around audience, this without doubt will take us to be the most-watched women's sports league in the world," she said.

"It is transformational. This is mainstream, this is



The TV deal is a landmark moment for women's football. Photo: AFP

prime slots on television, big audiences, week in, week out, and I think it's such an exciting step for the women's game."

It is the first time the rights to the WSL have been sold separately from those to the men's game, with the 12 top-flight clubs receiving a proportion of the revenue.

Clubs in the Women's Championship will also benefit, with 25% of the funds fed down to the second tier.

The WSL has begun to follow in the footsteps of England's Premier League by attracting top talent from around the globe with Chelsea signing Pernille Harder from Wolfsburg for a world-record fee for a women's player last September. AFP

Pathum United crowned new T1 champs

FOOTBALL

BG PATHUM UNITED'S 2-0 home victory over Ratchaburi served as the icing on the cake as the Rabbits lifted their first-ever Thai League 1 trophy on Saturday (Mar 20).

Pathum had secured the top league title early this month with a record six matches to spare. The win also extended the Rabbits' unbeaten run in the league to 29 matches.

They need a draw in their last fixture against SCG Muang Thong United to match the feat of winning the league title without losing a game previously achieved by Sunday's opponents and Buriram United.

The Rabbits' points tally stands at 77 points, 20 more than second-placed Buriram.

Pathum United got their first goal from Pathomphon Charoenrattanapirom in the 37th minute of the match while Diogo Luis Santo netted their second in the last minute.

MATCH-FIXING

Meanwhile, on Mar 18, the Criminal Court sentenced



BG Pathum United celebrate with the Thai League 1 trophy. Photo: Bangkok Post

15 people, including eight former Thai Premier League footballers, to between one and five years in prison, in a major match-fixing case that started in 2017.

The crime involved the paying of bribes on several occasions by five people betting on Thai Premier League football matches. Bribes were paid to the players, a referee and an assistant referee.

Thirachit Sitthisuk, a former assistant referee, was sentenced to five years and ordered to pay a fine of B2,000. Choetsak Bunchu, a former director of Sisaket FC, was given four years and fined B2,500.

Phakphum Phannikun and Manit Setthapaisit, both

accused of paying bribes, were each given four years in jail and fined B2,000 each. Wanlop Saman and Kittiphum Paphu-nga, also a former well-known footballer, were each given two years and fined B2,500.

Phummarin Khamruen, a former FIFA referee, was given two years, while Wira Koetphutsa, a former goalkeeper, was given one year. Seksan Chaothonglang, Sutthiphong Laophon, Suwitthaya Namsinglaek and Narong Wongthongkham, former footballers, were each given two years.

Thirachai Ngamcharoen, Thotsaphon Khamengkit, and Ekkaphan Chandakon were each given one year.

Bangkok Post



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10-12 APR Roy Rim Lay

📍 Laguna Grove

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14 APR Laguna Golf Phuket Songkran Open

📍 Laguna Golf Phuket

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3-4 APR Soundwave

FREE
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📍 Laguna Grove

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11 APR Phuket Sunset Beach Run

📍 XANA Beach Club

Run along Bangtao Beach whilst enjoying the beautiful sunset following by live entertainment.

12 APR Songkran

📍 Laguna Grove

Watch the Dragon Boat race and join the traditional Songkran celebration!

17-18 APR Soundwave

FREE
ENTRY

📍 Laguna Grove

Explore the festival enjoy FREE concerts by famous artists including Thaitanium, F.HERO, Bodyslam, Ice Saronyu and Instinct.



3-4 APR Angel Market



📍 Cassia Phuket

Market items from Airline Angels such as clothes, food & beverages and many more!



12-15 APR Laguna Phuket Pride

📍 Cassia Phuket

A 4-day event including Day and Night parties, Pride March Parade, Forum Discussion, and more surprises!

17-18 APR Surfskate

📍 Cassia Phuket

Hop on the Surf Skate trend with a vibrant event open to all levels! Workshops are available for first timers.



Laguna Phuket hotel guests receive special VIP access and preferred seating at each Soundwave concert

