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ARRIVAL



The Finnair flight from Stockholm on Monday (Oct 25) was given a water-cannon salute on landing. Photo: AoT Phuket

DIRECT FLIGHTS FROM EUROPE RESUME AS REOPENING SPURS CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

The Phuket News
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The first direct flight from Europe in nearly two years touched down in Phuket on Monday (Oct 25), bringing 135 Sandbox tourists from Stockholm. The arrival of Finnair flight AY153 marked a milestone in Phuket's first steps to recovering from the financial crisis brought on by the COVID pandemic as Thailand prepares to receive vaccinated tourists from 46 selected "low risk" countries with just one-night quarantine starting next Monday (Nov 1).

On hand to lead the welcoming

committee was Phuket Vice Governor Piyapong Choowong. Joining him were Monchai Tanode, General Manager of Phuket Airport; Thitiporn Maneenet, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Director for Europe, Africa and the Middle East; and Nanthasiri Ronnasiri, Director of the TAT Phuket Office.

"This is another important step in opening the tourism market to Phuket, after moving forward with the pilot project to open the area to receive foreign tourists as the first area [in the country] under the Phuket Sandbox project since July," V/Gov Piyapong said.

"The project has been very successful in ensuring that it meets the

standards set by the public health sector, along with the economic recovery of Phuket. It has built confidence as the first step of opening the country and as a model to open other pilot areas," he added.

"Tourists are welcome and glad to visit Phuket and Thailand again after not leaving their home countries for two years. As for the welcoming group, it was a joy to see the bright smiles of the visitors," he said.

The return of the Finnair direct flights to Phuket follows Nitinai Sirisathakarn, President of Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited (AoT), reporting that many airlines are returning "slots" – bookings

required to use airport facilities, including takeoffs and landings – for the winter flight schedule.

Foreign airlines had returned about 70-80% of the flight slots available at Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang airports, Mr Nitinai told Thai PBS. "This reflects that the airline business is still highly uncertain," he added.

The government's ban on domestic flights from the end of July through September had resulted in Thailand's aviation industry's lowest performance on record. During the period, the six airports operated by AoT averaged about 40-50 travellers per day. Domestic flights resuming this month had seen passenger traffic...

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News



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Reopening hopes kept in check

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...at the six AoT-operated airports increase to an average of 30,000 passengers per day, he said.

HEDGED OUTLOOK

Silver linings about the immediate future of Phuket's tourism and property industries were tempered with cautious optimism by tourism and property industry experts, who believe the return of tourism will be more gradual than exponential even with the reopening of the country to vaccinated tourists without quarantine on Nov 1.

The message came at the Joint Chambers Phuket Business Briefing "What's Ahead - Phuket's Plan for Kickstarting the Economy", led by the Australian Chamber of Commerce, held at Boat Lagoon Marina on Oct 20.

The event, attended by Boon Yongsakul, the Deputy Managing Director of Boat Lagoon Marina, was sold out with 80 people in attendance.

Matthew Barclay, Australian Consul-General in Phuket, marked how fast the tourism situation was changing, and confirmed that the Australian state of New South Wales would not require any quarantine for Australians returning home from Nov 1.

"We are already seeing early signs that airlines will re-engage with Australia and that Australian airlines will re-engage with Phuket and Southern Thailand very

soon," he said.

"It was very surprising to see that THAI Airways announced a couple of days ago with very little fanfare that direct flights to Sydney were to resume 1st November and one of those flights will be Phuket to Sydney starting mid-December, taking advantage of the festive season there. So these are really positive signs," he added.

Low-cost Australian airline Jetstar, the wholly owned subsidiary of Qantas, will resume its Sydney to Phuket flights on Jan 12, more than two months earlier than scheduled, the airline has announced.

Three return flights a week will be operated by 787 aircraft, parent company Qantas said in an announcement issued on Oct 22.

Locally, Bangkok Airways will resume its direct service between Phuket and Hat Yai from Sunday (Oct 31). The direct service between Phuket and Hat Yai will be operated by an ATR72-600, starting with one flight daily.

However, regarding the return of Australian tourists to Phuket, Mr Barclay pointed out that the less-than-expected response to the reopening of travel between Australia and New Zealand earlier this year indicated that Australians were being cautious in travelling abroad.

"I think what we're seeing is that Australians want to take tentative steps before they head back overseas. They

Schemes for Entering Thailand (by Air Travel) Effective 1 November 2021			
	Exemption from Quarantine	Sandbox Programme *	Alternative Quarantine
Eligible Countries	Only Eligible Countries <small>Note: Must reside in the eligible countries for at least 21 consecutive days</small>	All Countries	All Countries
Quarantine	No quarantine <small>Note: Must wait for RT-PCR test result at the hotel for 1 night or until receive negative result</small>	Travel restricted in Sandbox Area for 7 days <small>Note: Must wait for RT-PCR test result at the designated hotel before travelling</small>	Quarantine at the AQ hotel for 10 days
Vaccination	Fully vaccinated (at least 14 days prior to travelling)	Fully vaccinated (at least 14 days prior to travelling)	Not Required
Accommodation Requirements	1 Night Reservation at SHA+ or AQ Hotel <small>Note: Payment Confirmation required</small>	7 Nights Reservation at SHA+ Hotel in Sandbox Area <small>Note: Payment Confirmation required</small>	10 Nights Reservation at an AQ hotel <small>Note: Payment Confirmation required</small>
Medical Insurance	Medical insurance with minimum coverage of USD50,000 <small>(Not required for Thai nationals)</small>	Medical insurance with minimum coverage of USD50,000	Medical insurance with minimum coverage of USD50,000
COVID-19 test result before Departure	Have a RT-PCR Covid-19 test result issued within 72 hours before travelling	Have a RT-PCR Covid-19 test result issued within 72 hours before travelling	Have a RT-PCR Covid-19 test result issued within 72 hours before travelling <small>Note: Not required for Thai nationals</small>
COVID-19 tests in Thailand	One RT-PCR COVID-19 test on arrival date <small>(Travellers are responsible for test fees which is included in hotel reservation)</small>	Two RT-PCR COVID-19 tests - On Arrival Date - Day 6 or 7 of stay	Two RT-PCR COVID-19 tests - On Arrival Date - Day 8 or 9 of stay

The entry rules for international tourists to come into effect Nov 1. Image: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

want to see the system work, and I think that is something that is really good for Phuket," he said.

"Phuket is promoting itself not only as a travel destination, but also as a COVID safe destination. There really are very few parts of the world that have put in place the systems that Phuket has," he said.

"We heard some people saying, 'They haven't hit 100,00. They haven't hit the

targets they set... I think the system itself is a success here, and I think that's the selling point, and that's something that no other part of the world has that at the moment. We literally have places like Langkawi, Bali, looking to use that model," he added.

Mr Barclay highlighted the damage done to Phuket's economy, noting that after the 2004 Asian Tsunami Phuket's economy contracted by 15%.

Last year amid the COVID lockdowns, it contracted by 83%.

"Recovering from the pandemic will take years. I think there will be a lot of risk aversion. But I think that if Australian business can play into those sectors, I think we could be set for success.

There are a lot of reasons why those sectors will be a success," he said.

SLOW TRAIN COMING

Sumi Soorian, Development Director at Phuket Hotels Association, reported that the hotel industry in Phuket, among the hardest hit by the travel bans to counter the spread of COVID-19, were grateful to the Sandbox scheme for providing "a lifeline" to the industry.

"Although Sandbox numbers were not as high as we anticipated, they are rising - they have been a lifeline to Phuket. The hotel industry has been hit quite hard," Ms Soorian said.

The focus of talks among the industry is that tourists are looking for safe places to visit, a criteria that Phuket is matching well, Ms Soorian noted.

"While Bangkok was shut down by COVID restrictions, we saw a rise in the number of visitors coming to Phuket, where the restrictions are bearable," she added.

"In October we still expect a slight decrease in the number of arrivals, but we have a

higher forecast for November and December onwards, as Europe reopens

"We are seeing a lot of snowbirds making bookings. It will be a 'mini high season', not as high as anticipated, but it is rising. The number of flights and the number of destinations [source markets resuming travel] are increasing. These are positive signs of the industry coming back again," Ms Soorian said.

"Phuket is on people's minds. There is pent-up demand. The COE will be removed, and there is a lot of interest in Phuket as a safe destination. We have come out as a role model. The Sandbox is a success, and the country is confident to open up to other cities [to tourism]," she noted.

While hoteliers are currently looking at Russian, Australia and Singapore as source markets, tourists from China are not expected to return in any significant numbers until the first quarter or second quarter next year, after Chinese New Year, Ms Soorian said.

"With India, we are getting a lot of enquiries through DMC groups [tour operators] and clients, especially as families want to come and discover Phuket," she added.

"In short, the forecast is looking good. Next year I think will still be a recovery period for hotels but possibly 2023 we'll have more stability in the industry," Ms Soorian concluded.

Refunds for unneeded SHA bookings, PCR tests now confirmed

REFUNDS FOR SHA+ bookings and extra PCR tests no longer needed to comply with entry regulations for international arrivals to enter Thailand under the Sandbox scheme are already being upheld.

Confirmation came on Monday (Oct 25) by John Dalley, co-founder of Soi Dog Foundation, who recently returned to Phuket.

Regarding the refund for PCR tests no longer needed, Mr Dalley told *The Phuket News*, "Refund easy. Just asked when having the PCR test on arrival at the airport and they gave me a leaflet with a website



A foreigner exits Phuket International Airport on Monday (Oct 25). Image: TAC Phuket

address on it."

The website Mr Dalley was referred to was the "Thailand PSAS" website.

The website, titled the "Sandbox Swab Appointment System", is the official portal

set up months ago for people entering Thailand under the Phuket Sandbox scheme to book their required PCR tests.

Mr Dalley pointed out that the website now has a red button added to the bottom right

corner of its home page simply marked "Refund".

"You get a message saying to allow up to seven days, but I got a message confirming that the refund had been made within minutes," Mr Dalley said.

"They can only refund the credit card used to pay the fee or bank if done by bank transfer," he added.

"It was refunded to my hotel immediately and they gave me the money. Also when having the second test this morning [yesterday], there was a sign advertising refunds for the third test and a code to scan," Mr Dalley noted.

Regarding his experience

clearing entry procedures at the airport, Mr Dalley noted, "Airport arrival was very efficient... [I was] outside in 20 minutes after leaving the plane," he said.

Mr Dalley had been issued a Certificate of Entry (COE) and was to arrive under the original Sandbox requirements of 14 nights' stay at a SHA+ hotel with three mandatory PCR tests required, including one on arrival.

"Like many people I booked that but actually arrived after the government reduced it to 7 nights and 2 tests. I therefore got a refund as described. I was also offered a refund by my guesthouse,

but waived that as it was so cheap. (2 weeks accommodation was less than 3 PCR tests!)" he explained.

Since the announcement last week that from Nov 1 Thailand will reopen to tourists from 46 countries with only one night quarantine and one mandatory PCR test on arrival required, people who had already booked to come to Thailand under the previous requirements have expressed much confusion about which rules will apply after they arrive.

Much depends on when they will arrive.

The Phuket News

Income distribution vital

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Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew has emphasised that income distribution among residents across the island was paramount in the expected slow return of tourists after Nov 1, when Thailand will reopen to receiving vaccinated tourists without quarantine from selected low-risk countries.

The key message was delivered at an event held on Oct 20 to launch a united campaign by local business leaders and Phuket officials to prepare island residents for inbound tourists from Nov 1 and to promote the island as a safe tourist destination.

The campaign, called "Together Phuket Stepping Forward", was launched at the Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Chao Fah (Ramada Plaza Chaofah) in Wichit.

Governor Narong noted that Phuket was well prepared to receive tourists through the procedures and systems set in place under the Phuket Sandbox scheme, including the Mor Prom app, and the SHA and SHABA initiatives specifically designed for Sandbox.

He added that the next step forward would be through the Phuket Sandbox and various projects that will help Phuket's economy recover "to prosper again in all sectors".

"Moving forward from now on, it is important that we create as much income distribution as possible, to minimise the economic gap so that we can walk together in a stable manner in the midst of volatility. Phuket is ready to be a sandbox in every aspect of development to benefit the people of Phuket and Thailand," he said.

Phuket Vice Governor Piyapong Choowong pointed out that systems in place to receive both foreign and do-



The PPAO food relief efforts continued in the poor area of Soi King Kaew last Sunday (Oct 24). Photo: PPAO

mestic tourists were concise and integrated in all aspects.

"Phuket entry and exit measures [for domestic travellers] since October 16 are much easier. It signals the readiness of Phuket to move forward confidently. And Phuket is very ready to support the government's policy of opening the country on November 1 and we will set a good example to welcome tourists again happily," he said.

The call for the income generated from the return of tourists to reach the people in need came as food relief efforts continued across the island. The Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO, or *OrBorJor*) has maintained its campaign, with more than 400 meals as well as bags of rice and other necessities handed out to residents in the Soi King Kaew area in Rassada, one of the poorest neighbourhoods on the island.

MORE INFECTIONS WILL COME

Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon, Chief

of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO), pointed out plainly that more infections will come as the island reopens to receiving more visitors.

"The real world is that we will inevitably find infections from both foreign and domestic visitors, but the PPHO Health Team is confident in controlling and managing COVID-19 infections as we have learned from past experiences. With the support of all sectors, we are ready to live with COVID-19 safely," he said.

Dr Kusak also pointed out that the number of hospital beds available for treating COVID patients had risen significantly over the past few weeks as patients had recovered, with fewer people needing treatment replacing them.

"The Phuket CCR Team [Comprehensive COVID-19 Response Team] is continuing its proactive prevention and solution operations in the community, and we are paying much attention to

check on Group 608 at-risk people," he added.

'Group 608' has become Phuket officials' preferred term for higher at risk patients, comprising people over 60 years old along with those suffering from any of the seven recognised medical conditions that place patients at higher risk of developing

serious signs of infection, plus women more than 12 weeks pregnant.

"Students are now registering through the Phuket Must Win website to be vaccinated, and more local quarantine centres, COVID Care Centres and Hospitals are closing," he added.

Of note, according to the

Phuket COVID Daily Situation Report issued by the PPHO, the total number of people reported as currently being held at 'COVID-19 Care Centers' across the island fell overnight by 237, from 1,438 to 1,201 – indicating that at least one of the mass care facilities on the island had closed.

RECOVERY WILL TAKE TIME

Bhumikitti Ruktaengam, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, noted that even with the doors to tourism reopening, it will take time for the island's economy to recover to previous levels.

"Before Phuket's economy becomes as good as it was, it will take time and cooperation of all parties. Therefore, we have to spread our wings to open this door to travel more in all channels.

"As a result, the Phuket economy will recover. The aim is to allow Phuket residents to move forward together with enough income to support them through the crisis, and increase efforts to build tourism business sustainability for the next generation," he said.

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Manhunt for vicious robber

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Police across the island this week launched a manhunt for a robber wanted for the vicious beating of a 71-year-old gold shop owner who was repeatedly struck heavily on the head by a piece of wood at his home in Phuket Town last Saturday night (Oct 23).

Police were notified of the attack at about 11:30pm, said Phuket City Police Chief Col Theerawat Liamsuwan.

The attack occurred at the Thong Thaweechai gold shop on Ranong Rd in Phuket Town, where husband-and-wife shop owners Wangdee Inthawong, 71, and Puangpen Sakkasemkrit, 65, lived upstairs, he said.

When police arrived at the scene late last Saturday night, blood was smeared across the floor in the main room in the home, where Mr Wangdee had fought his attacker, Col Teerawat explained.

The couple were asleep in the bedroom on the second



Police at the scene where Mr Wangdee, 71, was heavily beaten with a piece of wood. Photo: Phuket City Police

floor when they were woken by the robber, who threatened them and told the husband to open the safe on the ground floor, he said.

The robber had entered the home by climbing onto the roof of the house and breaking through the bathroom ceiling on the second floor.

Threatened by the stranger standing in his bedroom, Mr Wangdee refused to open the safe. A fight ensued and carried into the adjoining room, where the robber beat Mr

Wangdee repeatedly with a piece of wood. Mr Wangdee suffered several head injuries in the attack, Col Teerawat confirmed.

After suffering a heavy beating and fearful for his wife also being beaten, Mr Wangdee finally relented and gave the key to the safe to the robber, who proceeded downstairs and stole many items of gold from in the safe. The robber fled through the second-floor side door of the shop, Col Teerawat said.

Police later confirmed that the robber made off with gold items valued at more than B8 million.

Mr Wangdee told police that he believed the robber was a Myanmar man from listening to his accent when he spoke.

Mr Wangdee luckily escaped serious injury in the attack. He received first aid at the scene from rescue workers and was later taken to hospital for further treatment.

After police and first-responder rescue workers attended the scene late last Saturday night, investigators arrived last Sunday afternoon (Oct 24) to inspect the area behind the gold shop and check CCTV footage from the area. The gold shop is located near the busy market area on Ranong Rd, just west of the Suriyadej Circle.

Joining the investigation were officers from Region 8 Police at the northern end of the island, led by Deputy Commander Region 8 Police Pol Maj Gen Wanchai Ekkapornphit, with Lt Col

Somporn Boonma, Deputy Chief of Investigation at Region 8 Police spearheading the actual investigation.

Region 8 Police are responsible for overseeing Provincial Police operations in the seven Upper Southern Thailand provinces, including Phuket, Phang Nga, Krabi, Surat Thani (including Koh Samui) and Chumphon.

Investigators reported that the robber fled the gold shop through a side door and is believed to have escaped past an abandoned building with overgrown vegetation behind the gold shop.

Officers found a red mask in the long grass, which they took for further investigation.

From CCTV footage inside the gold shop, officers noted that the robber was wearing black Aerosoft branded shoes, costing about B300.

The robber is also seen carrying the piece of wood and brandishing a large knife, which was not used in the fight with Mr Wangdee.

As of Tuesday (Oct 26), the hunt for the robber continued.

Fake news blasted for reporting 2,000 arrivals COVID positive

PHUKET OFFICIALS ARE warning people to ignore a notice circulating on social media claiming that 2,000 tourists from six different countries who arrived in Thailand under the Phuket Sandbox scheme have tested positive for COVID-19.

The warning posted by officials is branded openly as, "Fake news, don't share!"

"The Anti-Fake News Center has checked the facts with the Phuket Provincial Public Relations Office and found that such information is false information," said the notice, posted online last weekend.

"The Phuket Public Relations Office has checked the information and clarified that it is not true. From 1 July - 21 October 2021, 53,120 tourists arrived through the Phuket Sandbox, with 171 infected, representing only 0.3% of all tourists. Not all of them are infected with COVID-19 as stated in the post," the warning noted.

"Therefore, people are asked not to trust such information and



Image: PR Phuket

[we] ask for cooperation not to send or share such information on various social media channels. People can receive more information from the Phuket Public Relations Office posted through the website <https://pr.prd.go.th/phuket> or [they can] call 076-216118," the post added.

People were advised to report any reports or social media posts suspected of being "fake news" via: **LINE:** @antifakenewscenter (<http://nav.cx/uyKYnsG>) **Website:** <https://www.antifakenewscenter.com/> **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/AFNCThailand> **Hotline:** Government Information Service Center for the People Tel: 1111 ext. 87

The Phuket News

Wichit Na Ranong steps in over wastewater

WICHIT NA RANONG, OFTEN referred to as the 'Father of Phuket Tourism', has offered Rassada Municipality use of private land to help monitor wastewater levels flowing into the Soi Paniang area, which for years has raised serious health concerns over the foul stench emanating from the canal that feeds into Samkong on the north side of Phuket Town.

The issue was discussed at a meeting held last week at The Slate resort in Nai Yang, which Mr Wichit founded as the Indigo Pearl Resort Nai Yang. The resort is now run by his daughter Krystal Prakaikaew 'Khun Moo' Na-Ranong.

Leading the delegation of officials was Nakarin Yosangrat, Chief of Rassada Municipality, joined by Rassada Municipality officials and officers from the Wastewater Management Authority (WMA) under the Ministry of Interior.

Also present was Chaipat Na Ranong, Managing Director of Toyota Pearl Co Ltd. The Na Ranong family operates all Toyota Pearl distributorships across the island, and the family also owns and operates the Phuket tourism-founding Pearl Hotel in Phuket Town.

Mr Wichit, who has previously served as the President of the Tourism Council of Thailand, offered Rassada Municipality the use of nine rai of land on which the WMA can jointly set up



Wichit Na Ranong agreed for Rassada officials to use private land to build a water quality centre to monitor wastewater levels in the canal flowing in the Soi Paniang area. Photo: Rassada Municipality

a water quality management centre using a budget from the Ministry of Interior to carry out construction.

The water quality centre is to be built in Moo 5, Rassada, along the banks of the canal that runs along Soi Paniang, and will be used to monitor the level of wastewater pollutants being released into in the canal. Mr Nakarin had pointed out that Rassada Municipality simply did not have any land in the area on which to build such a facility.

Also agreed was for Rassada officials to use a tract of land 10 metres wide and 650m long behind Phuket Rajabhat University to install two rows of drains 1.2m deep to help prevent flooding in the communities surrounding the university with each heavy downpour.

The Phuket News

Retiree insurance targetted

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The Ministry of Public Health has raised the mandatory health insurance for expats staying on one year-renewed visas from B400,000 to B3 million, effective immediately.

The news came at a meeting in Bangkok on Oct 19, where it was decided to raise the mandatory health insurance for long-stay foreigners so that the health insurance covers treatment for COVID-19.

The meeting also decided that foreigners may provide evidence of the required health insurance coverage as provided from the country of origin.

The new health insurance requirements were made effective immediately, hence they came into effect on Oct 19.

However, even as this issue went to print, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is responsible for issuing visas, and the Immigration Bureau, which is responsible for extending stays in the country, both had yet to recognise the new insurance requirement.

The new requirement cannot be enforced until either Immigration or Foreign Af-



The Ministry of Public Health approved the move at a meeting in Bangkok on Oct 19. Photo: MoPH

fairs approve and inducted it into their own requirements for issuing visas or permits to stay.

The high-powered meeting on Oct 19 was led by Dr Satit Pitutecha, Deputy Minister of Public Health, together with Chaiwat Chuenkosoom, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Interior.

Also present were Daranee Likhitworasak, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports; Dr Thares Krasanai-

yarawiwong, Director-General of the Department of Health Service Support; Donwit Pool-sawat, Director of the Foreign Visa and Travel Documents Division; Pol Maj Gen Piti Nithinontaset, Immigration Commander Division 1; and Chuchat Pralumhol, Deputy Secretary-General of the Insurance Regulatory Commission (OIC).

After the meeting confirmed the policy shift, the party of top-ranking officials held a press conference called

“improve additional rules to support health insurance for foreigners who apply for temporary visas. Non-Immigrant Visa code O-A (1 year term)”

According to a report of the meeting posted by the Ministry of Public Health, Dr Satit said, “The government has a policy to promote health tourism, to make Thailand a global health centre (Medical Hub).

“There is an opening of health tourism routes, the development of Thai herbal

products, Thai massage and spa, and development of the potential of health care facilities, both public and private at all levels, including health establishments to achieve quality standards that are internationally accepted to attract more tourists to enter the country.

“In the past, there were 3,768 elderly people applying for a visa for a long stay (Long Stay) for a period of not more than one year,” he said, citing data from the Immigration Bureau and the Department of Consular Affairs.

“On June 15, 2021, the Cabinet approved in principle to improve additional rules as proposed by the Ministry of Health and relevant agencies by requiring foreigners who apply for a visa can purchase health insurance from abroad or have government welfare from abroad, and adjusting the health insurance limit from the original B40,000 for outpatients and B400,000 for inpatients, changing [this] to a limit to cover medical expenses and have insurance that covers the treatment of COVID-19 for not less than US\$100,000 or B3,000,000, effective from today [Oct 19]

onwards to build confidence to foreigners who will come to receive protection and care throughout the period of their stay in the Kingdom,” he said.

Dr Thares Ratanaiyarawiwong, Director-General of the Department of Health Service Support, said that the criteria for applying for a temporary visa for a period of one year will be used for elderly foreigners.

“Those who cannot purchase insurance in Thailand, those whose overseas insurance purchase certification form does not comply with the insurance business system/benefits from various funds, and those who apply for a second visa renewal [extend] wishing to apply for health insurance from abroad, this will reduce the problem of visa applicants unable to apply for a second visa, as well as upgrading and screening foreigners who will travel to Thailand.

“The policy can be purchased online through the Thai General Insurance Association website. <https://longstay.tgia.org>. There are 17 regional insurance companies participating in the program,” Dr Thares said.

Phuket Immigration Volunteers founder Kevin Moss loses battle with cancer

KEVIN MOSS, THE BRITISH EXPAT WHO founded the Phuket Immigration Volunteers and a regular at Patong Police Station with the Region 8 Police Volunteers, has passed away after a brief battle with cancer.

Kevin was diagnosed with late-stage cancer after presenting himself at Chalong Hospital for back pain. He was later admitted to Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town, where he was diagnosed with cancer in the brain and his back.

Kevin passed away on Oct 6. He was 64. “A friend to so many,” said Wal Brown, a long-time friend who has also worked with the police volunteer programme in Patong and the International Liaison Volunteer Program supporting the Region 8 Police.

“He had this temperament, when walking on patrol along Soi Bangla he could walk up to any situation where someone was kicking off and be able to just calm them down,” Wal recalls.

“He was an active member the whole time, always there to help out,” he said.

“At the police station, there was always somebody coming in asking for help. Kevin was happy to help, and very good with the immigration questions,” he added.

Kevin, originally a butcher from the UK, founded the Phuket Immigration Volunteer Program at the main Phuket Immigration Office in Phuket Town in 2007 after simply pedalling up to the Immigration Office in Patong on his bike and asking if they needed any help.

The program grew to 17 active volunteers, many of whom remain in service at the main



Kevin Moss happy to help, pictured here at Phuket Immigration in 2011. Photo: The Phuket News / file

immigration office today to help foreigners navigate the bureaucratic hurdles of filing applications for visa extensions and other immigration services.

He left the Immigration Volunteers in 2013 for a break. While on the island he also worked as Sales Director for Layana Development Co Ltd over several years.

Kevin joined the Region 8 Police Volunteers operating out of Patong Police Station in 2015, and remained an active member to the end.

“Help to coordinate between Thai Police and Tourists in Phuket Thailand. Ranging from loss of personal items to Drink Driving. Helping people to be safe while enjoying the Kingdom,” Kevin noted about his service to tourists in Phuket’s busiest tourism town before COVID pandemic.

Kevin’s body was at rest at Wat Chalong at 6pm last Saturday (Oct 23). His cremation was held the next day.

The Phuket News

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SCAN TO REGISTER

We can't go back to our old ways

The Phuket News

editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket's marine industry has been cautioned against returning to pre-COVID business strategies following hard lessons learned in surviving during the pandemic.

Shaun Stenning, CEO of 5 Star Marine, delivered the message while speaking as one of the panel of industry experts at the Joint Chambers Phuket Business Briefing "What's Ahead – Phuket's Plan for Kickstarting the Economy", led by the Australian Chamber of Commerce, held at Boat Lagoon Marina on Oct 20.

Mr Stenning delivered three key points: a need to focus more on domestic travellers as a survival and growth strategy shifting away from over-reliance on international visitors; a need for clear coordinated rules for conducting tours to neighbouring provinces Phang Nga and Krabi; and a clear shift away from the volume of mass tourism of the past.

"Phuket's marine industry needs to learn that we need a strong domestic base in tourism," Mr Stenning said.

While pre-COVID "almost 90%" of his customer base were international tourists, throughout the pandemic the target market shifted to domestic visitors. "We have been



The natural attractions around Phuket are beautiful again simply because there has not been the same number of visitors as before. The aim is to keep it that way. Photo: 5 Star Marine

nearly full, out every day, but not [with] Sandbox customers," he said.

"All that work that Phuket has done to make Phuket more accessible to the Bangkok market, I think Phuket needs to do that moving forward," Mr Stenning noted.

"We can't throw that to the way-side once the international market returns. I think we need a steady approach.

"We can soften out the curve between the high and low season by using the domestic market... We

shouldn't go just chasing numbers from the international flights, but chasing numbers from the domestic flights as well," he added.

RULE CONFUSION

Mr Stenning noted that the hotel industry has had the COE (Certificate of Entry) to deal with, which had enough problems of its own, but the marine industry has had to deal with three provinces dictating different, sometimes conflicting, rules.

"Phuket only has three islands,

Koh Racha, Koh Hei and Koh Maithon, that anyone actually wants to go to. So if you are stuck in Phuket and you can't leave the province without interacting with some other provincial order this becomes a nightmare for us to run our business.

"Sometimes a boat goes out and has to come back. The order changed overnight and the publishing of that order was so late the night before that no one in the Marine Office knew about it until they actually picked up the paperwork and read it," he said.

"It creates a sense of being overwhelmed among tourists when we explain all about what they can and can't do. They think after they land in Phuket that the COE was the last hurdle. It's not. If you come out on a boat, that's the first hurdle. We have three more hurdles for you to jump through before you can actually leave the province," he said.

Having a collaborative way to operate rules would have helped the Phang Nga 7+7 and the Krabi 7+7 Sandbox programmes, he said. "But everyone was so confused with the rules that no one did anything," Mr Stenning noted.

Mr Stenning marked that some progress has been made. "That was before, now we have the Krabi rules brought in line with the Phuket rules, so it's great that the government has caught up," he said.

Of note, Phang Nga officials have now also brought their provincial entry requirements into line with Phuket.

"We just need to get the message straight with the consumer, and that is a big thing," Mr Stenning said.

DEATH TO THE OLD WAYS

"We can't go back as a marine industry to what we were before," Mr Stenning cautioned.

"We saw what we did and what effect that had on the environment. You can see that in the before and after photos. Take a look at a before and after photo of Patong, of Khai Island, of Phi Phi Ley. All of these amazing destinations are amazing again, but they are amazing again because we weren't allowed to go," Mr Stenning said plainly.

"So I think the better approach is coming to a more sustainable way in what we do. I understand that we all have got to make money. We all have to be profitable. We all have to be commercially viable. But in the same way we can do that, maybe either with less customers or less of a footprint," he said.

"If we continue to keep Phuket beautiful and the islands beautiful... then the domestic market will remain interested. If the domestic market sees the international market return in a way that is not sustainable, they will not come because it is not beautiful anymore," he concluded.

Local food served in domestic tourism push to help villagers

LOCAL OFFICIALS HAVE launched a campaign to highlight local delicacies available at five villages in Phuket to help lure more tourists to the island and to distribute income from inbound tourists to much-needed areas.

The campaign, dubbed 'Check In Phuket', was launched at an event held at the Pearl Hotel in Phuket Town on Oct 21, presided over by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew.

Joining the Governor were Mukda Limnukul, head of the Phuket office of the Community Development Department, and Krisada Tansakul, Advisor to the President of the Thai Hotels Association Southern Thailand Chapter.

Also present for the launch were two of Thailand's top chefs, Suwichak 'Chef Mond' Kanghae and Saritawat 'Chef Earth' Wanwichitkul, both Iron Chef Thailand champions.

The project is to raise the standard of local food service and to promote the Andaman region as a world-class tourist destination, Governor Narong said.

"The project is for the development and upgrading



Photo: PR Phuket

of the villages and communities," he said.

The project specifically targets five villages in Phuket: Baan Koh Maphrao, on Koh Maphrao (Coconut Island) off Phuket's east coast in Moo 6, Koh Kaew; Baan Palai in Moo 3, Chalong; Baan Pa Krongcheep in Moo 6, Thapkrasattri; Baan Manik in Moo 7 Srisoonthorn; and Baan Tha Chatchai at the northern tip of the island in Moo 5, Mai Khao.

"The project provides visitors a way to learn about the lifestyles of local people in communities across Phuket through community tourism, and generate income and develop a strong and sustainable economy for Phuket Province,"

Governor Narong said.

"Through the Phuket Provincial Community Development Office, this project can raise the standard of local food services and promote the Andaman region as a world-class tourist destination," he added.

Governor Narong added that the objective is to develop an economic source that is linked to a community tourist attraction.

"The project also will help to develop leaders in local network and community organizations that can serve as a model for developing the potential of welcoming tourists to be able to generate income for the community," he said.

The Phuket News

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Government talks up new Thailand Pass

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Foreign Affairs Ministry is rolling out a campaign to promote the use of the new Thailand Pass system which will replace certificates of entry (COE) for visitors to Thailand when the country reopens on Monday (Nov 1).

Tanee Sangrat, spokesman for the ministry, said that since April 2020, the ministry has approved more than 400,000 COE requests by Thai nationals and foreign visitors for travel to Thailand.

Now that the government will reopen the country, the Department of Consular Affairs has collaborated with the Digital Government Development Agency (DGA) to develop the "Thailand Pass" system, the web-based system for Thai and foreign travellers to fill in their travel and health information and upload related documents before travelling.

The new system will help reduce unnecessary procedures and visitors can register on



Tourists are welcomed at Phuket airport. Photo: TAC Phuket

tp.consular.go.th from Monday (Nov 1), said Mr Tanee, who also serves as director-general of the ministry's Department of Information.

He said the Department of Consular Affairs and Thai embassies and consulates in foreign countries are testing the new system to get a good grasp before its official launch on Nov 1.

"Thai embassies and consulates will change their original role of issuing the COEs to publicising and giving advice on the registration of the Thailand Pass system. This means there will be no

more process of seeking their approval," Mr Tanee said.

The ministry, Thai embassies and consulates all over the world are stepping up campaigns to promote the country's reopening and explain the requirements for arrivals from 45 countries and one territory without quarantine, as well as arrivals under the sandbox and alternative quarantine programmes, he said.

The Thailand Pass system is a web-based system designed to make the documentation process for travellers entering Thailand more efficient than the COE application

by collecting both travel and health information and also facilitating the filing of TM6 and T8 forms.

The Thailand Pass is required for all fully vaccinated Thais and foreign travellers from the 46 low-risk countries listed by the government, as well as those who enter Thailand under the Sandbox programme or who have not yet been vaccinated or received only one shot and enter Thailand under the alternative quarantine programme.

Children under 12 years of age who have not been vaccinated but traveling with parents who have been fully vaccinated according to the criteria are able to travel to Thailand from Nov 1 under the new conditions of no quarantine.

According to the website, the processing of a Thailand Pass application takes three to five days depending on the Thai embassy or consulate where the application has been submitted. It is recommended to apply for the Thailand Pass at least seven days before the intended date of departure.



Photo: AFP

Moderna jabs on the way

BANGKOK

HOSPITALS ARE PLANNING to start administering the 560,000 Moderna COVID-19 vaccine doses which arrive next week to those who have pre-ordered by Nov 8, pending the required clearance process.

The president of the Private Hospital Association (PHA), Dr Chalerm Harnpanich, said after the jabs arrive on Nov 1, they will be examined by the Department of Medical Sciences in a process that will take no longer than five days.

Once cleared, Zuellig Pharma, as the jabs' authorised distributor, will hand over the doses to private hospitals and other institutions which have placed orders for them, Dr Chalerm said.

The PHA president said the vaccines should reach the hospitals by Nov 8 at the latest. He urged those who

have placed an order to contact their hospital for further information.

In total, the PHA has ordered more than 8.6 million Moderna vaccine doses, about 1.9mn of which will be delivered in December.

One million doses will be delivered to the Thai Red Cross Society and 100,000 doses will be delivered to the Ramathibodi and Siriraj hospitals each, he said. The rest will be sent to other hospitals.

He said all 8.6mn doses will be delivered by March next year, adding that one dose of the Moderna vaccine contains 100 microgrammes and the imported jabs are of the 1273 type, which can prevent the Delta variant of COVID-19.

Dr Chalerm added the Moderna vaccines have also been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for children aged between 12-17.

Bangkok Post

PM backs B100mn NYE plan

BANGKOK

PRIME MINISTER PRAYUT CHAN-ocha has defended the government's plan to spend some B100 million to secure K-pop sensation Lalisa "Lisa" Manobal of Blackpink and Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli for the New Year's Eve celebrations.

The Tourism and Sports Ministry has confirmed that both singers will perform in New Year's Eve shows in Phuket as part of the country's tourism reopening scheme.

The move came under fire after it was revealed that the deals would cost around US\$3mn (about B100mn), with critics saying the money could be better spent to support SMEs or rehabilitate the country.

Quoting the prime minister, government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said on Monday (Oct 25) the government has set aside funds for both COVID-19 rehabilitation and schemes to spur the economy.

The budget for hiring both performers is part of the tourism promotion scheme, which is necessary as the country is gearing up for its reopening, said Mr Thanakorn.

Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said the proposal to hire the performers will be discussed at a mobile Cabinet meeting on Nov 16 in Krabi.

He said the ministry will need to see the details of the contracts first before they are finalised. The draft, he said, should be ready by the end of the month.

Mr Phiphat said for the time being the



Lalisa 'Lisa' Manobal. Photo: via Bangkok Post

ministry has not yet asked the government to allocate funds from the central budget for the scheme.

He insisted that the plan to bring both artists to Thailand merited economic value, before adding most of the funds will come from private sector sponsorship.

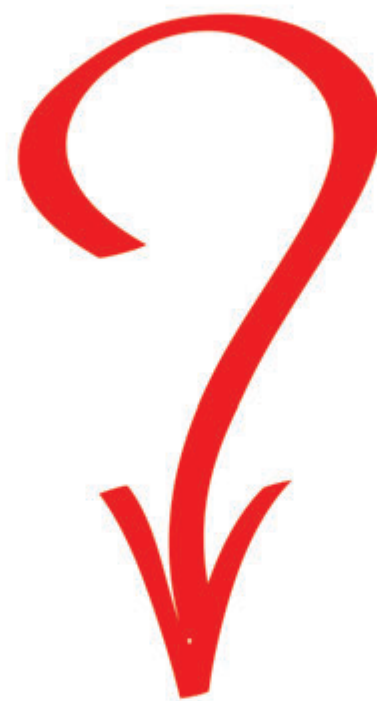
In announcing that the Thai government was in talks with the stars, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Yuthasak Supasron pointed out that an appearance by world-renowned artists could draw tourists from around the world to Phuket.

Mr Yuthasak said Phuket might be the destination for the countdown event as the government has already created a plan to establish the Andaman island as a "World Class Destination", which was approved by the Centre for Economic Situation Administration (CESA) earlier this month.

Bangkok Post



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Even the ubiquitous rubber trees seen across Phuket are not native to the area.



The invasive water hyacinth can take over entire ponds. Photo: Phuket Rajabhat University

The mysterious migration of plants



GREEN THOUGHTS

Patrick Campbell

Because the local climate is so conducive to growth, we tend to conclude that most plants in our tropic gardens originated in Thailand or at least Southeast Asia. Not true. Sometimes by accident, mostly by design, perhaps half of Asia's flora has fetched up here from all corners of the globe. Take the chili. This pungent spice was unknown outside America until Columbus made his voyage to the New World towards the end of the 15th century. Ironically, he was searching for the source of black pepper, then a commodity as valuable as gold dust. Chilies and peppers probably came to Thailand much later. One wonders how Thais managed without *nam prik* for so long...

The migration of plants has been going on for a long time. The Romans brought plums, walnuts, parsley and even roses to Britain; later, potatoes, pineapples and tomatoes arrived in Northern Europe from America. But the great age of plant collectors was the 19th century; numerous expeditions were mounted with the primary purpose of "discovering" new species, and bringing these exotica to the notice of a wondering and "civilized" world. The development of the glasshouse and – aptly named – conservatory, meant that these exotica could be literally "conserved" – indeed might even flourish in man-made micro climates that sought accurately to reflect conditions in the wild. Kew Gardens in London, which still houses the largest botanical collection in the world, was founded in 1840, the expression of a Victorian explosion of interest in exploration and plant hunting.

Why, one may justifiably enquire? Britain of course was enjoying its imperialist moment, the greatest nation in the world with an empire that reached out to all corners of the globe. How better to demonstrate this tenuous reach, than to display fruits and flowers from these remote lands. Unsurprisingly, it was a period of plant-hunting fever, a frenzy that spawned famous explorers, collectors and collections. And the motives were not merely political or even commercial, but were



Photo: Ryan Quintal / Unsplash

often the product of a passion for botany and natural history. George Forrest, for instance, was not only the greatest collector of rhododendrons – mostly from China – but also of *Camellia saluenensis*, a species whose hybrids are now grown in temperate gardens everywhere.

On the other hand, Scottish botanist Robert Fortune, who introduced the Chinese tea plant (*Camellia sinensis*) to India in 1848, was attracted by the commercial potential of a crop nowadays enjoyed the world over. Employed by the East India Company, he somehow managed to smuggle 20,000 seedlings into Darjeeling. It triggered the birth of the Indian tea industry. But he was not just a mercenary. Many other plants named after him included a euonymus and a mahonia, a celebrated climbing white rose – *Rosa fortuneana* and *Hosta fortunei*.

But the most famous plant heist, and one everywhere visible in Thailand to this day, was that engineered by Sir Henry Wickham, who in 1876 stole a huge quantity of rubber tree seeds from their native habitat in Brazil and personally accompanied them to London's Kew Gardens. Subsequently, these seeds were sent to a number of British colonies including Malaysia. Still regarded in Brazil as a "bio-pirate", his efforts bore substantial fruit in Malaysia and subsequently in Southern Thailand, aided by the obsessive enthusiasm of one "Rubber" Ridley, and the development of more efficient production methods than Brazil had been able to manage.

To this day, and despite the competition from synthetic rubber and plastic, these Southeast Asian countries remain

pre-eminent. Here in Phuket, for example, 60% of the woodland consists of plantations of *Hevea brasiliensis*. By a strange irony, most of these young *para* rubber trees grow alongside rows of *Ananas comosus*. The pineapple, let it be noted, had also found its way into Thailand, if more circuitously, from the New World.

Evidence of this great botanical migration is indeed all around us. Canna lilies, bougainvilleas, heliconias, acacias and allamandas are just a few of the shrubs visible from my window – all of them imports from other parts of the globe. Foreign plants, some as yet without local names, continue to appear in garden centres.

So is this all good news? For the most part it is. Indeed some immigrants do better in their new habitat than in their original environment. But that is in itself a double-edged sword. Some do so well that they become invasive, and require culling. Of course the limelight-catching stories concern animals: in Florida's watery wilderness known as the Everglades, there are now so many Burmese pythons, cast-off pets or escapees, that the entire local fauna is threatened. Australia now plays host to 56 invasive animals including the rabbit and the cane toad, introduced from South America in an attempt to control beetles in the sugar cane fields. The toad did nothing to control the insects, but eliminated most of the country's smaller predators. In Thailand, the most serious pest is the hispine beetle, which arrived accidentally from Indonesia, and which is steadily munching its way through groves of coconut trees.

The list of "take-over" plants is



Photo: Karolina Kołodziejczak / Unsplash

smaller. Here in Thailand, gardeners know of the existence of the giant sensitive plant (*mimosa pigra*), or the Siam weed (*chromolaena odorata*). But in general they approve of *wedelia*, a small ground-hugging plant which quickly colonizes waste lots and produces attractive star-shaped flowers. Or *lantana*, a pest in Australia, but here treated as a decorative perennial and frequently seen in nurseries as a multi-hued hybrid suitable for containers.

In Phuket I would only point an accusatory finger at one plant – the water hyacinth or *eichornia crassipes*. Originally from the Amazon basin – where presumably it was controlled by native animals who used it as a food source, it has become a pernicious presence in Thailand. Down the road is a large lake now so carpeted with the weed that the water is no longer visible. In Phuket Town and elsewhere, it not only clogs canals and impedes boats, but offers a prime habitat for mosquitoes and kills fish by depriving them of life-giving oxygen. It has commercial applications; these need to be exploited.

But let's not end on a downbeat note. As far as garden plants are concerned, the migratory process, man-made or accidental, has been almost entirely beneficial. All our gardens, everywhere, would be the poorer without these visitors who have come to stay.

The information in this article and much more is to be found in my book 'The Tropic Gardener'. Described in one Bangkok review as the best book on Thai gardening for 50 years, it is available for B500 (half price) to personal callers from 59/84 Soi Saiyuan 13 in Rawai (Tel: 076-61227 or 085-7827551).

Getting down in Phuket Town

PHUKET MUSIC SCENE

Andy Tong Dee

The live music scene on Phuket was dealt a severe blow by COVID, but happily not a mortal one. We are now starting to see green shoots of recovery, particularly in Phuket Old Town.

Michael's Bar on Takuapa Rd, now renamed Michelangelo's Bar, had something of a pre-COVID reputation for being moribund. All that has now changed under the new and dynamic management of my Hawaiian friend Don Mangiameli and his Thai partner Alice. I suggested to Don early on that a jazz and blues jam might work. Don is a drummer and he set up his drum kit at the back of the bar, bought a couple of amps and sold off the pool table to make space for live music. The Tuesday night jam was an early success and is attracting some fine musicians.

Don is now always busy booking acts to try to get live music of a good standard every night of the week. The house band Gypsy Sun plays blues and classic rock on Saturday nights, a hot act about which I wrote in June. Solo artists fill in the gaps in between bands and the Tuesday jam, bands such as the excellent Naughties and



Gypsy Sun making sure Michelangelo's, formerly Michael's Bar, is no longer moribund. Photo: Stephan Audiger

What's Up bands. So this bar is no longer moribund; it's on fire!

The intimate Bebop Jazz Bar just a few metres away is run by Boy Navio, a gifted virtuoso jazz guitarist. He set it up a few years ago and it has somehow managed to survive the COVID impact. Happily, it is now buzzing again with some stunningly good music played by class acts such as the Impromptu and Bebop bands. It's perfect for a romantic night out, but make sure to book a table

on the weekends when it's busy.

Head north into Yaowarat Rd and you will hopefully find the Good Vibes Bar opposite Harmonics Music Shop. I say 'hopefully' as it could easily be missed, for it has no front... or roof for that matter! This is because the bar is in an empty five-metre-wide space between two existing buildings. I can recall when it was boarded up and full of trash and rubble, but now it's packed with Thai youngsters having fun.

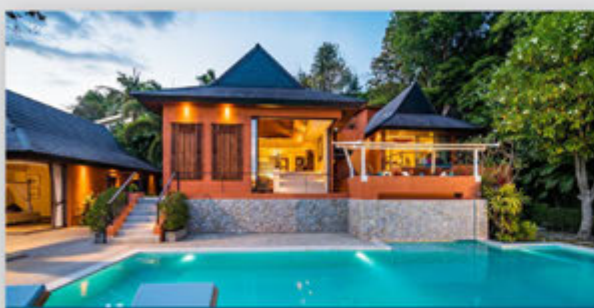
There is no electricity supply, so the bar relies on an extension cable to supply it from the next door shop. However, the shop shuts at 9:30pm, so the bar must then switch to battery power. At 11pm the recorded music ends and acoustic guitars are brought out for sing-a-longs. With furniture made out of driftwood and decorations from things found on the beach, this bar is Bohemian with a capital 'B'!

Just up the road is the famous Rockin' Angels Blues Bar run by Singaporean Patrick Chua to which I will dedicate a full article later. For now, I just want to say it's open again every day except Mondays for live music with a three-piece band usually on Fridays and Saturdays. Music starts at 10pm.

To end your musical trip around the Old Town, take a five-minute walk along Thalang Rd to find the Beer Sound Bar on Phuket Rd which I hear now has a live band on the weekends. Head east another five minutes and on Montri Rd you will find the Old Town's newest live music venue, the Midtown Jazz café run by Phuket's jazz stalwart Jeffery Sevilla. It's only been open a few weeks, so only has a jazz jam on Sunday nights for the time being. However, Jeffery confidently tells me he hopes to restart the annual Jazz Festival next April. Watch this space!

Expat Andy Tong Dee is a live music enthusiast and musician living in Phuket. Follow him on www.phuketmusicscene.com

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POP QUIZ

1. The classic Stephen King horror novel 'The Shining' is set at which fictional hotel?
2. Which major sporting event took place on Halloween in 2015?
3. Which novel by Ira Levin, was the top bestselling horror novel of the 1960s?
4. The Day of the Dead is celebrated in which country?
5. Kinemortophobia is the fear of what?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Careers by Myles Mellor

- Across
1. "Guinness Book" suffix
 4. Albeit, briefly
 7. Soft drink with a "generation"
 12. "All Songs Considered" network
 13. Navajo's neighbor, maybe
 15. Marquand sleuth
 16. Kind of operation
 17. It's got "Double Stuff"
 18. Westerns, in old lingo
 19. Natural health practitioner
 22. Cultural imitation
 23. Egyptian snakes
 24. Of a hymn
 28. Reduce
 33. "The Color Purple" star
 35. "Name That Tune" clue
 36. Vision specialist
 42. Italian bread
 43. Jacket material
 44. Chocolate cake, e.g.
 48. Loner
 52. Go through volumes
 54. Microwave, e.g.
 55. One who works with a loquacious "partner"
 60. Cab grabber
 62. Pessimist's word
 63. "Greatest" boxer

64. On pins and needles

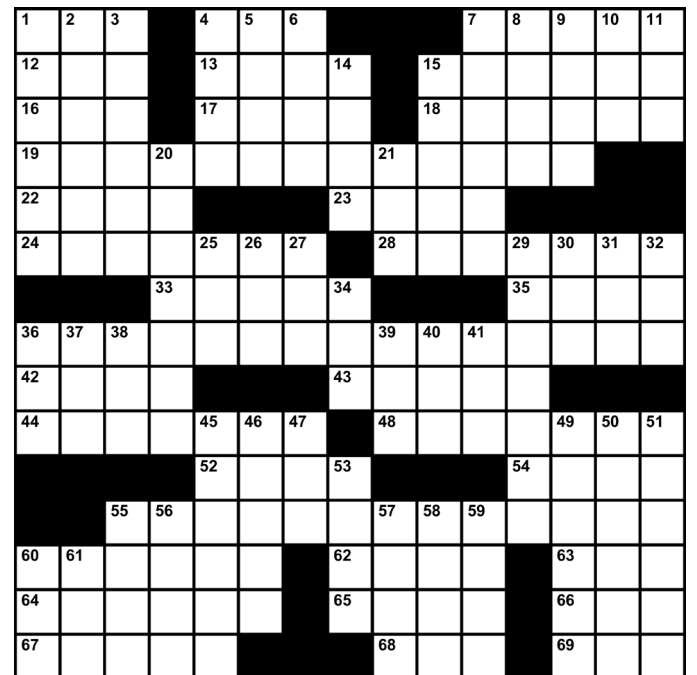
65. Little box
66. It's similar to a Balmoral
67. Norah Jones: "Don't know why I ____ come"
68. "Ghost Whisperer" skill
69. Yacht's dir.

Down

1. Set up a base, maybe
2. Seasons
3. Kind of center
4. 10 C-notes
5. Bugle, for one
6. Fuel price setter, for short
7. Pay homage
8. CPR pros
9. Coffeehouse entertainer, perhaps
10. Bering, e.g.: Abbr.
11. Aegean Sea island
14. Infinitesimal amount
15. Change shape
20. Jai alai balls
21. California University, abbr.
25. Dashboard abbr.
26. Can be Roth or traditional
27. Golden state, for short

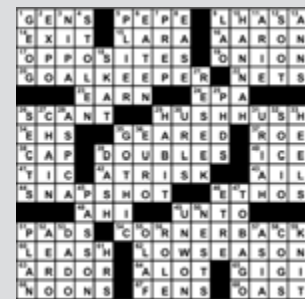
29. "All God's Children

- Need Traveling Shoes" writer
30. Luau dish
31. Aliens, for short
32. Clear, as pay
34. Initials at sea
36. Aged
37. Epitome of easiness
38. 24 in a day
39. "Certainment!"
40. "Au Revoir ____ Enfants"
41. "Deep Space Nine" character
45. 'Papa' Hemingway
46. Have another go at
47. Driveway material
49. Fly
50. Magnetic induction units
51. According to schedule
53. Prepare peppers, perhaps
55. Competed
56. Exuberance
57. When repeated, like some shows
58. Duty
59. Medicine cabinet item
60. Govt. housing org.
61. "Wheel of Fortune" request



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1.7

percent of women say they would only date a shorter man, according to a recent survey.

49

percent of women only want to date men who are taller than they are, said the same survey.

96

bags of feces, urine and vomit were left on the Moon by the Apollo missions.

1,000

tons of classified documents are incinerated by the CIA each year to heat water, protect information and reduce waste.

1

million

minutes old is a person when they have lived 19 years and 4 days.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Nai Harn on a clear day. Photo by Luke Gullins

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

This week in history

Oct 29, 2004

Al Jazeera broadcasts an excerpt from a 2004 Osama bin Laden video in which the terrorist leader first admits direct responsibility for the Sept 11, 2001 attacks and references the 2004 US presidential election.

Oct 30, 1970

In Vietnam, the worst monsoon to hit the area in six years causes severe floods, kills 293, leaves 200,000 homeless and virtually halts the Vietnam War.

Oct 31, 2011

The global population of humans reaches seven billion. This day is now recognised by the United Nations as the Day of Seven Billion.

Nov 1, 1512

The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, painted by Michelangelo, is exhibited to the public for the first time.

Nov 2, 1949

The Dutch-Indonesian Round



Photo: Jörg Bittner Unna

Table Conference ends with the Netherlands agreeing to transfer sovereignty of the Dutch East Indies to the United States of Indonesia.

Nov 3, 1957

The Soviet Union launches Sputnik 2 with the dog Laika, a stray dog from the streets of Moscow, on board as the first animal to enter orbit, paving the way for human spaceflight.

Nov 4, 1979

Iran hostage crisis: A mob of Iranians, mostly students, overruns the US embassy in Tehran and takes 90 hostages (53 of whom are American).

Source: *Wikipedia*

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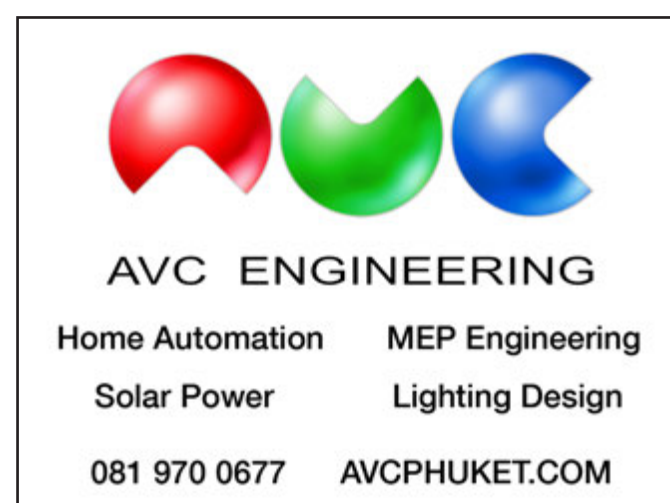
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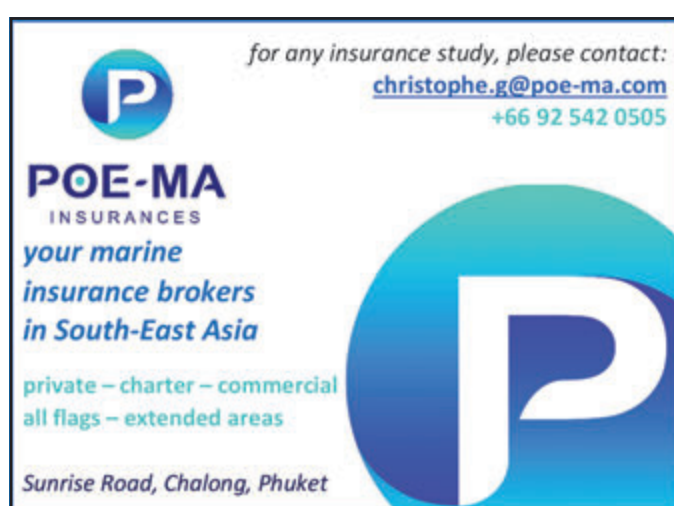


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FRI 29 OCT



Friday Mussels night

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SUN 31 OCT



Sunday roast

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

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MON 1 NOV



Pizza Monday

12 PM till closing: 20% discount on all our pizzas We have a kid's playground zone. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

WED 3 NOV



Wednesday BBQ night

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FRI 5 NOV



The Grow Boating Networking Evening for November 2021

The Grow Boating Networking Evening for November 2021 will be held at the new Boardwalk Bistro and Bar, formerly Tempt, next door to the Lagoon Saloon, at the Phuket Boat Lagoon on Friday the 5th of November from 5pm. There will be a light buffet sponsored by the Hardstand Restaurant and as always all of your selected beverages will be available. We are delighted to announce that Derani Yachts will be the drinks sponsor for the evening. See www.derani-yachts.com Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome. There is no entry fee, just drop your business card or register at the bar. We hope to see you there and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming please invite them along. To join our mailing list please send an email to growboatingphuket@gmail.com Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/growboating-phuket Grow Boating is kindly supported by our media partner The Phuket News, Live 89.5 radio and Phuket News TV. See www.thephuketnews.com

WED 10 NOV



Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand (AMCHAM), British Chamber of Commerce Thailand

(BCCT), Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber of Commerce, CanCham Thailand, Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce (FTCC), German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (GTCC) and the Netherlands-Thai Chamber of Commerce (NTCC), is delighted to invite you to join us for "Phuket Sundowners" at Four Points by Sheraton Phuket Patong Beach Resort, on Wednesday 10 November 2021, from 18.00 - 21.00 hrs. 500 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members 900 THB for non-members All attendees are asked to bring their COVID-19 vaccination proof or certification to show on entry to the event. For booking https://www.austchamthailand.com/event/10-nov-joint-chambers-phuket-sundowners-hosted-by-austcham/

SAT 4 DEC



A Night At The Popra

The event is a banquet style dinner and show. The money raised by ticket donations and auction items will be directly used to buy and distribute Life Bag supplies through One Phuket. Ticket donations are B5,000 per seat for VIP and B3,500 per seat for standard. Both ticket donations include a 5-star 3 course meal and free flow beverages.



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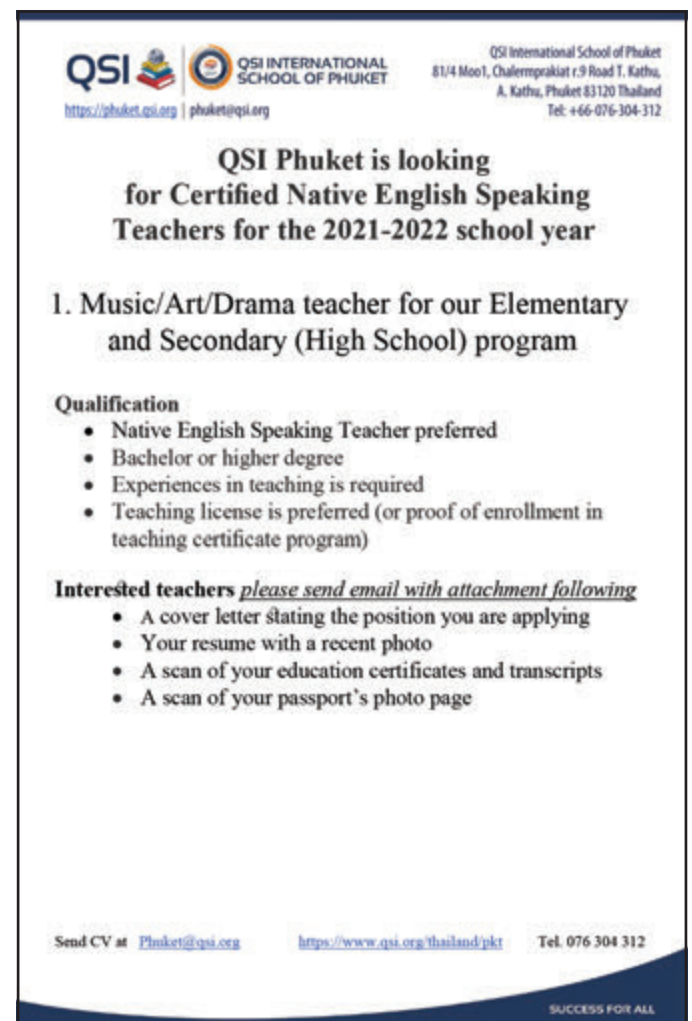


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AUSTCHAM SUNDOWNERS RETURN TO PHUKET

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, British Chamber of Commerce Thailand (BCCT), Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber of Commerce, CanCham Thailand, Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce (FTCC), German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (GTCC) and the Netherlands-Thai Chamber of Commerce (NTCC), held the "Phuket Sundowners" at Phuket Boat Lagoon, on Wednesday, October 20.



Thai shuttlers lose doubles final to Japan

BADMINTON

DECHAPOL PUAVARANUKROH and Sapsiree Taerattanachai lost to Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino of Japan in the mixed doubles at the Denmark Open last Sunday night (Oct 24).

The Thai duo went down to the fourth-ranked Japanese pair 18-21, 9-21 in the final of the World Tour Super 1000 event at Odense Sports Park, that lasted only 37 minutes, the Badminton Association of Thailand said on Monday.

The Thai second seeds received US\$2,9750 (฿993,650) as runners-up. They lost in the final in the same tournament in 2018.

Dechapol and Sapsiree advanced to the final after they came from behind to defeat third seeds Indonesia 16-21, 21-17, 22-20 last Saturday.

The Thai duo rallied to defeat the Indonesian third seeds and 2019 champions Praveen Jordan and Melati Oktavianti 16-21, 21-17, 22-20 in a thrilling semi-final.

The battle was very close as Dechapol and Sapsiree won a total of 59 points while the Indonesian pair took 58 in the



Sapsiree (front) and Dechapol. Photo: Supplied

65-minute contest.

It was also the first time the Thai pair dropped a game during the tournament, prior to the final against Japan.

Elsewhere, fifth seeds Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai, the other Thai players in the tournament, were overpowered by China's Huang Dongping and Zheng Yu in the women's doubles semi-final with the newly paired Chinese duo taking a straight win of 21-10, 21-15.

Huang and Zheng defeated second seeds Lee So-hee and Shin Seung-chan of South Korea in straight sets 21-15, 21-17 in the final last Sunday.

Bangkok Post

Verstappen doubles title lead in nail-biting finish

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Max Verstappen treated a sell-out Austin crowd to a nail biting last-lap victory over Lewis Hamilton at the United States Grand Prix last Sunday (Oct 24).

The title rivals started alongside each other on the front row of the grid and threatened to come to blows early. Hamilton had the inside line to the first corner, and though Verstappen swept dramatically left to try to cover the apex, the Briton won out and pushed the Dutchman off the track on exit.

But fully loaded with fuel and on the delicate medium tyre the Red Bull Racing car was quickest, and for the first 10 laps Verstappen harried the leading car for position, with teammate Sergio Perez closely in tow.

Hamilton's defence was steadfast, so the Bulls tried to crack him with strategy. On lap 20, much earlier than expected, he came in for his first of two pits stops, with Perez in two laps later.

On fresh rubber Verstappen was able to unleash his pace, and by the time Hamilton was forced to stop on lap 13 he'd lost 6.5 seconds.

But on the hard-compound tyres momentum swung back towards Mercedes, and as they neared the end of the



Max Verstappen leaves the pit during the US Grand Prix in Texas. Photo: AFP

stint Hamilton closed to within three seconds and was poised to make his move through the second stops.

Red Bull pre-empted the move and went aggressive again, bringing in Verstappen on lap 29. It gave him 27 laps to run but guaranteed him track position for the final stint.

Hamilton responded by staying out until lap 37. He lost more than five seconds to the Dutchman when he rejoined, but with 18 laps to go on much newer tyres, he sliced through the advantage until there were less than two seconds between them with seven laps to go.

But with the best of his tyres worn away and encumbered by the dirty air of the Red Bull car, Hamilton couldn't get close enough to launch a move.

With two laps to go he charged his battery for a final-lap assault, but

Verstappen had spent the stint keeping his tyres fresh, and he had just enough rubber in reserve to emerge a 1.3-second winner.

"We went aggressive, and I wasn't sure it was going to work, but the last laps were fun," he said.

Hamilton was sanguine in defeat, putting the loss down to having an all-round slower car.

"Congratulations to Max, he did a great job today," he said. "It was such a tough race."

"I gave it everything, but at the end of the day they just had the upper hand this weekend. We couldn't have asked for more."

The Briton at least scored a point for fastest lap, which took his championship deficit from six points to 12 with five races remaining.

Phuket News
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Predictions**

thepuketnews.com/predictions.php

COVID threat to Winter Olympics

OLYMPICS

TENS OF THOUSANDS of people in northern China were placed under strict stay-at-home orders on Monday (Oct 25) as authorities sought to stamp out a growing COVID outbreak in the run-up to the Beijing Winter Olympics.

Residents of the Chinese capital were also advised not to leave the city unless necessary, although regular transport services out of the city continued as normal. Those entering the city from areas with COVID cases must show a negative test, officials said.

China reported 39 new cases on Monday, bringing the tally from the latest Delta variant-linked outbreak to more than 100 cases over the past week.

The numbers are extremely low compared with most other places in the world, but China has pursued a zero-case strategy throughout the pandemic and authorities are determined to stamp out the latest outbreak with the Winter Olympics



The Winter Olympics start on Feb 4. Photo: AFP

due to start on Feb 4 next year.

Several housing compounds in Beijing have been locked down, and organisers on Sunday indefinitely postponed a marathon at which 30,000 runners were expected.

Some 23,000 residents in a housing compound in Changping district have been ordered to stay indoors after nine cases were found on the premises in recent days, local outlet Beijing News reported.

Photos showed officials in hazmat suits standing watch outside the entrances to each apartment block, and the perimeter of the compound blocked by metal barricades.

In a sign of how seriously Beijing is taking the outbreak, police in the capital have launched three criminal

investigations into alleged COVID safety breaches, the deputy director of the city's public security bureau said.

These included two infected people who initially concealed their symptoms, two residents escaping lockdown by climbing over a fence – as well as a pair of pharmacy managers who sold cough and fever medicine in breach of COVID requirements.

China requires registration for anyone buying cold or flu medicine in case they later turn out to have the virus.

In the central city of Wuhan – where the coronavirus was first identified in late 2019 – organisers abruptly cancelled another marathon on Sunday that was expected to draw 26,000 participants. *AFP*

Salah in a league of his own

FOOTBALL

Ben Tirebuck

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Make no bones about it, Mohamed Salah is the best player on the planet right now.

The 29-year-old Egyptian is in the form of his life with a series of sparkling displays of late confirming the claim.

Last Sunday's (Oct 24) hat-trick at Old Trafford in the 5-0 demolition of Manchester United was all the proof needed to quieten any doubters who still claim the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi are the game's optimal performers at the present moment. Both have faded in past months as Salah has flourished.

In week's previous, Salah displayed his imperious talent with not only sumptuous goals against Manchester City and Watford but devastating contributions to the team; his sublime pass to teammate Sadio Mane to open the scoring in the 5-0 thrashing of Watford on Oct 16, for example, was a mark of true genius and a thing of true beauty.

He is breaking records



Salah celebrates his third goal against Manchester United. Photo: AFP

aplenty resulting in giddy praise from fans, analysts, commentators and, arguably most pertinently, his manager at Liverpool, Jurgen Klopp.

"We don't have to talk about what Ronaldo and Messi did for world football and how they were really dominant," Klopp said after the Watford game.

"But in this moment it is clear that there is no one better than him [Salah]."

GOLDEN BOOT

Salah grew up idolising the

Brazilian legend Ronaldo and Italy's Francesco Totti, with the latter becoming a teammate at Roma in time.

He started his career at Al Mokawloon in his homeland before moving to Basel in Switzerland where he shone, resulting in a move to Premier League giants Chelsea. He was used sparingly at Stamford Bridge under Jose Mourinho before being shipped out on loan to Fiorentina then Roma in Italy's Serie A, with the latter signing him permanently in 2016. It was

his form with Roma, helping the team to a second-placed finish and a club record points tally, that saw his move to Liverpool in 2017.

During his debut season at Liverpool he scored 32 goals in 38 games, a feat which saw him win the Premier League Golden Boot and named the PFA Player's Player of the year. Last season he became the first Liverpool player since the Premier League began in 1992 to score more than 20 goals in three consecutive seasons, eclipsing club leg-

ends such as Robbie Fowler, Luis Suarez, Michael Owen and Fernando Torres in the process. His strike against Brentford on Sept 26 saw him named as the fastest Liverpool player to reach the 100 goal mark since Roger Hunt in the 1960s.

With his treble strike last Sunday, Salah became the first opposition player to score in three consecutive matches at Old Trafford and the first to score three goals there since Brazil legend Ronaldo in 2003.

He also became the highest scoring African player in the history of the Premier League with 107 goals, three more than former Chelsea star Didier Drogba. He has now scored in 10 successive games in all competitions, as Liverpool remain unbeaten in their last 22 games in all competitions.

His overall goal-scoring record since he joined the club in 2017 is a hugely impressive 107 goals in 155 league games, 142 goals in 216 appearances in all competitions. The fee of £43.9 million (B2 billion) paid to Roma for his services four years ago looks like a comparative steal in hindsight.

Salah's current deal expires

in 2023 and there have been fears he will leave Anfield if he is not paid among the Premier League's top earners. Klopp, however, is confident his star isn't going anywhere.

"He enjoys his football and long may it continue. I knew already [he wants to end his career here], I know the situation," commented the Liverpool boss.

INFLUENTIAL

Off the field, Salah has been praised for his tireless charity work and his strong advocacy of women's equality in the Middle East, something that saw him named amongst *Time Magazine's* top 100 influential people in the world in 2019. Following his goal that led his country to the 2018 World Cup finals for the first time since 1990, a school in Egypt was named after him.

TV chat show host John Oliver wrote the piece on Salah for *Time*, stating: "Mo Salah is a better human being than he is a football player. And he's one of the best football players in the world."

No doubt Oliver would be among the first to agree Salah currently stands alone as the greatest player in the world.

Stokes boosts England's Ashes cause

CRICKET

TALISMANIC ALL-ROUNDER BEN Stokes has been added to the England squad for the tour of Australia later this year, delivering a huge boost in their bid to reclaim the Ashes.

The 30-year-old said he is refreshed after taking time out from the game both for his mental health and also underwent two operations on a fractured left index finger.

"I had a break to prioritise my mental wellbeing and I got my finger sorted," said Stokes in an England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) statement on Monday (Oct 25).

"I am looking forward to seeing my mates and being on the field with them. I'm ready for Australia."

Ashley Giles, managing director of England's Men's cricket, said Stokes's return to the squad was terrific news but he added due to lack of game time they needed to move cautiously.

"Time and time again, Ben has demonstrated how important he is to the England team and having him available for the Ashes series is excellent news for all of us.

"Having not played for some time, we will move forward cautiously over the next few weeks to ensure he is fully prepared across all facets of his game.

"Ahead of a very busy period of cricket, we continue to remain mindful of the stresses on all our personnel, and our primary focus continues to be the wellbeing of all of our players and support staff."



Ben Stokes will face Australia in the upcoming Ashes. Photo: AFP

Stokes has not played for England since July, when he cut short his injury rehabilitation to captain the one-day side against Pakistan at short notice following a coronavirus outbreak.

It had been thought he would miss both the ongoing Twenty20 World Cup and the Ashes but the Australians will now be on notice that England's most likely match-winner will be facing them.

Stokes produced one of the most memorable Test innings to steer England to victory in the third Test of the 2019 Ashes series.

He scored an unbeaten 135 at Headingley to level the series – a few months after he had played a pivotal role in England's 50 overs World Cup success.

Stokes will depart with the Test specialists and the Lions on Nov 4. The first of the five Test series begins on Dec 8 in Brisbane. AFP



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Sport

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Verstappen wins Texas thriller > p14

COWS RUN RIOT AT ACG



The Thalang Cows celebrate their series victory over the Patong Penguins at the ACG on Sunday (Oct 24). Photo: Joe Ninan

CRICKET

Neil Quail

The fifth game decider between the Thalang Cows and Patong Penguins last Sunday (Oct 24) yielded an extraordinary run extravaganza, with three players claiming centuries during the afternoon's 25-over final at the ACG.

Ultimately, it was the destructive double-act of Ashan Fonseka and Ali Khan in scoring a combined 249 runs that secured victory for the Cows in a game that racked

up an astonishing total of 533 runs from both teams.

The Penguins elected to bowl first, allowing Cows skipper Joe Ninan and Fonseka into the fray to face the opposition bowling attack.

Despite Saju Abraham dropping a catch from Fonseka early on with the batsman on only 6 runs, Ninan soon fell when he was caught by Aidan Wood off the bowling of Imtiyaz Mushtaq.

Sameer Khan only lasted three overs before Ali Khan joined Fonseka at the crease to consolidate matters with the duo blasting 250 runs

between them in the next 18 overs.

Indeed, it was an expensive afternoon for the cricket coffers with several balls being lost to the ACG's surrounding vegetation and waterways during Fonseka's patchy innings of 113 off 75 (including six 6s and seven 4s), and Khan's volatile innings of 136 off just 55 (including eighteen 6s and one 4) contributing to an intimidating total of 296 for 6 after their 25 overs.

James Chattaway joined Penguins captain Curt Livemore to start the run chase

that required a hefty 12 per over.

A captain's innings was not to be on this occasion as the Cows' Sameer Khan quite brilliantly managed to take a catch as the ball descended over his shoulder off Wasim Mir's delivery.

Chattaway then joined his captain in the clubhouse when he was caught by Ali Khan, again off the bowling of Mir, sending Damien Westwood to join Craig Morgan in the middle. However, despite forging a 34-run partnership, Michael Flowers bowled the former for 11 to leave the

score on 42 for 3.

Morgan batted on valiantly, pummeling the Cows' bowling into the ACG car park, onto the clubhouse roof and elsewhere around the ground using a plethora of powerful orthodox and unorthodox shots, eventually reaching 147 before he was stumped by Flowers.

Returning after a brief hiatus due to health concerns, Anthony Van Blerk batting at 8 proved his worth by posting his team's second highest strike rate recording 14 (not out) off 14 deliveries, but in the end the Cows were able

to claim victory by 58 runs, and an overall 3-2 series win.

Man of the match was awarded to Morgan for his 147 off 64, while pick of the bowlers went to Cows' Mir for his 2 for 34 off 5 overs.

The recent revival of the Goan Panthers will hopefully lead to the establishment of a new tri-series over the coming weeks, while the ACG is looking forward to a number of incoming domestic tours during November.

For more information on training and matches at the ACG please visit the Phuket Cricket Facebook page.

Phuket resident beats BJJ world record

MMA

A PHUKET-BASED MARTIAL arts instructor managed to successfully break a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) world record while raising funds to help a local kid's Jiu-Jitsu program last Sunday (Oct 24).

Australian Campbell Symes broke the world record for rolling, a term used for the sparring aspect of BJJ, with a time of 30 hours.

His schedule allotted four-hour intervals with 12-minute breaks, reported *Jiu-Jitsu Times*. He was supported by his teammates who took turns as sparring partners for each round, some of them even

sleeping on the mats throughout the night. At the 30-hour mark, the gym erupted in cheers as they played "We are the Champions" by Queen.

Campbell's record also helped to raise funds for Phuket-based RDC Gym where he has been training and which is home to some of the best Jiu-Jitsu kids athletes in the country.

"When COVID-19 hit and we lost our Jiu-Jitsu home, RDC opened their doors to us, welcomed the team, and also gave me a chance to teach these amazing kids," Campbell said ahead of his feat.

"Now COVID-19 has really affected the gym, parents can't

afford training and the gym is on the verge of closing," he added.

At time of press, Campbell's efforts had helped raise B65,000 towards his target of B250,000.

The previous world record of 24 hours was set by Australian Damian 'Obi' Todd who helped raise funds and awareness for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in 2019.

Campbell has won a considerable amount of national and regional competitions, including the Pan-Asian Championships, the UAEJJF National Pro, Siam Cup, Copa De Bangkok, and IBJJF Pan Pacific Championship.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu is a grappling martial art that was developed for



Campbell (left) in action. Photo: Temple BJJ

self-defense. The sport has grown massively popular over the years, especially with the rise of mixed martial arts (MMA) as BJJ is seen as one of the fundamental martial arts for cage fighting, on par with

Muay Thai, boxing, wrestling, and other martial arts.

More details about how to donate can be accessed at: <https://gogetfunding.com/bjjlongestroll/>
JP Mestanza