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TRACK AND TRACE

OFFICIALS SILENT ON ONE PHUKET COVID CASE WHILE TRUMPETING ANOTHER

Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Thanit Sermkaew at a meeting earlier this month. Photo: PPHO

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Health officials' aspirations of using the 'Phuket Model' of preventing and handling COVID-19 infections in other provinces took a heady blow this week after an intensive 'track and trace' campaign successfully hunted down some 290 people suspected of infection after close contact with one COVID-positive man who travelled through Phuket, while a 38-year-old Dutchman confirmed as infected in Phuket just days after enter-

ing the country remained entirely unexplained.

The Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) in Bangkok reported both cases last Saturday (Nov 7), but immediately launched a track and trace campaign only for an Indian man staying in Krabi who passed through Phuket. The man had dinner with a friend in Patong before boarding a Thai AirAsia flight north to enjoy a short holiday in Chiang Mai and Loy Krathong festivities in Sukhothai.

The Indian man, who had travelled to Phi Phi Island before his visit to

Phuket, was confirmed as infected with COVID-19 only after he had returned to Krabi and undergone medical tests for his work permit on Nov 4. The man, 37, works at a restaurant.

While the hunt for suspected subsequent infections from the Indian man went into overdrive, along with a blitz of government reports highlighting the efforts undertaken to contain any spread of COVID-19, officials were silent on any explanation of how the 38-year-old man from the Netherlands came to be infected.

According to the CCSA report last

Saturday, the Dutch national tested positive for COVID-19 in Phuket. The man was reported as currently in care at an Alternative State Quarantine (ASQ) venue in Phuket, but no other details were made available.

According to a report by the *Bangkok Post*, the Dutch national arrived from his home country on Nov 1 and stayed at an ASQ facility in Phuket. He tested positive last Thursday (Nov 5) with no symptoms, and was admitted to a private hospital.

Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Thanit Sermkaew has blankly refused to provide any...

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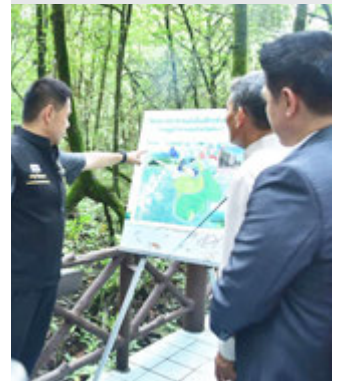
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Maya Bay plan under review to boost tourism



LIFE PAGE 6

The full price of not preserving the planet



SPORT PAGE 12

Penguins edge Cows in thriller at Phuket ACG



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News



Ancient cave paintings found on the bay > p5

Phuket COVID tracing a hit and miss

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...details about how the Dutchman became infected in Phuket, or why the Dutchman had been allowed to enter Phuket just four days after entering the country.

Currently, according to all public information announcements by national health officials, and even the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), all foreigners entering the country must observe a mandatory 14-day quarantine period at an approved venue in Bangkok before being allowed to travel to any other parts of the country.

"Please follow the details from the CCSA only," was all Dr Thanit would say about the case.

At the time of going to press, five days after the Dutchman was confirmed as infected, the CCSA had yet to explain any such details.

"Don't worry. Phuket is far from the risk of COVID-19 spreading," Dr Thanit assured.

Phuket Governor Narong Woonchiew, at the time of going to press, had made no statement about either the Indian man or the Dutchman.

Phuket Vice Governor Phichet



DDC Chief Opas Karnkawinpong believes COVID-19 has not spread from the Indian patient due to the small amount of the virus found in his body. Photo: Disease Control Department / Facebook

Panaphong, who has been tasked with overseeing all COVID-19 operations in Phuket, refused to comment.

However, Vice Governor Phichet did confirm that PPHO Chief Dr Thanit was authorised to comment on COVID-19 measures implemented in Phuket, and directed *The Phuket News* to ask Dr Thanit for details.

Dr Thanit repeatedly declined to

explain any details of the COVID-19 management plan in Phuket, which earlier this year was touted by national health officials as to be used as the 'model' for all other provinces in the country to follow.

Dr Thanit even refused to give some indication of what would be required before officials would consider lockdown measures again. "If

that happened, I am not the person to make any decisions about closing down any area in Phuket. That is for the CCSA to decide," he said.

"We do everything according to the procedures as we have been instructed, and it is under control," Dr Thanit repeated.

"Health officials and the investigation team work hard at their jobs and follow every procedure to protect people from COVID-19," he said.

Contacted to be asked whether silence from officials about how a person in Phuket became confirmed as infected with COVID-19 would inspire any confidence among tourists, foreign or domestic, to travel to Phuket, TAT Phuket Office Director Nanthasiri Ronnasiri declined to comment.

"Only the Phuket Governor is able to say anything about it," she said.

Dr Thanit was willing to confirm that the Thai friend with whom the Indian man had travelled to Chiang Mai, and the American friend with whom the Indian man had dinner in Patong, had both been located and tested negative for the virus.

Both had been ordered to observe

a 14-day house quarantine period, he added.

"These two men live alone, without family or a partner, so there is no worry of people at extra high risk of infection from these two men," Dr Thanit said.

National health officials already confirmed that not one of 290 people traced and tested in the case had been infected.

Disease Control Department Director-General Opas Karnkawinpong last Saturday said that chances the Indian had spread the coronavirus to other people were slim because only a small amount of the virus was found during the tests conducted on him.

The department is trying to find the source of the virus as Singapore was the only country outside Thailand he had travelled to since the outbreak began.

The man's most recent overseas trip was to Singapore, but he returned in February, he said.

The Indian man first arrived in Thailand in April last year to set up a restaurant on Phi Phi Island. He has a brother on the mainland in Mueang district of Krabi.

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Teacher denies kicking boy, 5, in face

A FEMALE KINDERGARTEN teacher at Wichit Songkram School has had a holding charge filed against her by police for causing bodily harm to a 5-year-old boy in her class, but has denied kicking the boy in the face.

The teacher, who remains unnamed since the incident came to light last Friday (Nov 6), has been temporarily charged under Section 295 of the Criminal Code, Capt Surachart Thongyai of the Wichit police confirmed to *The Phuket News* on Tuesday (Nov 10).

The incident came to the public's attention only after the national Paveena Foundation for Children and Women reported the incident directly to Wichit Police Chief Col Sujin Nilabodi.

If found guilty, the teacher faces a fine of up to B4,000 or up to two years in jail, or both.

"I am still investigating the complaint, but this case will be finished and sent to the Public Prosecutor's Office within one month," Capt Surachart said.

"She [the teacher] admit-



The child was presented to the Wichit Police in Phuket last Thursday (Nov 5). Photo: Paveena Foundation

ted that she harmed this boy, but her action is not like the complaint reported in the news," Capt Surachart said. "She told me that she didn't order the boy's classmates to harm him, and she didn't hit the boy's face with her foot," he said.

However, Capt Surachart declined to explain how the teacher came to harm the boy, who needed stitches over his right eye and was suffering blurred vision from the force of the blow to this head.

The female teacher involved in the incident has been transferred to an administrative position while the incident is being investigated.

Pongsathorn Chanponto, Director of Wichit Songkram School, and social workers from the Phuket Provincial Office of Social Development and Human Security met the boy's grandmother last Friday (Nov 6) to discuss the incident.

The grandmother of the boy subsequently presented the child at Wichit Police Station last Thursday (Nov 5), when she alleged that the teacher had kicked the boy in the face, and allowed his classmates to hurt him.

The grandmother also alleged that the teacher offered B5,000 to settle the matter, an offer the grandmother said she refused.

The Phuket News

Maya Bay pondered for providing tourism boost

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

World-famous Maya Bay may be reopened to limited numbers of tourists in the coming months as a way to help boost tourism to the Andaman region.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Warawut Silpa-Archa announced on Tuesday of last week said the bay may be reopened within six months. His announcement came during an inspection visit of the area.

Located in the Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Koh Phi Phi Marine National Park, Maya Bay has been closed for more than two years to allow the local marine ecosystem recover from years of heavy tourism.

Over the years, Maya Bay had become an international tourism magnet, luring visitors from all over the world who want to visit the park. The park's popularity skyrocketed after the release of the Hollywood film *The Beach*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, 20 years ago.



Maya Bay now nigh pristine after two years closed to any visitors. INSET: The mass of tourists that led to Maya Bay's closure. Photos: DNP / Thon Thamrongnawasawat

By 2017, the daily number of visitors was almost 5,000, but the department estimated that the bay and island could only accommodate 2,400 tourists per day. In total, 1.38mn tourists visited the bay in 2016, and 1.65mn visited in 2017.

Mr Warawut explained that at this stage a pier is under construction at Loh Sama Bay, located on the other side of Phi Phi Leh island.

"After Maya Bay reopens, only 350 tourists per day will be allowed to visit. However

no boats will be allowed to anchor near the shore," Mr Warawut said.

"This will be a new measure for traveling to Maya Bay," he added.

A report by state news agency NNT explained that a panel of experts will first be consulted about the suitability of the plan.

The committee of experts will first be consulted on the feasibility of allowing no more than 350 people to visit the island daily and the plan to

ensure no boats are anchored near the shore.

If the panel agrees, the island will be opened to tourists next year, said the report.

The news follows Mr Warawut presiding over the opening ceremony for a 360-degree viewpoint tower on nearby Koh Hong on Nov 1.

Present to welcome the minister were Krabi Provincial Governor ML Kitibodee Pravitra, Than Bok Khorani National Park Chief Theekhawut Sriburin, and a host of other officials.

Electric buses eyed, instead of light rail

TRANSPORT MINISTER Saksayam Chidchob has ordered the Mass Rapid Transit Authority (MRTA) to investigate the use of an electric bus network instead of developing the planned B35-billion Phuket Light Rail project.

Mr Saksayam ordered the review following his update on the project delivered to the mobile Cabinet meeting in Phuket last week, Thai-language business journal *Thansettakij* reported last Friday (Nov 6).

Mr Saksayam said the move would greatly reduce the cost of launching a mass-transit system. In Phuket's case, it could save up to B10bn, he said.

"You would not have to build a rail and signaling system, and local people will benefit from the lower fares as well," he said.

"However, as time passes it would become less cost-effective as old buses will need to be replaced," he noted.

Mr Saksayam explained that as the project was still in its development stage, the MRTA was not bound to develop specifically a rail system. A bus system could



Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob arrives in Phuket last Saturday. Photo: PR Dept

be launched instead, he said.

"Looking at the latest study results we found that only about 39,000 people a day would use the mass-transit system, which could be a bus system at first. Initially, it would be a special express bus format," Mr Saksayam said.

The route would remain the same as the current plans for the light rail, Mr Saksayam noted.

The express bus network would be able to use the same central reservation area along Thepkrasattri Rd where the light-rail is planned to be built, he said.

Mr Saksayam cautioned people from jumping to conclusions about whether or not a bus system will be launched instead. The concept is only under consideration, he pointed out.

The Phuket News

Cabinet blasted for 'window dressing'

WHILE PRIME MINISTER PRAYUT Chan-o-cha and Cabinet ministers were on the island for the mobile Cabinet meeting last week, iconic buildings in Phuket Town at night were lit up with laser-light messages in Thai blasting the ministers' visit to the island as nothing more than "window dressing".

"We used the messages to peacefully protest the government at nighttime. It was a symbolic expression that we chose while Prime Minister Prayut and the Cabinet were in Phuket," a key organiser of the anti-government protests held in Phuket told *The Phuket News*.

Among the buildings lit up with the messages were the iconic Standard Chartered Building, as well as other key buildings, including the shell of the still-incomplete "new" Provincial Hall on the south side of town.



The messages were emblazoned on key buildings in Phuket Town. Photo: Phuket Democracy / Facebook

"The mobile Cabinet meeting is window dressing," said one message. Another read, "Phuket [people] paid expensive taxes but nothing improves."

One message even protested the recent blocking of the Pornhub website.

The Phuket News

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Blue Horizon Developments wins the prestigious FIABCI-Thai PRIX D'EXCELLENCE AWARD

ADVERTORIAL

One of Phuket's most renowned property developers, Blue Horizon Developments, brings home yet another award. On 6th October 2020, the real estate company, founded by the serial entrepreneur Andres Pira, won the FIABCI-Thai PRIX D'EXCELLENCE AWARD in the 'Hotel' category for its outstanding development of Best Western Plus The Beachfront in Rawai, bringing its total award winnings to 22 in the past five years.

The FIABCI-Thai PRIX D'EXCELLENCE AWARD is a sought-after award that all property developers have their eyes on. Established in 1940, FIABCI has affiliations with over 120 leading real estate organizations with a combined total of 1.5 million members, making it the largest real estate association in the world. FIABCI's most prestigious award is PRIX D'EXCELLENCE, an

Blue Horizon Developments has won the prestigious FIABCI-Thai PRIX D'EXCELLENCE AWARD. See www.BlueHorizon-Thailand.com.

international real estate project contest with jury members from all over the world. This year, the winner of the award in the 'Hotel' category is Best Western Plus The Beachfront, a project Blue Horizon Developments takes pride in having developed.

Best Western Plus The Beachfront was designed to prioritize the wants and needs of its residents while incorporating green energy technology, creating the ultimate center of relaxation on the island. It has 183 guest rooms and suites that all fea-

ture a contemporary design and stunning sea views. The hotel also offers a wide array of amenities, an all-day dining restaurant, a beachfront bar, and a private beach so guests can enjoy the unique flair of this tranquil part of Phuket. Managed under a Best

Western International brand, Best Western Plus The Beachfront is committed to supporting the local community and buys ingredients for its restaurant – from vegetables to seafood – from local markets and fishermen in order to support the local community and to offer the freshest and most authentic ingredients to its diners. It regularly organizes beach cleaning activities with its employees and distributes food and other necessities to the less fortunate in Rawai. The hotel also has a positive working environment and offers equal opportunities for employees.

"Best Western Plus The Beachfront is undoubtedly one of our best work," says CEO & Founder of Blue Horizon Developments Andres Pira. "We are currently developing a few more real estate projects in Phuket with an unwavering commitment and are hopeful that they will receive the same level of recognition this hotel has."

Popular candidates enter race for provincial election

POPULAR POLITICAL FIGURES Jirayut Songyot and Rewat Areerob are both running for the position of President in the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO, or *OrBorJor*) election to be held on Dec 20.

Registration for candidates opened at Phuket Community Hall on Narisorn Rd, Phuket Town, on Monday of last week.

Long-serving PPAO councillor Mr Jirayut, 49, who is representing the Khon Baan Rao Party ("People from Our House") which won many seats in the PPAO election eight years ago, has been allocated "No 1" on the ballot.

Mr Rewat, 54, representing the Phuket Yatdai Party ("Phuket Trustworthy Party"), is already nearly a household name across Phuket. He has served the island as a Member of Parliament for the Democrat Party and currently serves as assistant secretary to Deputy Public Health Minister Satit Pitutecha. Mr Rewat has been allocated "No 2" on the ballot.

The other candidates are Sorawut



Supporters cheer after Rewat Areerob registered his candidacy. Photo: PEC

Palimapunt, 48, of the longstanding Gao Na Party ("Progress Party"); Songsak Suan-aksorn of the Phuket Poon-tey Party ("Phuket Origin Party"); and independent candidate Punya Kraithat.

Incumbent PPAO Acting Chief Watcharin Patomwatthanapong has announced that he will not run for PPAO President.

A total of 77 people have registered to contest the 24 seats on the PPAO Council.

Additional reporting by Eakkapop Thongtub



Photo: The Phuket News / file

Brits arrested in school raid

TWO BRITISH NATIONALS HAVE been taken into custody on suspicion of working illegally following a Phuket Immigration raid at an international elementary school in Rawai.

Phuket Immigration Deputy Chief Lt Col Nareuwat Putthawiro confirmed to *The Phuket News* last Friday (Nov 6) that the two foreigners were taken into custody at the Palm House International School on Nov 4.

The two Brits have been handed over to the Chalong Police, who have been asked to investigate whether any charges should be pressed against the operators of the school, Lt Col Nareuwat said.

"The two teachers were arrested for working without a work permit. Once processed, they will be deported out of the country. Meanwhile, the owner

of the school will be investigated too," Lt Col Nareuwat added.

The school posted a notice on its Facebook page announcing: "As you have no doubt heard we had a visit from immigration on Wednesday, unfortunately, this led to two of our teachers being interviewed for visa reasons. With all the Covid disruptions to border control and a misunderstanding regarding visas, this brought about a hiccup in our records. However, we are interviewing a potential new director on Friday, who will ensure that this type of misunderstanding never occurs again."

"Yes, it has been a disruptive couple of days for both students and teachers which is truly unfortunate, these types of incidents are a part of life and we will deal with them." *The Phuket News*

Sea gypsies awarded state land to live on

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Sea gypsies living in the Klong Tha Jeen area on the east side of Phuket Town have been given more than four rai of state land to live on under a government pilot project to ensure the once-sea-faring indigenous people now have a place to call home.

The news was announced at the unveiling of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Phuket City Municipality offices in Phuket Town last Friday (Nov 6).

The main signatories to the MoU include the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE).

Other signatories to the MoU include the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI) government agency, as well as the Chumchon Thai Foundation and People's Movement for a Just Society (P-Move).

DMCR Director-General Sapon Thongdee presided



The landmark MoU was unveiled at the Phuket City Municipality offices last Friday (Nov 6). Photo: PR Phuket

over the signing ceremony, joined by DMCR Acting Deputy Director-General Apichai Eakwanakul and Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw.

Mr Apichai explained that the pilot project to dedicate state land to sea gypsies followed an initiative proposed by the P-Move through talks on Jan 13 this year.

The result was that the DMCR has designated three rai 52 square wah in the Klong

Phuket, the sea gypsies living in the Sa Ton Pho community have been granted an area of four rai two ngan in the Pa Chai Len National Forest Reserve, a protected mangrove forest in the Khlung Bang Chee lao - Khlung Tha Jeen area on which to live.

The other two communities to benefit are the sea gypsies living on Koh Lao, in Tambon Pak Nam, Ranong, who have been granted four rai 52 square wah in the Klong

Hua Khiao and the Klong Sui reserved forest areas, and the Chao Letho Ba Liu community in Tambon Saladan in Koh Lanta District, Krabi, who have been seven rai one ngan of state land to live on.

Under the MoU, the granting of the land also includes the provision of government funds to provide public utilities and other public benefit projects, such as the installation of electricity and water supply, and road repairs.

Ancient cave paintings found in Phang Nga Bay

ANCIENT PAINTINGS have been found on cave walls at five new sites in Ao Phang Nga National Park

Officers at the Fine Arts Office Region 12 office in Nakhon Sri Thammarat were informed of the cave paintings by national park officers and came to inspect the paintings on Oct 27-28, Fine Arts Department Director-General Prathip Phengtakko explained last Wednesday (Nov 4).

The newly discovered cave paintings were found on Koh Thalu Nok, Koh Khaotao, Koh Khai, Koh Yang Daeng and in the Nok Krarian cave.

Officers currently estimate that the new paintings are about 3,000 to 5,000 years old, but experts have been called in to study them further, Mr Prathip said.

The new paintings have brought the number of locations of cave paintings in the national park to 11, he said.

"Officers have found 30 ancient paintings in areas along the Andaman coast," he added.

"Most of them were painted in prehistoric times



Experts have been called in to study the cave paintings further. Photo: Fine Arts Department



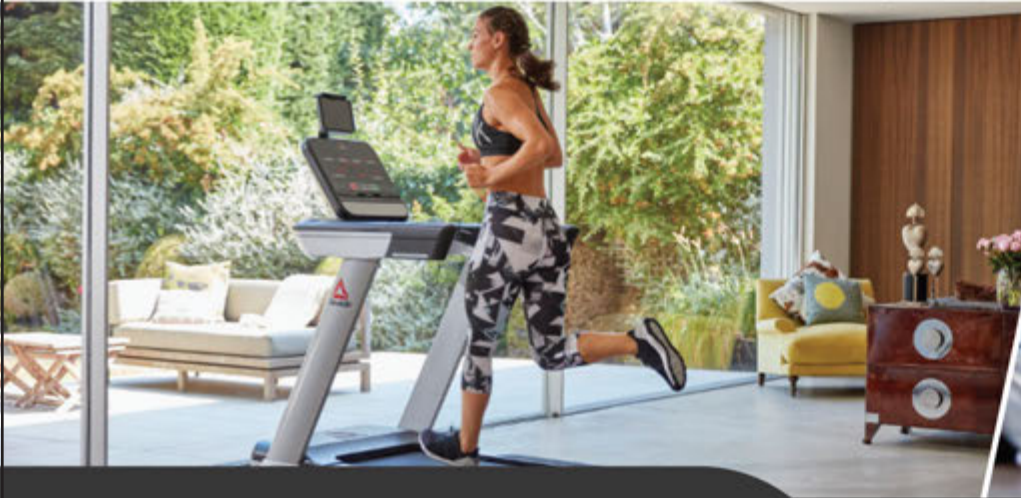

when humans had not yet invented any alphabet. The paintings express how people at that time lived and noted their knowledge," he said.

The first ancient painting found in Phang Nga Bay was discovered by a group of Thai and foreign scholars in 1987, under the archaeological site survey project in the southern region, Mr Prathip explained.

Since 2014, officers of the Fine Arts Office have been continuously informed of new discoveries of cave paintings, he added.


"I already ordered officers to make a project to study, conserve, and systematically collect knowledge about the paintings, in order to show local people and create ecotourism in the areas," Mr Prathip added.

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Palmer Owyong

In his new documentary *A Life On Our Planet*, BBC Presenter David Attenborough details the impact humanity has had on nature during his lifetime. The world population has risen from 2.3 billion in 1937 to almost 7.82bn today, while the world's forested land has dropped from 66% to just 30%.

Rampant fires, floods, droughts, violent hurricanes, this global pandemic, the death of species at 1,000 times their normal rate, the loss of arctic ice, climate change, even the increased volcanic activity and earthquakes are all partially because of deforestation, which leads to a loss of biodiversity, a disruption in the water-distribution cycle, and an increase in greenhouse gases.

Scientists believe that these events are culminating into the sixth extinction of the planet. The five prior mass extinction events led to the death of

99% of all life on Earth. The evidence says that we are now in the middle of the sixth and that human activities are directly responsible for accelerating it.

The Global Pandemic

Deforestation also leads to the transfer of diseases from animals to humans, which is the suspected cause of COVID-19. Les Kaufman, a professor of biology at Boston University, estimates that the annual cost of preventing the transmission of novel viruses from tropical forests is US\$22.2 to \$30.7 billion per year. It is estimated that COVID-19 will cost the world economy between US\$8.1-15.8 trillion after everything is said and done. In short, the economic loss from COVID-19 will be roughly 500 times as much as it would have been to prevent it.

The Problem in Thailand

Like many parts of Southeast Asia, Thailand is suffering from deforestation. The Royal Forest Department reports that the country went from 70% forest coverage in 1930 to 31% in 2018.

Losing mangrove forests is especially



MNRE Minister Warawut Silpa-Archa oversees a project to restore 700 rai of a mangrove forest near Phang Nga Town on Nov 1. Photo: MNRE

problematic because they act as a buffer between the ocean and land, shelter coral reefs, protect against storm surges and tsunamis and prevent soil erosion. They are crucial as they also provide a safe zone where fish, birds, crabs, shrimp and other life can thrive. It's estimated that 80% of caught fish rely on mangrove forests directly or indirectly. They are also important carbon sinks which sequester up to five times more CO2 than a tropical forest. Thailand has lost almost 60% of mangrove forests since 1961.

There is Hope

Attenborough suggests that in addition to switching to renewable energy and reducing population growth, one key strategy to saving our planet is to restore biodiversity – by replanting forests and giving them enough time to heal.

He cites Costa Rica as an example. In the 1950s, 70% of the country was covered in forests, but by the 1980s this fell to 25% due to logging. However, within 25 years it was back up to 50% thanks to government projects offering grants to landowners as an incentive to replant native species.

Rewilding Thailand


In recent years Thailand has taken

steps in order to protect its natural assets. An aerial project by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Royal Thai Air Force has dropped millions of seed bombs on damaged areas in northern provinces since 2013, with the goal to restore forested land to 40% by 2024.

There have also been substantial efforts to protect mangrove forests by collaborating with non-profits such as the Mangrove Action Project, which has been working with locals to regenerate forests in Ranong and Krabi damaged by now mostly abandoned shrimp farms.

"It's not about saving the planet, it's about saving ourselves," Attenborough concludes. Nature is both resilient and intelligent. If we work with it rather than against it we can return the Earth to a time before the fires, floods, droughts, deforestation, hurricanes and global pandemic that we are seeing today. If not for ourselves, then for our children. We need to learn to live in balance with the planet rather than at odds with it. There is no other choice.

Palmer Owyong is an environmental activist working with the Kamala Green Club and the Global Sustainability Hub.






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Re-invented, Cosmo comes of age



THE CULINARY DETECTIVE

Chris Watson
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I have always believed that the key to maintaining your competitive position as a world-class hotel is to never stop moving forward, continually seeking out ways to re-invent whilst building on past successes.

In Thailand today, where hotels are currently devoid of overseas tourists, the staycation market becoming somewhat saturated, their restaurants have become an increasingly important element, offering diners value focused packages whilst also showcasing innovation to tempt demanding local residents through the doors to spend what they probably would have spent on a now postponed, overseas vacation.

One such hotel which never ceases to amaze me by continually pushing the boundaries is The Nai Harn Phuket. With Frank Grassmann the ever-present General Manager setting the culinary bar extremely high for his Executive Chef, Mark Jones, I was delighted to join them both for a tasting session coinciding with the resort's reopening in October.

I and other 'foodies' have invariably focused on extolling the virtues of Rock Salt, the hotel's Mediterranean beach-side eatery. I was therefore intrigued that our venue for lunch was to be Cosmo, the hotel's 'all day dining', a rather sterile expression I truly abhor. One of the umpteen challenges with hotel dining is that the 'main' restaurant has to cater for breakfast in usually high numbers and the rest of

the day requires menus which provide everything from snacks and sandwiches to more adventurous plates. Simply put, it must cater for everyone at all times of the day, this in itself restricting a Chef's ability and inherent desire to provide the very best.

Seated with both Frank and Mark, my sight is drawn to the majestic views of the ocean and Nai Harn beach afforded by the restaurant's elevation, certainly competing with Rock Salt. They begin by telling me that during this quieter period, they have both been brainstorming to come up with a new approach to Cosmo to attract both new diners and indeed diners who previously were only loyal to Rock Salt.

Whilst Mark pops into the kitchen to do what he does best, Frank shares with me the first of these new initiatives, Saturday Social, which has just started. Every Saturday at Cosmo, a three-course menu with oodles of choices and drink options is offered with suitably classy live background music, at a tremendously attractive price and if booked for two, the lucky diners can stay the night for an extremely competitive rate in a Grand Ocean View room no less, the next day, to enjoy, world class breakfast for two; truly tempting.

Mark duly arrives with service staff carrying a multitude of Saturday Social dishes which include a delectable plate of Prosciutto ham with a poached organic egg, asparagus and a decadent Hollandaise sauce, a roasted wahoo mackerel with tomato ceviche and a wickedly tasty seared squid on a bed of chorizo risotto and Port Phillip bay mussels. I have always marveled at chefs who manage to present dishes where the complexity in combination, depth of flavour and textures is

intelligently disguised to appear truly simple; this is evident in all the aforementioned. Whilst enthusiastically tasting all on offer, I try but fail in maintaining a level of mature control as they all just taste so good. Menus will change every week.

The second initiative follows closely behind as Mark arrives with a couple of new a la carte dishes, a lovingly just-cooked pizza inspired by his learnings from visiting chef last year, Salvatore de Rinaldi, the pizza master himself. This is one from a selection of four on Cosmo's new a la carte menu.

The second dish is a perfectly executed appetiser of pan-seared Okinawa scallops with green apple, roasted hazelnuts and pea shoots. These dishes have Mark Jones' name written all over them; meticulous attention to detail reigns. I finish with yet another

recent creation of ethereally light, glazed passion fruit parfait and rather greedily, a banana clafoutis from the Saturday Social selection; positively, a tad retro and yes, simply to die for.

I depart thanking both Frank and Mark for a preview of The Nai Harn's latest. It is clear, The Nai Harn is not resting on their laurels, new dishes abound to continue their position at the leading edge of culinary prowess not only in Phuket, but in fairness across Thailand. Cosmo has come of age, shattering the urban myth of the predictable all-day dining.

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

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POP QUIZ

1. What is the full first name of the puppet Punch of the medieval Punch & Judy puppet show?
2. Which African city means 'victorious' in Arabic?
3. Who married Slovenian model Melania Knauss in 2005?
4. Which Hollywood movie did David Radcliffe appear in before he starred in the *Harry Potter* series?
5. On a QWERTY keyboard, which letter is to the right of 'Y'?

Answers below, centre

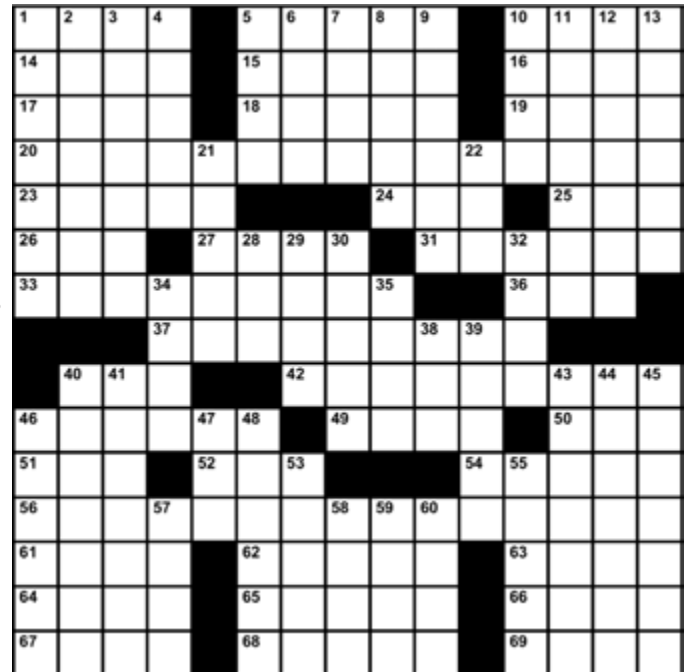
SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
1. First name in spying
 5. Up, in baseball
 10. ___ Fox
 14. Inn inventory
 15. "Pipe down!"
 16. Volcanic flow
 17. Jettison
 18. Rich cake
 19. Give out
 20. Antarctic denizens
 23. Prefix with coastal
 24. Music's ___ Speedwagon
 25. Officer, abbr.
 26. "Another rainy day" singer from the UK
 27. Mont. neighbor
 31. Hit list
 33. Oxygenations
 36. Large Hawaiian hawks
 37. One of 101
 40. Good works ad
 42. Battery
 46. Came across as
 49. Fencing piece
 50. Excessively
 51. ___ minimum
 52. Middle X or O
 54. First name in British sports cars
- Down**
1. Portuguese island
 2. Old students
 3. Satan, e.g.
 4. According to
 5. Phrase found in memos
 6. Norse thunder god
 7. After dinner no-no
 8. Flower
 9. Surfing arena
 10. Cordon ___
 11. Rear-end, say
 12. Proves
 13. Fingers
 21. Music category
 22. Sticky material
 28. Be bedridden
- Across**
29. A bit
 30. Scoundrel
 32. Durable wood
 34. Classic Rodin sculpture
 35. Stride
 38. Belligerence
 39. Regions
 40. Like most flowers
 41. Nautical measure
 43. Briefcase
 44. Hotel entrance attendant
 45. New York city
 46. "The English Patient" setting
 47. Berlioz's "Les nuits d'___"
 48. Have the nerve
 53. Partridge sound
 55. Castaway's residence
 57. Baseball great for the Giants
 58. 12th month of the Jewish calendar
 59. Beginning for dynamic or space
 60. Go down



Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Punchinello; 2) Cairo; 3) Donald Trump; 4) The Tallor of Panama; 5) J

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



GOT YOUR NUMBER

3.4

times is how much more likely Americans are to die by lightning strike than become a member of the US Congress.

75

percent of the edible calories in an avocado are pure fat.

350

times a second is how fast the Australian blue-banded bee headbangs flowers to collect pollen.

1930

was the first year that toilet paper could be advertised as "splinter free" as production techniques had improved.

200

million

of the 1 billion cattle in the world are in India, where the slaughter of cows is largely illegal.

Source: Uberfacts



Kamala Beach from up on high. Photo: Christer Scherloff

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

This week in history

Nov 13, 2015

A set of coordinated terror attacks in Paris, including multiple shootings, explosions, and a hostage crisis in the 10th and 11th arrondissements kill 130 people, seven attackers, and injured 368 others, with at least 80 critically wounded.

Nov 14, 1889

Pioneering female journalist Nellie Bly (aka Elizabeth Cochrane) begins a successful attempt to travel around the

world in less than 80 days. She completes the trip in 72 days.

Nov 15, 1933

Thailand holds its first legislative election in history.

Nov 16, 1849

A Russian court sentences writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky to death for anti-government activities linked to a radical intellectual group; his sentence is later commuted to hard labour.

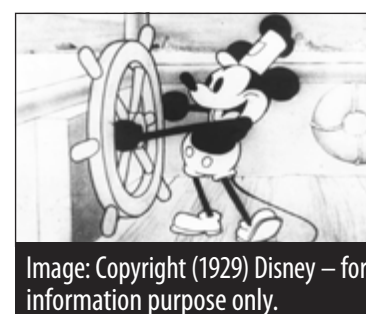


Image: Copyright (1929) Disney – for information purpose only.

Nov 17, 1558

Elizabethan era begins: Queen Mary I of England dies and is succeeded by her half-sister

Elizabeth I of England.

Nov 18, 1928

Release of the animated short Steamboat Willie, the first fully synchronised sound cartoon, featuring Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse. This is considered by the Disney corporation to be Mickey's birthday.

Nov 19, 1969

Brazilian football player Pelé scores his 1,000th goal.

Source: Wikipedia

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FRI 13 NOV



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SAT 14 NOV



All you can eat BBQ night

6pm – 11pm: Beef, Pork, Chicken, Burgers, Sausages, Prawns and Squid, Salad buffet, Choice of potatoes and sauces, bread, buns and garlic bread. Reservation recommended. B395 P/P. shakersphuket@gmail.com 081 891 4381.



Phuket's Best Burger 6

Now in its 6th Year, Phuket Best Burger has become one of Phuket's most loved events. This year we will be getting all burgerlicious at Blue Tree Phuket, on Saturday 14th November 2020 and we would love for you to be part of Phuket Best Burger 6 - Greatness, Redemption, Glory. <https://fb.me/e/5Hd6KHJdY>

SUN 15 NOV



The Sunday English Family Roast

Let's enjoy our signature brunch with unlimited bubbly, grapes, hops, plates dishes, BBQ meats, fresh seafood, famous roasts & carving stations with dessert buffet. Live

music & complimentary pool access. Only THB 2,200 net. Every Sunday 12 pm - 3.30 pm. Reservation, Banyan Tree Phuket, fb-phuket@banyantreephuket.com, 076 372 400



Sunday Culinary Charity Market

Sunday Culinary Charity Market at Boat Avenue Laguna. Amazing food offerings from from top hotels and restaurants at street market prices all in one place. Proceeds to be donated to "Phuket Has Been Good to Us" & "Good Shepherd" Azad Meer, 21/11 Lagoon Street Cherngtalay, Phuket 83110, azad@brandconnect.asia, 0890160822



All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet

Beef, Pork and Lamb – Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, fried mushrooms, grilled tomatoes – Yorkshire pudding – roasted potatoes, mashed potatoes – gravy, mushroom sauce, mint sauce. Reservations recommended. B350 P/P. shakersphuket@gmail.com 081 891 4381.

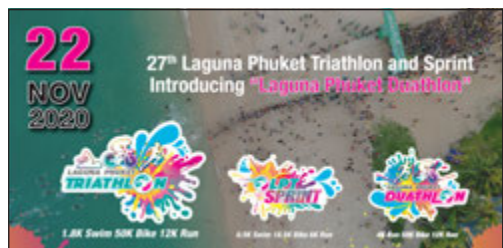
MON 16 NOV



All you can eat BBQ Ribs night

6pm – 11pm: All you can eat BBQ Ribs served with salad buffet, potato salad & choice of sauces. Reservation recommended. 295 baht P/P. shakersphuket@gmail.com, 081 891 4381.

SUN 22 NOV



Laguna Phuket Triathlon 2020

27th edition of Asia's longest-standing triathlon race will take place on 22 Nov and comprise Laguna Phuket Triathlon (1.8K Swim, 50K Bike and 12K Run); Sprint (0.5K Swim, 20K Bike and 6K Run) and includes the inaugural Duathlon (4K Run, 50K Bike and 12K Run). All events follow the latest mass participation events health and safety requirements, and contribute towards the official charity partner, Laguna Phuket's Children First Fund. Register at www.LagunaphuketTri.com until 15 Nov.

FRI 4 DEC



The Grow Boating Networking Evening for December

The Grow Boating Networking Evening for December 2020 will be held at the Speakeasy Yacht Club, at the Royal Phuket Marina on Friday the 4th of December from 5pm. There will be a light buffet sponsored by the Speakeasy Yacht club and as always all of your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Please contact us if you would like to be our drinks sponsor for the evening. Sponsors receive a generous media package from the Phuket News and can display their products and services on the evening and give a presentation on their company. 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 The Grow Boating Networking Evening is organised by the Thai Yachting Business Association. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/GrowBoatingNetworkingEvening or our Website <https://www.thaiyachtingbusinessassociation.com/grow-boating-networking-evening> Grow Boating is kindly supported by our media partner The Phuket News, Live 89.5 radio and Phuket News TV. See www.thephuketnews.com

SAT 5 DEC



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Angel Market is back at Cassia Laguna Phuket!! Every first weekend of the month, you are invited to

enjoy awesome market items from airline angels, Foam & pool party, with live band, DJ and a lot of games & entertainment. Special FREE 100THB credit to shop around the market when book a room at Cassia Phuket starting from THB 699 net per night or THB 999 for two nights, plus heaps more free stuff! Call 076356999 for more information.

FRI 11 DEC



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Laughter and fun for all ages! Full Production with amazing Actors from Theatrix. Spellbound sets from the Underwood Art Factory. Get into the Christmas Spirit! Tickets from B500 Child B900 Adult Contact: 0898742942 or email: chantal.fernandes@gmail.com 6pm Doors open. Food and drinks available from The Grind Cafe and Carol Singing from the Good Shepherd Phuket Town Students 6.45pm Show starts with 2 Acts & Interval 9.30pm Finish Location: Underwood Art Factory, Bypass Road (just before Ikea)

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A worker seen here in March walks past hoarding at the Formula One Vietnam Grand Prix race track site in Hanoi. Photo: AFP

Vietnam GP axed as F1 reveals 2021 calendar

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

The Vietnamese Grand Prix is off the Formula One calendar without ever having been run, but the sport still hopes to return to normality with its 2021 schedule.

The inaugural Hanoi street race was postponed to next year after its April 2020 date was called off due to COVID-19, but has now been omitted from the calendar altogether.

Its absence is reportedly due to political issues, with a key governmental backer of the event recently arrested on alleged corruption charges unrelated to the race, raising serious questions about whether the grand prix will ever go ahead.

Its omission leaves just three Asian rounds on the calendar and only Singapore in Southeast Asia.

Vietnam's vacated April 23-25 weekend has been left blank on the provisional 22-race calendar in the hope another event can be found to fill the gap.

Frontrunners include some of the races called up to complete this year's rearranged schedule, including circuits in Portugal, Germany, Italy and Turkey. The inclusion of any one of them would bring the calendar to a record-breaking 23 races.

Beefing up the numbers is a new street race in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which is expected to host the sport's third Middle Eastern round for at least two years before

a permanent circuit is built in Qiddiya, near capital Riyadh.

This has drawn criticism from human rights groups, with Amnesty International warning F1 it is being used to 'sportswash' the kingdom's "abysmal human rights record".

The announcement that the Brazilian Grand Prix will be moved from São Paulo to a proposed new circuit in Rio de Janeiro has also drawn scorn, with environmental groups baulking at the requirement to bulldoze as many as 180,000 trees to build the track.

The track remains mired in environmental approval processes, and the 2021 calendar again lists São Paulo as Brazil's host city.

The 2021 season was also due to mark the debut of the

Miami Grand Prix, which was to be held in the car park of Hard Rock Stadium, home of the Miami Dolphins NFL team.

However, resident groups are taking race organisers to court seeking a permanent injunction on the event over allegations of racial discrimination and constitutional rights violations.

For all the problems already encountered in assembling a 23-race calendar, pandemic-related logistics remain the most significant.

However, the sport has proved this year it can travel and operate safely through the pandemic, having recorded very few cases, and it is bullish it will be able to complete a normal program of races in 2021.



Laguna Phuket Triathlon 2019 Swim Start. Photo: Laguna Phuket Triathlon

Excitement ahead of the Laguna Phuket Triathlon

TRIATHLON

THE 27TH LAGUNA Phuket Triathlon (LPT), taking place on Sunday, Nov 22, will feature a crowd of exciting elite athletes from the domestic triathlon community including Thai and selected international athletes based in Thailand.

Leading the Thai male elite athletes will be Phuket born Jaray Jearanai, who has won the Thai male division of the LPT for the last nine consecutive years.

Krzysztof Hadas of Poland, may be regarded as the overall favourite in the male division, having finished in third place at last year's LPT.

In the female division, Pareeya Somsen is expected to lead the Thai female challenge, after her runner up finish at the 2019 Subic Bay South East Asian Games (Duathlon).

Lindsay Nickel of the USA, who recently won third place in 2020 Ironman 70.3 Bangsaen, is currently the fastest Thailand-based female triathlete and will be expected to strongly challenge for the LPT this year.

The event will also feature amateur enthusiasts including Thai celebrity triathlete Yossavadee 'Yo' Hassadeevichit.

The world famous event is being held for the first time under new normal operations, with every aspect adhering to stringent public health and safety regulations. Organisers are confident the enhancements to operations and limited number of athletes will have a positive impact on the overall event experience.

There are still spaces available to join the Triathlon, Sprint Triathlon and Duathlon races. Online registration remains open until Sunday, November 15, 2020. *Laguna Phuket*

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Sport



Triathlon gears up for new normal > p11

PENGUINS MILK COWS

CRICKET

Neil Quail

The Patong Penguins claimed victory over the Thalang Cows by just four-runs in a thrilling 30-over encounter last Saturday (Nov 7) at the ACG to take bragging rights as Phuket's top cricket team.

Cows' captain Joe Ninan won the toss in the long-awaited and highly anticipated clash and elected to send the Penguins' opening pair of captain Michael Flowers and Seemant Raju to the crease.

Raju fell for 13 and was soon followed by long-serving Penguin Anthony Van Blerk (3) as his flick off Khan was superbly snapped up by Jeremy Bootsy.

Khan then bowled Aidan for a single run with the Pen-



Man-of-the-match Michael Flowers on his way to a captain's innings for the Penguins. Photo: Anne Zii.

guins enjoying the reprieve at drinks on a precarious score of 86 for 3 after 15 overs.

Within 12 balls of the restart, Ali Khan claimed Shad Wahid (3) LBW, and

the following seven overs saw three more Penguins given their marching orders

for fewer than 45 runs.

Bhanu Pratap's 23 was encouraging, but any resurgence was thwarted when Flowers (59 off 70) was dismissed by Ali Khan in the 22nd over, with the Penguin's finishing on 156 all out.

After lunch, the Penguins took to the field in sweltering conditions, knowing a solid bowling and fielding performance would be crucial if there were to be even a sniff of victory and they started well with Shad bowling Livermore in the first over and fellow opener Evans following shortly afterwards.

Stuart Hamilton (31) and Ali Khan (38) lassoed the game back in the Cows favour then Ninan chipped away for a score of 24 off 18 before he was caught behind off the bowling of Shad.

The normally patient Sameer Khan was bowled

by Gaur for a duck leaving tensions riding high for the final batting pair of Michael Thomas and Haseeb Sam with only seven runs required off the remaining three overs.

Bhanu tempted Thomas into an uncharacteristic lash at a straight delivery that removed the batsman's leg stump, causing the Penguins to flock together in celebration with eight balls left in the game.

The man-of-the-match award went to Michael Flowers for his captain's innings, with mentions to Sameer Khan for his 5 for 15 off six overs, while Shad Wahid claimed 2 for 9 off six overs, capped by an inspired fielding performance.

Round 2 between the Penguins and the Cows takes place this Sunday (Nov 15) at the ACG Phuket from 10:30am.

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