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Crackdown on ferries begins

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

THALANG: The Marine Office on March 14 began enforcing rules barring ferries from carrying both passengers and cargo at the same time, and limiting the number of passengers per ferry on all boats operating from the Bang Rong Pier.

The move to enforce maritime safety regulations follows the deaths of 10 people in the sinking of the ferry *Rungroj* off the Koh Yao islands on March 5. Already fears are being voiced that ferry operators may oppose the crackdown with a "mob".

Phuket Marine Office Chief Surin Tirakulpisut told the *Gazette*, "I believe local people will not accept [the enforcement of safety regulations] at first, but it is good for [safety in] the long term."

"I also think that a mob may be formed over this issue, but I'm not scared; I am ready to fight for the right reasons."

K. Surin explained that the move to enforce safety regulations has resulted in ferry operators jacking up the standard fare for the 20-kilometer trip from 50 baht to 80 baht in order to cover fuel costs, as ferries must now have fewer passengers on board.

A resident of Koh Yao Noi told the *Gazette* that the fare in the other direction is now as much as 100 baht per person.

"The increase in fares is because of [officers' efforts] to protect against overloading. Many boat owners have said that having only 20-odd passengers per trip, paying 50 baht each, is not enough to cover fuel costs," K. Surin said.

The *Rungroj*, which was licensed to carry 22 passengers,



A ferry leaves the Bang Rong Pier, bound for Koh Yao Noi.

had 75 on board when it capsized in heavy seas.

K. Surin blamed the overloading on a "mafia" that has put a limit on the number of ferries operating between Bang Rong and the Koh Yao islands.

"The *Rungroj* was overloaded because it was the last ferry of the day [from Phuket to Koh Yao Yai and Koh Yao Noi]."

"There are not enough ferry services [to and from the Koh Yao islands], but that is not because there are not enough boats; it is because there is a 'mafia' controlling the number of ferries [on the route]."

He added, "If the [Marine Offices of Phuket and Phang Nga] are unable to solve this problem, the provincial governments [of Phuket and Phang

Nga] have authority to increase the number of regular ferries."

K. Surin explained that the decision to crack down on maritime safety followed a meeting on March 11 of water transportation officials from Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi Provinces.

The meeting was chaired by Phang Nga Governor Anuwat Metheeviboonwut, who was ordered to investigate local Marine Office operations in the wake of the disaster.

On March 8, K. Surin told the *Gazette* that his office had just eight officers, enabling only random inspections, although he added that, since the tragedy, he had requested more officers to conduct inspections at piers commonly used by tourists, such as Bang Rong, Ao Por and Chalong.

Puzzle over time bomb found in quiet soi

By Gazette Staff

PA KHLOK: Police explosives experts from Takuapa on the night of March 10 used a controlled explosion to destroy a time bomb found in a quiet residential street of the east Phuket village of Baan Pa Khlok.

The device, said Phuket Provincial Police Chief Maj Gen Suwit Othong, consisted of two sticks of C4 plastique wrapped tightly in black insulating tape and connected by wires to a cheap alarm clock. He said he believed the bomb was the work of an expert.

The device was discovered in the early evening at the foot of a wall surrounding a cold storage facility on Soi Na Neua.

Initial investigations are focusing on the source of the C4, which police said would normally be available only to the Thai military.

Pol Capt Udom Hormnoom, of Thalang Police Station, theorized that the bomb might have been prompted by a business dispute, but Teerayuth "Lone" Kuha, the Muslim owner of the cold store, insisted that he had no disputes with anyone.

Pol Col Chinnarat Ritthakananont, Superintendent of Thalang Police Station, said officers were also investigating the possibility that the bomb might have been linked in some way to teenage gang rivalry, although he did not rule out a link with separatist violence in the south of Thailand.



The time bomb found in Pa Khlok.

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Bypass project nears halfway mark

PHUKET: Phuket motorists are asked not to be unduly alarmed by the sound of explosions as they travel along the bypass road to do their weekend shopping – it's all part of the government's 111-million-baht project to widen Chalermprakiat Ror IX Rd to make for room for Phuket's ever-growing number of vehicles.

Boonyakiat Kongketyai, government engineer with the Provincial Highways Department and head of the Bypass Enlargement Project, told the *Gazette* that the project was about 40% complete. About 40 million baht of the total 111 million baht budget had already been released to the main contractor, Chiang Rai Harn Charoen Enterprise Ltd.

He said blasting on the hillside stretch of road north of the Baan Samkong Intersection began af-

ter the contractors waited some 265 days for government approval.

The blasting work, limited to a two-hour window between 1 pm and 3 pm daily, is expected to continue until about the first week of April, he said.

K. Boonyakiat said traffic is being halted for 20 minutes when blasting takes place. Drivers can either wait until after the detonation, or can use Soi Paniang as an alternative route.

He added that the bypass road in its current state was designed for a daily traffic load of about 7,000 vehicles, including motorcycles – far less than the 20,000 vehicles a day it now serves.

He asked the public to have patience with the inevitable traffic congestion until construction is completed. – *Sangkhae Leelanaporn*



Bang on time: Blasting to shift rock out of the way of the bypass road expansion will continue until next month.

Night-long soccer to exorcize spooky beach

KALIM: Island footballers are invited to enter teams in a five-a-side beach soccer competition aimed at laying to rest rumors that Phuket is haunted by the ghosts of those who died in the tsunami.

The tournament will run from 6 pm on March 19 until 6 am the following morning on Kalim Beach, near the Phuket Monte Carlo project.

The competition is being organized by entrepreneurs who believe their businesses have been hit by rumors of ghosts that have scared away tourists, particularly Thais. Proceeds will be donated to Baan Kalim School, which was damaged by the tsunami.

In addition to the soccer, there will be musical performances and a display of chopper motorbikes.

The knock-out soccer tournament will see a 5,000-baht prize go to the winners, with 3,000, 2,000 and 1,000 baht for 2nd, 3rd and 4th places.

Entry in the tournament costs 500 baht a team. For more information or to enter, call Tel: 01-9684860.

Govt slashes funds for rebuilding, memorial

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn & Kamol Pirat

PHUKET CITY: The Cabinet on March 8 approved a budget of 200 million baht to rebuild Patong Beach and a further 100 million baht to rebuild Kamala Beach, together totaling less than a third of the original budgets Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangura requested.

At a meeting of district chiefs and other top-ranking provincial officials, chaired by Gov Udomsak on March 9, Vice-Governor Winai Buapradit announced the Cabinet's decision to slash the rebuilding budgets, which were based on plans drawn up by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

Attempting to bring the TAT's rebuilding plans to fruition, Gov Udomsak had presented the plans to Cabinet for approval and asked for 700 million baht to rebuild Patong Beach and 305 million baht for Kamala.

However, V/Gov Winai explained, "The Cabinet decided not to include in the budget the money to put electricity and telephone lines underground because it is too expensive."

The Cabinet also instructed the TAT to draw up new plans to rebuild the beaches, within the confines of the reduced budgets.

Suwalai Pinpradab, Director of the TAT Region 4 office, told the *Gazette*, "We will redesign the plans according to the budgets that have been approved. However, I cannot imagine that the new plans will be close to the originals."

Also cut back by 25% from the original proposal is the budget for the proposed tsunami memorial in Phang Nga.

The head of the Phang Nga office of the Culture Ministry, Prayoon Nujuk, said that the Cabinet last week approved an initial budget of 50 million baht for construction of a 1.5-billion-baht tsunami memorial in Bang Niang.

The original idea for the memorial park called for a 2-billion-baht high-tech dome off the beach at Bang Niang, a plan that was widely criticized as insensitive and a waste of funds.

K. Prayoon told the *Gazette* that the memorial was still in the planning stages and that his office had yet to receive any funding from any ministry for the project.

"I can't say exactly what the memorial will look like, but I have heard that foreign architects will be involved in the design work and that it could have a half-Thai and half-international look when completed," he said.

The intended location of the project is a 21-rai site near where a Marine Police patrol boat was grounded after being swept inland by the tsunami.

Miss Universe beauties head for Soi Bangla

PHUKET: Some 44 contestants in the 2005 Miss Thailand Universe competition were due to arrive in Phuket on March 17 for a one-week stay on the island. The visit is intended to help bring tourists back to Phuket in the aftermath of the tsunami.

When not out promoting tourism, the beauties will be staying at the Kata Beach Resort.

The resort's owner, Pamuke Achariyachai, expressed confidence that the publicity would help bring tourists back.

Those hoping to catch a glimpse of Thailand's next representative in the Miss Universe 2005 pageant can do so during tentatively planned visits to Wat Chalong, the Phuket Governor's Office, Laem Phromthep, Phuket Special School, the Phuket Home for the Elderly, Phuket FantaSea and Patong's Soi Bangla.

Lookout towers to be built at nine beaches

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) intends to build 12 permanent watchtowers, where observers can watch for signs of future tsunami, and also monitor the safety of tourists.

Some of the towers will replace existing lifeguard stations, others will be completely new.

OrBorJor Vice-President Sutin Lean-Udom said there would eventually be three towers around Kata and Karon; three in Patong and Kalim, two at Surin Beach and one each at Nai Harn, Kamala, Laem Singh and Bang Tao Beaches.

K. Sutin said he calculated that each tower would cost no

more than 250,000 baht to build, and that the Bangkok Phuket Hospital had offered to pay for the construction of 10 of the 12.

He continued, "Wooden towers at Nai Harn, Patong, Karon and Surin Beaches were damaged by the tsunami.

"The new towers wouldn't be used only to warn of tsunami. They could also be used to watch out for sinking boats, tourists in difficulty or other problems."

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Tsunami blame report to be buried

BANGKOK (*The Nation*): The public will not hear whether the Meteorological Department failed in its duty to warn people about December's devastating tsunami, Smith Thammasaroj, the chief of the investigation into the disaster, has announced.

K. Smith said a report into the incident might never be written. Even if it were, he said, he would conceal it from the public in order to protect national interests, because relatives of Western tourists who died in the tsunami might use the information in lawsuits against the Thai government.

"I will not and I cannot reveal it – and the report may never be published ... No way, because it has become a lawsuit issue and could cause much damage," he said.

He added that billions of baht could be lost if the Meteorological Department were

found guilty of failing to warn the public and tourists in the provinces struck by the tsunami.

Last month, 19 relatives from Austria and Germany filed a lawsuit in New York against the government for failing to provide a timely tsunami warning. "They won't [now] have the information to sue us," said K. Smith.

On March 8 K. Smith told an audience of about 1,000 people that he believed many lives would have been spared if the Meteorological Department had listened to 10 percent of his suggestions concerning the possibility of a tsunami hitting the Andaman coast in southern Thailand.

By heeding his advice, he said the department would have had 75 minutes to act before the tsunami hit.

"I don't know how to punish him," said K. Smith, referring to the then Director-General of the Meteorological Department, Suparakk Thantratanawong.

"Did he know about [the impending tsunami]? I can't tell you the result, because 60 foreigners are trying to sue [the government]."

K. Smith acknowledged that the government might be in a Catch-22 situation. If it claimed that the department did not know the tsunami was heading towards Thailand, that could be grounds for a dereliction-of-duty lawsuit.

If it were found that officials did know the tsunami was on its way, but did not warn the public, that would also lead to a lawsuit, he said.

"Either way, they can sue us. And these *farang* love to sue," he said.

'Jealous' taxi driver admits killing Brit

KRABI: Uthane Douangnoi, a 29-year-old taxi driver in Krabi Town has confessed to stabbing to death Briton Richard Mark Collins on the evening of March 8, but has denied a charge of pre-meditated murder, claiming that he acted in self-defense.

However, police maintain that Uthane stabbed Collins in a jealous rage, and he is now being held at Krabi Provincial Prison while investigators gather evidence to use against him in court.

According to a statement given to police by the suspect's former long-term partner, 26-year-old Sunisa Sirirod, Uthane acted out of jealousy in the mistaken belief that the Briton had become romantically involved with her.

K. Sunisa, who operates a tour agency and employed her ex-husband as a driver, told the *Gazette* that she had been friends with Mr Collins for about three years.

She described her relationship with Mr Collins as "platonic". She said that Mr Collins had visited Krabi Province several times, but had never before met her ex-partner.

She said the two men had got into a fight. "I saw Mr Collins had wrestled Uthane to the ground. But from below, Uthane had stabbed him twice, once in the stomach and once near the heart," she said.

Before Uthane had a chance to flee, police – alerted by K. Sunisa – arrived and took Uthane into custody.

Mr Collins was rushed to Krabi Hospital, five minutes' drive away, but subsequently died of his wounds.

Info 'key' to reviving tourism

BERLIN: Prospective visitors to Asia have indicated that they would like more information about the areas hit by the December 26 tsunami, and cite health and sanitation as their main concerns, according to the results of a survey released on March 10 at ITB Berlin, the international

tourism industry's premier expo.

The findings of the Post-Tsunami Global Travel Intentions Research (PTGTIR), which was conducted by Visa Asia Pacific on behalf of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) Emergency Task Force, suggested that potential travelers also want in-

formation on the progress of clean-up operations and the tsunami's effect on local infrastructure and tourist facilities.

James Murray, the Executive Vice-President of Visa Asia Pacific, commented that international travel to the affected tourist destinations had dropped dramatically despite the significant and swift success that the countries' rebuilding and restoration projects had enjoyed.

He continued, "Given the scale of the tsunami and the extensive media coverage of its aftermath, international travelers are understandably concerned about the state of destinations in Asia."

"The tourism industry and authorities across South and Southeast Asia are therefore faced not only with the task of reconstruction, but also the formidable challenge of enhancing tourist confidence around the world regarding the affected destinations."

The survey indicated that,

although the impact on travel to Asia varied by source market, 65% of respondents said the tsunami had not affected their travel plans to the region as a whole.

According to the survey, the tsunami's impact has been most severe on travelers from South Korea and Japan. Respondents in those two countries indicated that the tsunami has affected their travel plans not only to the countries that have been directly affected by the tsunami, but also to the rest of Asia.

At the other end of the spectrum, it appears that the tsunami has actually had a positive effect on the travel plans to respondents from some nations, with 20% of Chinese, 19% of British and 18% of Swedish travelers saying that, post-tsunami, they are more likely to visit affected countries.

This, the authors of the research stated, reflects their altruistic sentiments and is a demonstration of support for the affected communities.

Tsunami victim stats updated

PHUKET: The Tsunami Center in Phuket has issued updated statistics of the number of victims of the tsunami, following deduplication of lists.

The total number of dead is now officially 5,395, comprising 1,926 Thais, 1,953 foreigners and 1,516 of as-yet-unidentified nationality. By province the numbers are:

Phang Nga: Dead: 4,224 (1,253 Thais, 1,633 foreigners and 1,338 unidentified); Injured: 5,597 (4,344 Thais, 1,253 foreigners); Missing: 1,733 (1,428 Thais, 305 foreigners).

Krabi: Dead: 721 (357 Thais,

203 foreigners and 161 unidentified); Injured: 1,376 (808 Thais, 568 foreigners); Missing: 569 (329 Thais, 240 foreigners).

Phuket: Dead: 279 (151 Thais, 111 foreigners and 17 unidentified); Injured: 1,111 (591 Thais, 520 foreigners); Missing: 620 (256 Thais, 364 foreigners).

Ranong: Dead: 160 (156 Thais and four foreigners); Injured: 246 (215 Thais, 31 foreigners); Missing: nine Thais.

Trang: Dead: five (three Thais and two foreigners); Injured: 112 (92 Thais, 20 foreigners); Missing: one Thai.

Satun: Dead: six Thais; Injured: 15 Thais.

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Queer News

Three holes in one

PATTAYA: Though few people may know this, it's actually against Thai law for three people to ride on the same motorbike.

Three young men on a drinking spree in Pattaya learned the hard way that even if the police tend not to enforce the law rigorously, there are other perfectly good reasons not to pile so many on a single bike – especially if you have enemies.

The trio, identified as Arthit Laihrin, 20, Chainart Petcharat, 17, and Pichetsak Wongwai, 20, had been drinking at a local resort when they decided to hit the road and go shopping for supplies at a nearby store.

They were riding three-on-a-bike when they crossed paths with a rival gang of 15, who fell in behind them. Unable to resist such a tempting target, one of the pursuers fired a single shot that somehow managed to drill through all three men. Arthit was seriously injured and his two friends sustained lesser injuries. All three were taken to Banglamung Hospital for treatment. At last report, police were still searching for their assailants.

Source: Pattaya Mail

Prognosis is knot good

PHUKET: Doctors at Patong Hospital were left scratching their heads over the mysterious case of a teenage construction worker who was admitted to hospital after vomiting a three-inch nail and a knotted length of string.

After vomiting up the string and nail, 17-year-old Samorn Ngamphosri, from Buri Ram Province, was taken to Wachira Phuket Hospital, where an X-ray determined that he also had a one-inch nail in his bowels. Doctors, fearing a punctured intestine, said they might have to operate to extract it.

K. Samorn, who had, before the tsunami, worked as a kitchen assistant, professed to being as baffled as the doctors as to how the objects had arrived in his stomach.

He said that he had no enemies, and that he had never eaten any nails or string.

Source: TNA

WHERE DID

If the official figures are to be believed, around 100 million baht of government money has found its way to Phuket since the tsunami.

But Phu Yai Nid, chief of Baan Laem Tukkae on Koh Sireh, has received just 10,000 baht so far.

"I got one payment of 2,000 baht, which I understand was for 'being jobless'," she said, "And I got 8,000 baht which I think was because my house was damaged. But I don't know whether I will get any more."

"There are 274 households in my village; 108 were destroyed by the tsunami. We are not happy at all with the help we have got from the government. It's so little."

K. Nid continued, "The strange thing is that the receipt the officer asked me to sign before I got the money for my house said '10,500 baht', but I got only 8,000 baht."

"And when I asked why I wasn't getting 10,500 baht, as it said on the paper, I got no answer."

"The same thing happened to my assistant, Kanda Pramongkit. On the receipt, it said 10,000 baht but she got only 6,000 baht."

As the waters of the tsunami rolled back off Phuket, they seemed to suck into the province vast sums of cash from Bangkok.

The money – around 100 million baht – was intended to help the bereaved and the destitute rebuild their battered lives.

But nearly three months after the catastrophe, some tsunami survivors are reporting that they have received just a couple of thousand baht in aid from the government, causing many islanders to wonder just where all that money from Bangkok has gone.

Rungtip Hongjakpet and Anongnat Sartpisut try to find out.

"Actually, neither of us got a copy of the receipt; the officers got us to sign for the money, and kept the receipts," she said.

K. Nid, perhaps understandably, cannot remember which government departments either of her payments came from.

But one thing she does know is that, as far as she is concerned, most of the help for her community has come from the private sector, from the likes of the Asian Gospel Mission in Thailand, World Vision and students from local schools.

She said, "These people came with building materials and helped us rebuild our homes."

Then there were Thais and *farang* who came and brought food and water – and sometimes even money – to help us. That's more than the government did."

In Kamala, Boonma Koy-sakul has also been relying on help from non-governmental sources, in particular foreign expats, who have supplied food for his family and donated construction materials to help him rebuild his restaurant, The Beer House.

K. Boonma has received 20,000 baht from the government – twice as much as K. Nid in Koh Sireh, but nowhere near enough to recompense him for the 10 million baht he says he lost when

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ALL THE MONEY GO?



Fishermen, such as this one in Klong Pak Bang, Patong, have generally done well, with boat rebuilding and repair bills paid for by the government. But on land the story seems more patchy.

might expect to have been funded by the government are in fact being underwritten from other sources.

The Social Development and Human Security Office (Phuket), for example, has built 113 homes across the island, from Kamala to Koh Sireh, from Tah Chat Chai to Rawai, for those rendered homeless by the tsunami, and is organizing support for orphaned children.

But all this work has been funded by donations, not gov-

ernment money. Office head Pannee Sittikan explained, "Each project is funded by donations. If we did not handle the coordination, these people would not get homes."

"We need to check the size and shape of the houses, and bring food to the students and volunteers who are building them."

K. Pannee added, "And if we build a house for someone, they forfeit all rights to compensation from the Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (ODPM). We give them a choice, and some of them decide they don't want us to build a house for them."

Some relief efforts have, of course, received government funding.

According to official figures, the government gave 34.08 million baht to the Phuket Provincial Fishery Office, which has been used to repair or replace fishing boats, equipment and stock.

Phuket Provincial Livestock Office has paid out just over 76,000 baht to compensate people for goats, chickens, pigs and geese – a total of 864 animals – lost in the tsunami (an average of 88 baht an animal).

And the Prime Minister's Relief Fund has spent 19.5 million baht on funerals, medical treatment for the injured and grants to people who have lost their jobs.

The accounts include 11.4 million baht spent on grants to unemployed people. This does indeed work out at 2,000 baht per person, consistent with what unemployed people have told the *Gazette* they have received. So

Continued on page 6

The Beer House was wrecked by the water.

Like K. Nid, though, K. Boonma has no idea where the 20,000 baht came from.

He said, "It was from the government; I was told it was because my house had been damaged, but I'm not sure which government department it came from. It's very confusing. I also don't know how they decided who should get money and who shouldn't, or how much any person should get."

"The tsunami caused damage of around 10 million baht to my property. My family and I have tried to understand the government aid system, but the of-

ficers can't explain anything to us.

"It seems that if you have good connections with these people, they will help you first, and they will help you more than the other victims who don't have a personal relationship with them."

He continued, "I want to ask 'Where did the relief money go?' I lost my livelihood and all I've got from the government is 20,000 baht."

Tiwa Koontong may be a member of Kamala Tambon Administration Organization (*Or-BorTor*), but that doesn't mean he knows where the relief money has gone.

He said he has 30 relatives who still do not have a place to live after their homes were damaged by the tsunami, and they are camping in his garden until their houses are repaired.

They are jobless and anxious about their futures, and are living on donations of food from foreigners.

Said K. Tiwa, "Some of them got 20,000 baht from the government. They might get more, but I don't really know. It seems like no one knows anything about this relief money, even me – and I'm a member of the *Or-BorTor*."

To confuse things even more, some of the schemes one

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From Page 5

the figures do seem to add up. Or do they?

The biggest single amount of government money received by a government office in Phuket is the 45 million baht which the Phuket ODPM was given between December 27, 2004 and March 2 this year.

According to figures provided to the *Gazette* by the ODPM, 42,075,100 baht of this 45 million baht has been spent.

Phuket ODPM Chief Nakorn Tipsat explained how the money was distributed. He said, "First, each victim would report to the local authority, the *Or-BorTor* or *Tessabaan*, say, where their house was registered.

"These local authorities would then send the ODPM a list showing the names of the survivors, plus the amount of money they were entitled to.

"There would be two lists – one for owners of small businesses and one for householders. Then our officers would go and hand out cash or checks to them."

The ODPM has provided the *Gazette* with a breakdown of how the money was spent and it does indeed account for 42,075,100 of the 45 million baht.

While some figures make sense – 106 funerals at 15,000 baht per person does come to 1.59 million baht, and contributing 3,000 baht apiece towards the medical treatment of 21 people does add up to 63,000 baht, as the records say – some are vague.

For example, the biggest single amount – 21.39 million baht – has been used to recompense people for the loss of "equipment used for occupation" – boats for fisherman and creams used in spas are given as examples, but the figures do not specify how much has been paid to whom.

The post-tsunami waters are further muddled when one considers that, on February 15, then-acting ODPM head Metha Mekarat reported that 2.05 million baht of the 45 million baht was missing from the strongbox in which it had been kept.

Earlier this month, police

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS BY PHUKET OFFICE OF DISASTER PREVENTION AND MITIGATION (ODPM)		
Details	Cases	Baht
Funerals at B5,000/person	106	1,590,000
Grant for death of head of family (father)	40	1,600,000
Serious injuries at B3,000/person	21	63,000
Disabilities at B10,000/person	1	10,000
Relief cash at B2,000/person	27	54,000
Professional equipment (cream for spas, boats for fishermen)	2,478	21,390,000
Kitchen Equipment	1,805	6,053,800
Clothing	6,206	6,331,700
Bedding	1,499	1,447,200
Daily needs (toothbrushes, soap, etc)		
Lighting equipment	215	64,400
Repatriation of body (Korat native who died in Phuket)	1	19,000
House repairs	11	72,800
Other (rent, repairing fences around fields)	2	12,200
Total		42,075,100

CASH PAID OUT BY OTHER STATE ORGANIZATIONS DECEMBER 27 - MARCH 2	
	Baht
Phuket Provincial Fishery Office:	34,080,820
Repairing/replacing registered boats (548 boats):	23,044,300
Replacing equipment such as nets (for 348 fishermen):	2,898,120
Loss of stock (for 418 people)	8,138,400
Phuket Provincial Livestock Office:	76,287
Compensation for goats, chickens, pigs and geese killed or lost, 864 in total.	
Prime Minister's Relief Fund:	19,407,000
Funeral arrangements for 187 people @ 20,000 baht:	3,680,000
Inpatient medical treatment for 125 people @ 5,000 baht:	625,000
Outpatient treatment for 1,834 people @ 2,000 baht:	3,668,000
Other expenses, such as grants for those who lost jobs (5,717 people)	11,434,000

officers posed for pictures with the strongbox, pointing to the hasp of one lock, which appeared to have been sawn through, and claiming that they had "strong leads" about who had stolen the money.

Just five days later, Vice-Governor Supachai Yuwaboon, head of a commission set up to discover who was "responsible" for the disappearance of the money, reported that the commission had concluded that the money had been "lost" through "poor accounting" by "seven or eight" ODPM officers responsible for distributing it to tsunami survivors.

V/Gov Supachai declared that these officers – including K. Metha – would be required to repay the money out of their own pockets.

Governor Udomsak Usawangkura said this should not happen until the police investigation was complete, in case it found evidence that the money had been stolen.

New ODPM Chief Nakorn refused to discuss the matter of the missing money with the *Gazette* because, at the time of the interview, the police investigation was still ongoing.

All he would say was, "We all worked hard and worked late

into the night. I confronted my staff, and they all denied touching the money. I can't do anything more or they will become discouraged."

He did, however, say that he was annoyed by claims that the government had not done enough for survivors, and he stressed that the 42 million spent so far had reached those in need, and that he believed they had received enough.

He said, "You have to understand that human beings have different definitions of 'need', and that some people may think that what we gave out wasn't enough. The ODPM was only one of the government departments giving out aid.

"The problem, as I saw it, was that some people got money more than once. So we set up a computer database to make sure

the money was shared among everyone.

"But you can't expect to get more money from other government units if your name is on the ODPM database.

"It just isn't possible for the government to recompense everyone fully for what they have lost. We can give them the basics, but they have to help themselves, too."

Even where aid appears to have got through – even if it is not directly from the government – recipients still feel they need more support.

Tsunami survivors at Klong Pak Bang in Patong told the *Gazette* that each family had received 2,000 baht from the Phuket Provincial Employment Office and 10,000 baht from Patong Municipality.

The Phuket Provincial Administration Organization gave fishermen 60,000 baht to replace each lost boat and 20,000 baht to repair each damaged one – although this applied only to boats registered with the Fishery Department, but still, some people feel, it hasn't been enough.

"Farang were the first people to give us food after the tsunami," said one local. "We wondered why Patong Municipality, which is responsible for this area, didn't think of the suffering of the people here.

"They realized we were here when they put a road through here and made us produce documents to prove we were entitled to live here, but they didn't want to know when we needed help, even though the farang did."

"We have had no advice on how much we should claim. No one has told us whether we will get any more money. We may have no work, but we still have children to take care of."

The tsunami survivors have the sympathy of Gov Udomsak. He said, "I would like to help all the victims. But I want to know who has not received help from the government. I want names.

"I want them to come and see me in person, and I want to know whether they are saying that they have received help once, but not a second, a third, a fourth time..."

He added that, according to research conducted on his behalf in January, 90% of the victims were satisfied with the government aid they had received.



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Hospital duty for drunk drivers

Convicted drunk drivers will be ordered to care for accident patients in hospitals, to tour prisons and to clean cemeteries, said Probation Department Director General Kittipong Kittiyarak.

Presiding over the launch of a TV advertising campaign aimed at curbing drunk driving, K. Kittipong said the initiative would start on April 4, a timely start before the Songkran Festival, and would focus on provinces such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chon Buri, Nakhon Ratchasima and Khon Kaen, all of which have high traffic accident rates.

K. Kittipong said the Songkran period last year left 628 dead and 26,100 injured in traffic accidents, with most attributed to drunk driving. There were 3,814 drunk-driving cases in that period and about 90% of offenders were ordered to perform public service.

The new punishments will be in addition to the usual public-service punishment of having to clean public areas, he said.

A sign from above: Royal Thai Air Force commander-in-chief Air Chief Marshall Kongsak Wanthana proposed setting up a special squadron to guard the Royal Family on visits to the Deep South.

The squadron, to be based at Ban Ton Airport in Narathiwat, would also support missions of the Southern Border Provinces Peace-building Command, ACM Kongsak said.

Rather than getting air-force assistance and planes from Wing 56 in Songkhla every time the Royal Family visited the South, he said, the special squadron would be responsible for that duty, saving money.



FUN IN THE SUN: Boys show off their fishing catches from a pond near Pattani's provincial sport stadium. Getting covered in mud was an essential part of another day of fun for the children, who are enjoying their summer break from school.

He added that this would be especially true given the additional demands on the air force this year and the Southern Border Provinces Peace-building Command.

ACM Kongsak said that although there would be no warplanes stationed at Ban Ton, a permanent command would allow officers to tend to the airport to accommodate incoming and departing aircraft on missions.

Graft commissioners get bail: In a motion review ahead of their trial, the nine National Counter Corruption Commission members successfully applied for bail using their positions as a bond.

The Supreme Court's Criminal Division for Holders of Political Positions set the bond at 400,000 baht each before agreeing to release the nine NCCC members on their own recognizance.

The nine will fight graft charges stemming from their uni-

lateral decision to award themselves a pay increase last year.

Underage sex case: A 15-year-old girl was saved when police burst into a room at The Penthouse "love motel" in Bangkok and nabbed 61-year-old American Louis Joseph Chiavacci, who was naked and allegedly about to rape her.

Acting on a report that the man had entered the hotel with a girl in a school uniform, Pol Col Surat Udomrat, head of the Child Welfare Division, led the raid.

The girl, who was also naked, told police that she knew Chiavacci through an older friend and that he had offered her 2,000 baht to pose for photos in her uniform. After the shoot, Chiavacci promised her 5,000 baht if she posed nude. Once she had complied she started to fear that he was going to rape her.

More than 400 nude pictures of young girls were found in four digital-camera memory

cards belonging to Chiavacci, Col Surat said.

Chiavacci was charged with molesting a girl under 18 and taking a minor away from her parents.

Golden garbage: A woman who was collecting bottles for recycling at Bangkok's Weekend Market came across a discarded bottle cap worth 1 million baht as part of Oishi green tea's "Thank you Thailand" campaign.

The woman, 27-year-old Rujira Arunratsawat, has since collected the prize.

"I work for the social welfare office for 5,260 baht a month, and plastic bottles go for 13 baht a kilogram. I don't know how many decades it would have taken me to get 1 million baht that way," said K. Rujira.

She said she would give some of the money to her mother-in-law, set some aside for her one-year-old son's education and

build a house for her mother in Nakhon Phanom.

Keeping tabs: The Cabinet approved proposed amendments to the Identification Card Act of 1983 that would require applications for ID cards to be filed for babies no more than 60 days after they are born.

Under the proposal, new ID cards would be valid for 10 years, compared with the current six. The proposed changes would improve the government's database of the population, said deputy government spokesman Yuranan Pamornmontri.

Under the planned legislation, parents or guardians of the newborn would be required to apply for the ID cards. Existing law requires citizens to apply for the cards when they turn 15.

Siphon concerns: Senator Pramote Maiklad, a former chief of the Irrigation Department, expressed concern that the government was planning to spend 210 billion baht on an irrigation project that would probably still fail to solve the problem of annual droughts.

Sen Pramote said the government needed to focus on preparing and storing water for use during dry periods instead of building a system of piped water grids across the country.

"The government must first have water, instead of building pipe networks when there is no water to distribute," K. Pramote said. "Otherwise between 200 and 300 billion baht will be spent without solving the problem."

Around the Nation news roundup is sourced from the pages of The Nation and Kom Chad Luek newspapers.

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Samui Royal deer under threat

Around 100 years ago, HM King Rama V visited Koh Pha-ngan and released a pair of European Samba deer into the forest there. Since then, the population has grown to an estimated 300.

Sadly, development is encroaching on the deers' habitat. Food and water sources are shrinking, forcing the deer to wander out of their territory in search of nourishment.

Samba deer are sensitive creatures, and have been known to suffer heart attacks brought on by fear. Unfortunately, when they stray into urbanized areas, they are often attacked by packs of dogs, which usually results in injury or in some cases death to the deer.

The District Chief of Koh Pha-ngan, Panluak Chokjai, recently reported on a deer that came down from the hills in Ban Tai. It was a large male, about 2 meters long, with fully-developed antlers. The creature was injured and badly dehydrated.

According to local villag-

ers, the animal simply dug itself a hole, sat down and died.

K. Chokjai is keen to protect these deer, and has contacted the Royal Society for Wildlife and Livestock (RSWL) for help.

The RSWL will conduct research into the animals, tagging them to ascertain the exact population. It will also introduce water holes, food drops and salt licks into the 22,000-rai forest – which is now being designated a wildlife reserve.

Local people have traditionally respected the deer, mainly due to their royal history, and the population has been allowed to grow.

Human intervention is now required to protect this unusual island inhabitant and prevent further unnecessary deaths.

Company registrations up: Sompong Uprasert, from the Surat Thani Provincial Commercial Registration Department, reported that company registrations

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander
Sammy Swan



ROTARY RELIEF: Members of the Rotary Club of Samui, including Fundraising Chairman Debra Yantis (in navy blue top) who owns the Red Bike mountain bike rental shop, joined with fellow Rotarians from the UK to sign a sister club agreement and to donate 10 bicycles to the tsunami-ravaged village of Baan Tungdap on Koh Phra Thong, off the coast of Phang Nga Province.

increased in the province last year, despite a slight drop in December of around 2% compared with the same month in 2003.

Overall, the number of new companies registered rose by 117% with 102 new firms – 18 of which are limited companies – adding a net capitalization of 113 million baht to the province. There were also 31 closures.

Most of the companies that registered are in the service sector – which accounts for around

50 million baht of the total capital invested. Some 26 of the companies are involved in real estate.

The majority of businesses set up are small- and medium-sized enterprises, and Koh Samui was the top location for new firms. Muang District and Koh Pha-ngan were close behind.

The actual value to the region of such registration depends largely on the investments made when compared to the profits taken out. It is hoped that the

former will help build up the economic strength of the whole province.

No Chinese takeaway: A higher number of mainland Chinese visitors is expected in Thailand this year, especially at beach resorts such as Phuket, Samui and Koh Chang.

There have been a number of promotional campaigns in Chinese cities, especially in and around Shanghai. Many Shanghai-nese appear to be interested in four- and five-star resort accommodation and package tours.

Samui holds a particular appeal for Chinese tourists, thanks to its Chinese-influenced history and culture, and also because of the recreational opportunities on offer, such as golf and diving.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) expects China to become Thailand's third-largest source of tourists by the end of this year, and many businesses on Samui are keen to tap into this growing sector.

Woramit Panu, the TAT's representative on Koh Samui, said the island enjoyed revenue of around 200 million baht during the Chinese New Year holiday period in mid-February.

Cdr Swan is a writer with Koh Samui's community magazine.



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This week



ALL AT SEA: The Justice Minister under the last Thaksin government, Pongthep Thepkanjana, (blue shirt) presides over a ceremony in which Desjoyaux Pools International donated 14 longtail boats to fishermen in Phang Nga's Takuapa District. Company President Pierre Louis Desjoyaux and his wife Begonia (4th and 5th from left) hosted the event to provide assistance to tsunami victims.



PLAQUE AND PLAUDITS: Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarankura (in uniform) receives a plaque and other gifts in recognition of his efforts following the tsunami. The plaque, from the Peace Child International charity, was presented by the group's President, David Wallcombe (right). Also pictured are filmmaker Daniel Dubie and Phuket businessman Surin Bumrunghol (left).



PEARL OF A SHOWROOM: Vice-Governor Vinai Buapradit (5th from left) presided over the opening ceremony of the Toyota Pearl Company's new showroom on the bypass road. Also in attendance were members of the owning family, including Khunying Kanjana Na Ranong and Wichit Na Ranong.



REJUVENATION PROCLAMATION: Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa owners' representative Maitree Narukatpichai (4th from left), General Manager Peter Hourigan (3rd from left) and hotel staff as well as guests celebrate the grand opening of the hotel's new spa.



ABOVE: Katathani Beach Resort General Manager Uwe Lukas (front row 3rd from left) and staff greet Pradap Pibulsonggram, the Thai Ambassador to Switzerland (6th from left) and Swiss journalists who stayed at the hotel after the tsunami.

Left: Phuket kids dressed as hilltribe children (*dek doi jai dee*) take part in the Early Childhood Demonstration School "finishing course" at Phuket Rajabhat University.



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Therese Aisha is both happy and sad. "The sadness, of course, comes from my daughter passing away, but I am happy because finally I have found her," said Therese, who wanted to be interviewed so she could say a public "Thank You" to all those involved in helping reunite the bereaved with their loved ones.

Betty, who was four months pregnant, was staying at the Sofitel Khao Lak ("She wanted a holiday before giving birth," according to her mother). As soon as she heard about the tsunami, Therese sent off a barrage of emails to her daughter. When no reply came, she knew exactly what to do.

"I had to come here, even though everyone was telling me that it would be impossible to find my daughter. 'There are too many dead and missing,' they said. I *had* to come here," she said.

Therese arrived in Phuket from China – where she is teaching and studying for her PhD – on January 20.

Betty had married and moved to France five years ago, and had become a French citizen. Her mother was met at 1 am at Don Muang Airport by the French ambassador to Thailand and his wife. They were, said Therese, "so kind, so full of humanity".

Therese, who still often refers to Betty in the present tense, immediately began to search for her daughter.

"I call her *kuku* and she calls me *kuku*, and it means 'someone you love too much' – we have a very deep love. I said, 'I'm here to find you, *kuku*.'"

After two days of scouring the hospitals in Khao Lak and Phuket in the hope that Betty was still alive but injured, she felt discouraged.

"The authorities initially said I should go back to China because they could not find my daughter. But two days ... that

A bitter blessing

Every one of the 300,000 or so people who died on December 26 had a family, and each of those families has a story, even if not all of them can be told.

Therese Aisha, from Cameroon, spent 26 days waiting for the body of her pregnant 23-year-old daughter, Betty, to be located and her identity confirmed.

The *Gazette's* Andy Johnstone spoke with Mrs Aisha about the harrowing weeks between the tsunami and the day she collected Betty's body for burial.

was just not long enough," she explained.

She knew the search would be a harrowing experience, so when aid workers at Wat Yan Yao told her she should not look through the photographs of the dead, "I told them I was prepared to see the photographs – and bodies – as I knew they could contain the key to finding Betty."

Therese was greeted at Wat Yan Yao by a "warm-hearted consular official from the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs".

She said, "He was a tremendous support in those first difficult days. I needed someone who could listen to me and accept that I was crying and that I needed to talk, and could calm me down. "When I first met the Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) team, they suggested that Betty might have been confused with a Thai person because she is black."

"But then, she has French citizenship. So if they search for her as a French person, they probably wouldn't think to look for a

black person, only for a white one."

The first search file for Betty was opened on January 22. Therese painstakingly detailed her daughter's distinguishing characteristics to aid identification.

"Betty has a diamond set into her one of her front teeth, she has a pierced bellybutton. As is traditional [in our culture] she always wears gold rings and earrings. She also has tattoos on her left arm, one – of a rose – on her shoulder and a large tattoo across her back, just above her hips," she said.

"My daughter had also had breast implants and was four and a half months pregnant."

"There were many ladies among the dead who had breast implants, but when I was told of the other distinguishing features [of these corpses], I knew I hadn't found Betty. More than a week passed and we still had found no trace of her."

She continued, "On January 31 – at that time I was driving from the Novotel Patong hotel to Khao Lak every day – we opened a second file, searching under different parameters."

Two days later, two potential matches had been made, but neither turned out to be Betty.

Said Therese, "The DVI team gave up trying to search for people by items such as jewelry; most of that seemed to be missing from people."

"It was the permanent features – tattoos, breast implants, pregnancy and so on – that could point to my daughter, but still we did not find her."

"I then remembered that Betty has hair extensions, so I

'If [I were given compensation], I wouldn't accept it. I just want Betty again.'



said we should also enter that search as a search field."

The team searched again and within 24 hours had found another potential match, a body with tattoos and hair extensions; Therese then had to obtain Betty's dental records from France.

It was suggested that she then take a break, to give the DVI team time to make a positive identification.

"I waited until February 14, but heard nothing," continued Therese. "My daughter always called me on February 14 – Valentine's Day – just to say 'Happy Valentine's Day, *kuku*,' to me."

"Early the next day, I visited part of the French team based at The Metropole hotel to ask if there was any progress. They suggested that I go into the Consul's office. 'He has something to tell you,' they said."

"'Bonjour, madame. Your daughter has been identified,' the consul said."

Therese said that the team apologized for the delay in iden-

tifying Betty, but, "I thanked them and took pictures of them. I was so happy ..."

She sat quietly for a moment. Then, "Perhaps more bodies could be identified – by the mothers. I say this because a mother is the only person who knows her child well."

"A mother's love is the strongest love in the world. No one can know the same deep love as a mother and her child have."

Once Betty was identified, Therese spent nearly a month pleading to be allowed to see her for one last time, something especially meaningful for her as Betty's estranged husband had decided she should be buried in France.

"I have never met my son-in-law but, because he is officially her next of kin, the [French] law says that the burial must take place where her husband decides, even though they were divorcing," she explained.

"I have never visited where her resting place will be, and it is very upsetting to bury her in a place I do not know, particularly

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for Therese



Left: Therese offers up a prayer at the beach at Khao Lak; Above: the bereft mother walks through ruins in Khao Lak; Above, right: Mother and daughter in happier days; Right: Therese looks for a photograph of her daughter at Wat Yan Yao.



if I am not able to see my daughter one last time.

"I think I have the right to do so, no matter how shocking it will be."

That wish was eventually granted, and Therese was about to see Betty for the last time the day after the *Gazette* interview.

Although it would not be possible to dress Betty for her funeral, Therese hoped to be able at least to lay a dress on her body as a symbolic gesture.

She continued, "Tomorrow, finally, I will see my daughter and say goodbye. The last time I saw her was in November last year,

when she came to China to tell me that she was pregnant.

"The book of my daughter's life was open, and now it's closed. Nothing can change

that... Now I can do the burial ceremony, and I can now accept that my beloved one is no longer in this world."

Therese was allowed to

visit the room in the Sofitel Khao Lak in which Betty had stayed. The hotel company, Accor, also provided her with free accommodation at the Patong Novotel from the beginning of February.

Widowed in 1988, Therese said, "I am not rich, and have worked very hard to raise three children on my own. [Accor] has helped me so much."

Therese is keen to thank everyone involved in identifying victims, from the DVI teams to the volunteers who helped relatives at the temples to the monks, who, she said, "have done so much for us".

"We are afraid of seeing the bodies [of our relatives] but the monks are not. They are so calm and give us so much strength," she said.

"So I must say thank you to the Buddhist monks who have welcomed our people. They are so calm, and this helps us so much. God bless them. God bless the Thais and everyone who is helping."

She continued, "I'm a believer; I believe in God, no matter which religion, no matter which god. I spent nine days fasting and praying before traveling, asking Him to help me find my daughter."

"And He has. He has helped me to carry on and he is there with the DVI teams helping them to identify others."

"He is the only one who can settle everything in a good way," she said, Betty's death certificate in her hand. "I could not have handled this by myself."

Therese has established the United Family of the Tsunami (UFT) foundation, which she hopes will keep alive the memories of those who were lost.

The catalyst was the feeling that, in death, everyone is the same. "All the bodies at Wat Yan Yao – white, yellow, albino, black – were soon all the same: black. They all formed a united family," she said.

"[UFT] is for those whose

hearts have been broken by the tsunami. We will be coming to Thailand every year to visit, to walk on the beaches where our beloved ones died.

"Thousands died here, and most of us who are left are now connected to the ground where our people died. We will come back."

She continued, "They came here for joy. But within an hour, everything ..." She paused before she gently opened her hands, which had been resting on her lap, "disappeared."

But along with the sorrow, there is anger, as Therese feels that money now seems to be valued above the dead.

She said, "Money – after an individual or a shared catastrophe such as this – is nothing when compared to life."

"It's all money and business [following the tsunami]. Nobody cares about the really broken-hearted. All anybody – the 'volunteers' – seems to care about is how to rebuild their businesses."

"What is the duty of volunteers: to rebuild businesses or to rebuild lives? They are not the same things. How do you rebuild lives? Simply by asking for money? I don't think so."

"We are broken-hearted, and all we want to do is find our beloved ones, bury them and find some peace. More assistance should be given to the DVI teams to help them to let our relatives and us be at rest."

At the time of writing, some bereaved families and survivors were threatening to sue the Thai government, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its Tsunami Warning Center, and Sofitel, for failing to protect them and their loved ones from the tsunami.

Perhaps alluding to this, Therese said no amount of money could compensate relatives for their losses.

"If [I were given compensation], I wouldn't accept it," she said. "I just want Betty again."

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Above: David Hornby (3rd from left) and Alistair Bayley (4th from left) buy boat engines. Below: David and Alistair with a fisherman and his boat.

Shanghai supplies

It takes all sorts to help out after a disaster. Two pupils and a teacher from a private school in Shanghai recently returned to China after visiting Phuket to deliver toys and gifts to children who lost their possessions to the tsunami, and supplies to help their parents get back on their feet.

Teacher David Hornby and pupils Siri Supakornchai and Alistair Bayley were charged with handing over goods bought with 110,000 baht raised by pupils, staff and parents of the Yew Chung International School (YCIS).

After delivering baby formula and doors, windows and door fittings to Kamala for use in rebuilding battered homes, they drove to Phang Nga.

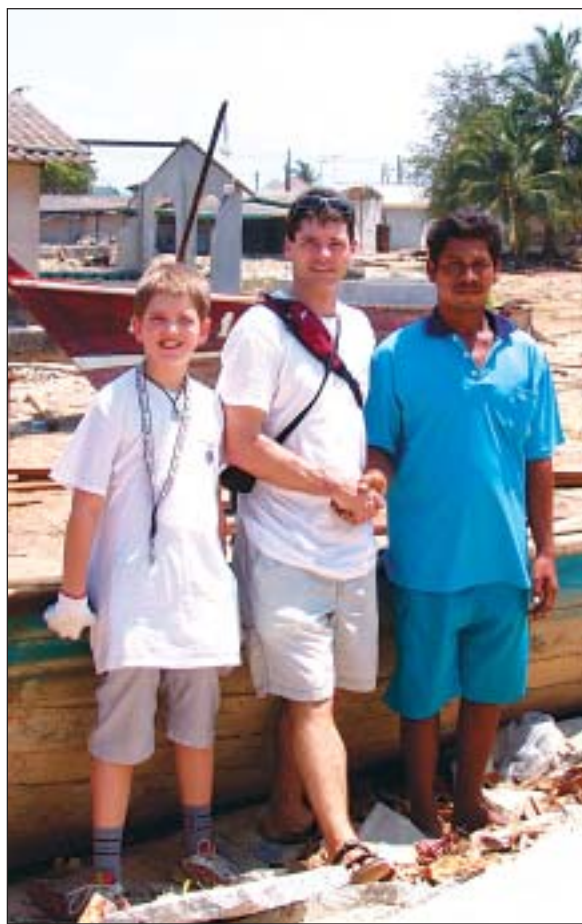
There, they donated teddy bears, coloring books, Play-Doh, toothbrushes and toothpaste to a temporary village set up by the Duang Prateep Foundation, which is providing 300 children with food and a safe place to play.

At Baan Laem Kao, the group bought engines and parts for the fishing boats of three families.

"I felt we achieved quite a lot, given that we had four days and the amount of money we had," said Mr Hornby, a Canadian who has been teaching at YCIS for two years.

"I have vacationed in Phuket every year for the past 10 years and I wanted to help local people in Kamala and the hard-hit area of Khao Lak."

The trio's journey to Phuket was sponsored by Thai national carrier Thai Airways International.



SIMPLY

There is a joke about how everyone buys fruit with the intention of eating it as part of a healthy diet, yet it always ends up sitting in the fruit basket until it is moldy and inedible, and has to be thrown away.

This week, however, the *Gazette* showcases some guilt-free fruit – guilt-free partly because it can sit in a fruit basket – or anywhere else – and never go moldy, and partly because it isn't meant to be eaten in the first place, as its function is decorative rather than dietary.

One of the most popular "decor fruits" is the mangosteen, possibly because of the combination of the deep purple skin, pure white flesh and bright green stalk.

But mangosteens can be equally decorative when dried. Featured here are pots made from real mangosteens, which, after the flesh has been removed, have been dried and the interiors lined with gold lacquer.

Similarly, coconuts can be dried and lacquered. The resulting bowls are considerably lighter than fresh coconuts – a great advantage, as anyone who has ever dropped a fresh coconut on his or her foot will no doubt testify.

A gilded mangosteen costs 650 baht and a coconut is 850 baht.

It is also possible to buy pots shaped like mangosteens but made from wood; small pots are 200 baht each and large ones 250 baht. Apple-shaped pots are also available, for the same price.

Also made from wood is the toilet-paper holder with banana motif. The 36-centimeter-long holder is 1,200 baht, while a towel hook costs 600 baht.

Apples, particularly red ones, are another popular decor choice. Plaster apples cost between 25 and 45 baht while others made from Thai silk – which can be used as pin cushions as well as decorations – cost 250 baht.



Also practical as well as pretty are candles shaped like strawberries and oranges, which come in sets with incense sticks. The only problem is that they look so good it's a shame to put a match to them. The sets cost 700 baht each.

Fruit is also a popular motif for anything from jewelry to household items such as wine bottle holders, hooks and tissue boxes.

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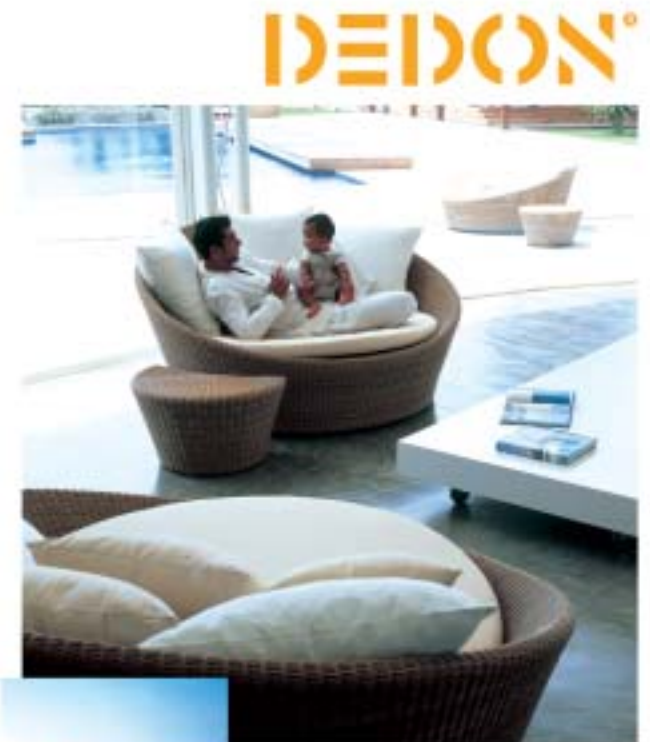
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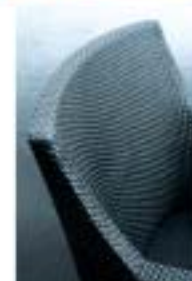
Above: Plaster apples; Right, Real mangosteens with gilded interiors. Far right, top, silk pin cushion fruit; Far right, bottom: Mangosteens and apples carved from wood.



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Ocean Tribes at Central Festival Phuket is very much the coming-together of Prapatsorn Chamroonrat and husband Frank Couture – and their hobbies.

Frank loves sport, particularly surfing. Prapatsorn likes clothes. What better way to unite their interests and talents than to open a surf shop-cum-fashion boutique?

But it isn't just surfer-dude and dudette togs at Ocean Tribes; the range of fashions on the well-stocked racks at Ocean Tribes includes dresses suitable for an evening beach party. "We pick up most

of our pieces from our overseas trips," said K. Prapatsorn. "Frank's main business often takes him abroad.

"Many items in our range are from France, the US and Australia, as well as from Thailand," she added.

Prapatsorn said that many customers ask if the shop is part of a franchise. "I am proud to say that it is a local, family-run business," she said.

Ocean Tribes, on the 2nd floor of Central Festival Phuket, is open from 10 am to 10 pm. Model: Jaratsri "Jena" Surat. Photographer: Sareepab Meekaewnoi. Location: The Boat Lagoon.



Beaded T-shirt by Bridge 590 baht
Beaded red jeans by 2000NC 1,950 baht



White top by Pink house 495 baht



Surf suit by Honey Ocean Earth 2,190 baht
Blue shorts by Surf Chic 290 baht



Black bikini 1,000 baht
Floral pants by Pep-One 590 baht



Cocktail beach dress by Hotkiss 2,200 baht



Orange short skirt by Ocean Tribes 950 baht
Blue sarong by Basile Hand Made 450 baht
Bikini by B-SURF 1,000 baht

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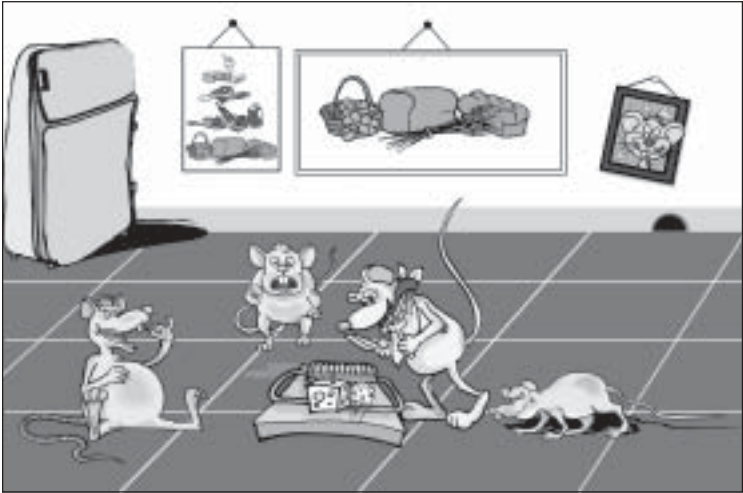
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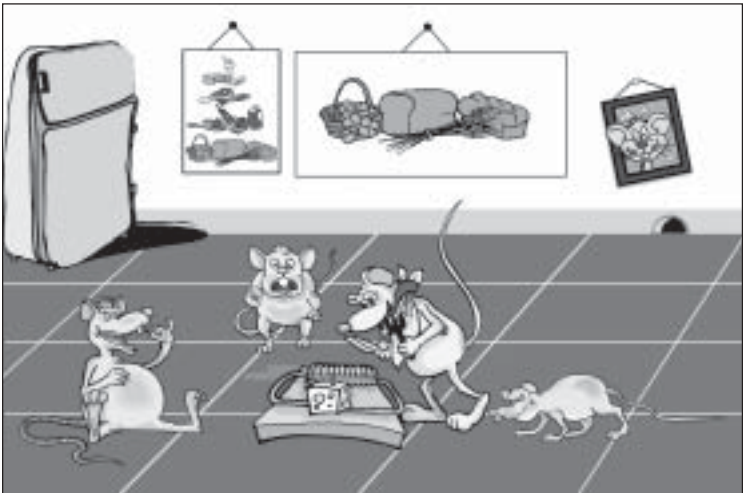
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Spot the Difference



Can you find the seven differences between the two cartoons below? And can you find them faster than the rest of the family?





Brain Buster!!

Each letter below stands for the name of something. What should the last three letters be?


M V E M J S ???

A. U for Uranus, N for Neptune, and P for Pluto (the planets in the Solar System, in the order of their distance from the Sun).

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

1. Sculpture; 2. Argentina and Brazil; 3. Jack Kerouac; 4. Generation X; 5. Billy Idol; 6. *Finding Neverland*; 7. JM Barrie; 8. Halle Berry; 9. *Manga* (comic books); 10. Cross-country skiing; 11. The 8th to 13th centuries AD; 12. Penang, Malaysia; 13. Horse latitudes; 14. Xavier Creus; 15. Chemoheterotrophs; 16. Piccadilly Line; 17. Nature; 18. Trapezoid; 19. *Alea iacta est* (The die is cast); 20. The Chemical Brothers.

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



1. Which planet was first photographed March 19, 1915?

2. Which US state has the nickname the Beehive State?

3. Which world-famous structure was opened to the public on March 19, 1932?

4. Where would one find the os zygomaticum?

5. Which parallel of latitude runs at 23° 26' 22" north?

6. Which actor, famous for roles in *Pulp Fiction* and *Twelve Monkeys* was born March 19, 1955?

7. The character Allan

Quatermain was created by which author?

8. Which film did Allan Quatermain appear in most recently?

9. Which actor first portrayed 007 on screen?

10. Who was the second actor to portray James Bond?

11. Where would you find the crispy biscuit called a *fattigam*?

12. What are Yi, Orogen and Lisu?

13. Which word is the name of a Czech composer, a type of sour cream and a computer language?

14. Which sporting team has

the nickname the Black Caps?

15. Which Korean pop star recently released an album called *La Fiesta Caliente*?

16. Scarface, Willie D and Bushwick Bill collectively form which gangsta rap outfit?

17. What is the name of their most recent album?

18. What are the Sonoran, the Kara-Kum and the Negev?

19. What are Higgs bosons?

20. Which newspaper is sometimes known as "The Gray Old Lady"?

Answers next week

Never a Cross Word!

Across

1. Caesar's mum?
4. Major religion in India.
7. Parisian water.
8. Capital of Jordan.
9. Blood-sucker.
10. Newspapers and TV, for example.
11. Room in jail.
15. Legend.
16. Bordeaux or Sauternes, for example.
19. Striped animal.
21. Attain.
22. XXI divided by VII.
23. Opposite of zenith.
24. Apple alcohol.

Down

1. Beef or pork, for example.
2. Storm.
3. French artist Pierre Auguste.
4. Muscled green cartoon character.
5. Born in France?
6. Hard-work direction.
12. Green gemstone.
13. Online book seller.
14. Acid in lemons.
17. Duo.
18. Sonny Bono's old partner.
20. Take part in an auction.

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

S	C	A	R		S	N	A	C	K	S
M		P		P	U		A		T	
I	R	E	L	A	N	D		L		I
L				R	E	G	G	O	N	
E	I	G	H	T	H		A		K	
			O		Y		S		R	
C	N					L	I	B	Y	A
H	A	D	E	S		S				U
I		O			A	D	A	M	A	N
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While most of the hotel industry in Phuket may still be recovering from the impact of the tsunami, one new accommodation facility that will no doubt have little trouble finding repeat customers is the Happy In, just north of Makro on Wichit Songkram Rd.

Clearly set up as a short-time establishment, Happy In has just about everything one might want in a hotel room – and more. For a start, the VIP rooms (400 baht for two hours, 600 baht all night) come equipped with TV and DVD player, king-sized bed with mirrored ceiling, and Stool Pigeon's favorite: a sex swing.

This contraption is suspended from the ceiling and has a heavy-duty spring, below which are a leather "seat" and two stirrup-like appendages. In case any would-be swingers feel confused or intimidated, there is also an easy-to-read, illustrated wall chart showing the considerable variety of positions it enables – and it's in English, which just goes to show how far Phuket has come to really establishing itself as an international city.

Was it Le Corbusier, or perhaps Martha Stewart, who said that "a house is a machine for living in"? Well, the rooms at Happy In are machines for screwing in – and if you can get into the swing of it, you will never again have to endure those petty little arguments about whose turn it is to get on top.

I have a few lingering worries about the VIP rooms, however. First, there is no way of telling if the mirror on the ceiling is two-way or not. After all, nobody wants to go in for a little afternoon delight and find out a week later they are being featured, like Nong Nat or Joey Boy, in the latest underground DVD making the rounds of the beach road in Patong.

The other concern is about just how much weight the swing can support. Even as a Stool Pigeon, I don't like to toy around with the force of gravity any more than is completely necessary. Maybe they should have a "no fatsos" warning on the wall chart.

SWINGING INTO ACTION



GETTING HAMMERED: This charming young lady, who works in a Soi Sea Dragon beer bar, had the misfortune of popping a lace-up seam on her dress. Fortunately, another girl at the bar picked up a tack hammer used in a "nail-and-hammer" game and banged the rivet holding the lace back into place.



reminder to him that there are worse realities to choose from than being constantly surrounded by wine, women and song.

If you stop in to see him, ask about his "Bin Laden Killer", a homemade concoction which is basically *phrik kee noo* (the hottest of the Thai chilis) steeped in cheap vodka for a few weeks and then removed, leaving just the right spiciness in the vodka to impart an eye-watering reaction if downed in one shot.

Given the local love of chili, it's surprising that it took a foreigner to come up with it. Too bad – it might have kicked some serious tail at the OTOP festival otherwise.

Criticisms, queries, comments and tales should be sent to: stoolpigeon@phuketgazette.net

On the other hand, the device is clearly imported. My guess would be that it comes from the good ole US of A – what other country would export such a thing? As the country of origin is renowned not only for its engineering expertise but also for the bulging waistlines of its citizenry, my guess is that it could support even the heaviest of swingers – as long as it's been mounted right.

Elephantiasis: Let's face it, some Brits can be a bit snobby about beer. But one Brit who will never be accused of beer snobbery is Peter Scouse, proprietor of the Jug & Crocodile Bar on Soi Sea Dragon.

Not only does he sell Beer Chang at four (small) bottles for 100 baht. He has also taken his promotion of Thailand's best-sell-

ing beer to another level, by having an image of a Beer Chang label tattooed on his right arm.

In the back of his bar, Mr Scouse – who insists he has been to Liverpool only once in his life – has hanging a huge collection of ties, left over from his former life as an estate agent in London. These are no doubt a powerful

In The Stars

PISCES (February 20-March 20): An overdue touch of astral magic smooths the path of progress this week. The last two weeks of March should bring both professional and personal fulfillment, and you will begin to understand which goals are realistic and which are simply banana pie in the sky. On Thursday, Taurus makes a proposal that has success written all over it. You should not hesitate long before jumping into this boat.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): The workaholic side of your nature thrives this week and much will be accomplished. Be on the alert on Wednesday when someone's jealous tendencies become obvious. Keep your secrets of success closely guarded to avoid having them stolen from right under your nose. A personal problem resurfaces this weekend; this should be solved for once and for all. The stars are smiling on your plans for an April escape.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Networking can open doors for you early next week. Your creative talents are sharply tuned and this is an auspicious time to turn dreams into reality. Those who are ready for romance shouldn't have long to wait, as Cupid is ready to leap into action on your behalf during the first half of April. Where financial matters are concerned, a bonus is in the pipeline.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Your sense of humor is activated this week. Seeing the amusing side of things will enable you to maintain a cool heart in the face of delays and misunderstandings. Frustrations are particularly likely on Thursday. Those who have been experiencing the desire to go it alone will receive the necessary motivation to do so. Wear the color sunflower yellow to spread some cheerfulness.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): A sticky situation needs careful han-

I looked at myself in the mirror recently and it shattered. This made me think about having cosmetic surgery.

Despite the chaste and immaculate lifestyle I have always led, the delights of Thai cuisine have made me inflate to the proportions of a giant meatball. As I roll down the sidewalk, people often mistake me for an enormous lump of pork fat escaping from a vendor's stewpot.

According to the media, men are now going in for cosmetic surgery in a big way. We're having our faces lifted, our wrinkles smoothed, our double chins tucked in, and our warts and moles removed.

Nobody raises an eyebrow at such unmanly displays of vanity, but I personally wonder whether such men are operating with a full complement of testosterone, let alone brain cells.

Despite considerable misgivings, I went to Dr Kacha Deepli, the famous cosmetic surgeon, to make discreet inquiries. Our conversation went like this:

Dr Kacha (taking a long look at me): I don't know who you are, pal, but you've come to the right place.

Me: My name is Tsow, and I'd like to know what you can do for me.

Dr K (surveying me with a professional eye): Well, I presume you want me to turn you into a reasonably recognizable approximation of a quasi-humanoid. Which part of your physical wreckage would you like to start with?

dling on Monday. Someone at work has got hold of the wrong end of the stick and isn't prepared to let go easily. You are advised to produce evidence on paper, as opposed to getting into verbal discussions that will certainly become too hot for comfort. Your better half tries to encourage you to be more ambitious; he or she may have a valid point.

LEO (July 24-August 22): A providential meeting arises from accepting a last-minute invitation this weekend. Even if you're more inclined to curl up at home, you will not regret making the effort to go out. Your partner is in the mood to talk mid-week; listen carefully before coming to conclusions. Changes are brewing regarding your work situation. These will be very much in your favor.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): The stormy atmosphere of last week blows over, leaving you free to enjoy some relatively

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A quest for cosmetic perfection

Me: I've been thinking in terms of a full-body transplant.

Dr K: I'm afraid that's impossible. Hooking your brain up to a new body is currently beyond the competence of medical science. There are too many neurons and blood vessels to connect.

Me: Hooking up my brain is no problem. I don't have one.

Dr K: Well, what kind of body do you want?

Me: Something along the lines of Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, Ben Affleck, George Clooney or maybe even The Rock.

Dr K: That can get pretty expensive. There's also the problem of finding a donor. I doubt that any of the gentlemen you've mentioned would want to part with their bodies under any circumstances.

Me: What I really want is a body that would make a woman like Beyoncé Knowles look at me without bursting into fits of uncontrollable laughter.

Dr K: Ha ha. I see we're deep in fantasy land here.

Me: Can't you just sort



of fabricate me a new body out of protoplasm or silicone or something?

Dr K: No, we haven't advanced that far yet. For a totally new body, you'd have to die. Then, assuming that the theory of reincarnation has any validity, you'd be reborn in a new body.

Me: I don't want to die. Even if I were to be reborn, suppose I came back as a toad or a pig?

Dr K: At least you'd look better.

Me (firmly): No, I want you to do something to spruce up the body I already have.

Dr K: Well, with a great deal of hacking and chopping, I could trim you down to look like Jabba the Hutt.

Me: I don't want to look like Jabba the Hutt.

Dr K: Hey, it would be an improvement.

Me: No, I'm tired of being fat.

Dr K (after a thoughtful pause): Well, I suppose I could perform radical liposuction.

Me: What's that? I've heard of liposuction, but I really don't know what it means. Sounds dirty, though, like something they'd do in a no-hands bar.

Dr K (chuckling heartily): No, no, it's nothing like that. We merely suck out all your fat.

Me (anxiously): How do you do that? I mean, I might need some of my fat to keep my skeleton standing up.

Dr K: Don't worry. We cut you open and stick a vacuum cleaner inside you and just start sucking away.

Me (really worried, now): What if you suck out my heart or a lung or my liver or something?

Dr K: When we empty the vacuum cleaner, we look for any stray organs and pop them right back in.

Me: What would I look like after radical liposuction?

Dr K: Gollum. I can make you look just like Gollum. You know, the weird little dude in the *Lord of the Rings* movies.

Me: So I have a choice between looking like Jabba or Gollum, eh? Great. I'll think it over. Don't call me, I'll call you.

The cosmetically-challenged S. Tsow can be flamed at stsow@yahoo.com, except when he's fantasizing about Beyoncé Knowles.

Easy PC

I am ashamed to admit to you, my generally chronologically-gifted, usually melanin-impooverished, often persons-of-substance readers, that this column has strayed down the path of political incorrectness on so many occasions that I am compelled to ask for your forgiveness.

From now on I shall not call a spade a spade, and I am not referring to the colloquially-distasteful term for melanin-enhanced persons. Instead I refer to a long-handled garden implement commonly used for the purpose of digging or excavation.

In many of my previous missives I have talked about aesthetically-challenged and even cerebrally-challenged persons of opposite gender, and I have come to the conclusion that while many could be classified as reality impaired

and motivationally dispossessed, it is better to use the Politically Correct (PC) terms rather than simply saying "ugly, stupid, utterly lazy airhead women".

Having become PC, I now realize the persons at whom my invective is directed will better understand my stance and will not take offense.

For myself, I now accept I am follicly challenged and chronologically gifted. After all, there's no getting away from reality when Thais, many of whom seem to be medically enhanced to achieve a level of mammarial superiority, start calling out "Hey, Baldy" and "Where you go, papa?"

Sometimes they only say these things at around 1:30 am on Pattaya's Walking St when they are more than a little chemically inconvenienced. I do become a little emotional when a previously-enjoyed companion, whom I know to be horizontally accessible and – by her chemically-inconvenienced state – sexually focused, still spurns my advances.

Instead, I am forced to make my sullen promenade along the beach road in search of a low-

cost provider. Sometimes, to save my dwindling funds, I go home alone for a solitary, onanistic sexually-fulfilling experience.

Pattaya is a haven for the visually impaired and the residentially challenged. They are compelled to wander the streets with a tin cup in hand requesting donations of monetary units from pedestrians.

People who are former clients of the correctional system or are simply economically marginalized can also be found meandering around Pattaya, asking for alms.

It is sometimes claimed that these persons lead to a marked increase in the street-activity index. Many is the time these persons are found metabolically challenged; the cost to City Hall of the resultant funerals must be enormous.

I find it most disconcerting to be approached for money by any of the above (apart from the already metabolically challenged of course) when I'm walking back to my abode with a sexually-extroverted, mammariially superior Thai who may well have taken an intellectual detour off the information superhighway but has been recommended to me by friends as vocally appreciative.

As this is my first attempt at producing a PC column I feel I should do readers a service by providing a glossary of the terms I have used.

This will serve two purposes. First, it'll give me enough words to finish the column and, second, I will be doing something useful for the community by promoting the use of torturous circumlocutions, or Political Correctness.

How that gladdens my major muscle for the pumping of blood through the veins and arteries of my earthly mortal encumbrance.

Sorry, Duncan. No space for all that rubbish – Editor.



by Isla Star

peaceful days. You will be content to relax at home; this is the perfect time to indulge in some spring-cleaning and start thinking about home improvements. Unexpected visitors on Sunday are a welcome surprise, but may need more than a gentle hint if they are not to outstay their welcome. The number 5 could prove lucky on Tuesday.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Librans who are tired of negotiating stumbling blocks along a romantic path will be faced with a make-or-break situation this weekend. You will probably have to make an irreversible decision, but should feel relieved once this has been done. On Wednesday you will be susceptible to a bout of absent-mindedness; take care to leave in a prominent place a reminder concerning important appointments this day.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): A steamy sensual atmo-

sphere prevails this week. If you have recently embarked on a new romantic voyage, you will discover hidden depths. If you're already in a settled relationship, try surprising your partner with a spur-of-the-moment trip. Books need balancing by the end of this month; don't be fooled into thinking that deadlines can easily be extended. The number 2 is lucky on Sunday.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): This weekend you can look forward to a reunion with old friends. As memories are rekindled, you could easily start thinking about relocating. However, remember that, as the island landscape turns browner and browner, it's all too easy to focus on how green it is elsewhere – you are not advised to make any sudden moves during the coming months as the landscape of your life is about to become lush and more inspiring.

CAPRICORN (December 22-

January 20): You are still coasting on a romantic high and can look forward to another week of caring and sharing with that special someone. However, you are advised to resist the temptation of setting in cement a relationship that is still in the preliminary stages. You may encounter subtle pressure to do so this week, so make a point of keeping the mood light and carefree. Wear sea-green to encourage creative thoughts.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): It's starting to seem as if life so far this year is mostly about work and very little about play, but this weekend brings nothing but fun in the sun. Don't feel bad about locking the office door and walking away without a backward look. Aquarians deserve some quality time doing nothing, and everyone close to you will also benefit from your more relaxed mood. The number 3 looks interesting on Wednesday.



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Arrests should defuse bomb fears

In December, Phuket took the biggest hit yet to its tourism industry, when the tsunami swept away the high season.

It is, of course, by no means the first time Phuket's tourism has suffered in the past few years – 9/11, the Bali bombing, Sars and bird 'flu have all taken their toll – but the tsunami has been by far the biggest battle Phuket has had to deal with.

Which is why the discovery of a time bomb in a sleepy soi in Baan Pa Khlok was such a blow to confidence. It has long been a great fear that the violence in the Deep South would find resonance in related communities in Phuket.

Was this a separatist bomb? Although police have yet to rule out the possibility, it seems most unlikely that political terrorism was behind the failed attack.

First, the bomb was found at the foot of a wall surrounding premises owned by a Muslim businessman.

Second, it was placed in the middle of a community that is at least 50% Muslim – there are five mosques nearby.

Third, it was nowhere near the traditional targets of the separatists – police stations or military installations, restaurants and other places where security forces gather.

Fourth, it was a long way from even the nearest tourist facility, the Bang Rong Pier.

Police experts said that the bomb was the work of a professional, but it was hardly high-tech: two sticks of explosive, a cheap alarm clock, a detonator and some wiring. It could just as easily have been the work of a novice criminal bomb-maker.

Police originally theorized that the bomb might have been the result of a business dispute, but investigators say that the owner of the premises has insisted repeatedly that he has no conflict with anyone.

Another theory is that the bomb was the product of teenage gang warfare, and was thrown away when the young thug carrying it became nervous at the sight of police roadblocks.

Whatever the truth of that aspect of the matter, it is plain that the bomb-maker gave not a moment's thought to the possible effect of its discovery (or worse, of its detonation) on the economy at this sensitive time.

This is why it is crucial that the perpetrator be caught and brought to justice as soon as possible, so that a further cloud is not added to those created by the damage from the tsunami, or hysterical TV reports, or ghost stories and other rumors.

Phuket needs a break from bad news. A swift arrest will certainly help.

– The Editor



Letters

The *Gazette* is pleased to receive mail from readers. Please write to us at 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000, fax to 076-213971 or send an email to editor@phuketgazette.net

with your views for publication in our next issue. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Pseudonyms are acceptable only if your full name and address are supplied.

Alarming plans

Is it just me, or do other observers find Phuket's plans for a tsunami-warning system lame and laggard in the extreme? They are:

– A siren system in Patong that sounds like a temple festival announcement.

– Lookout towers costing 250,000 baht each which may give us five or 10 minutes' warning, in daylight hours only, if the watchman is actually awake and paying attention.

– And yet more proposals from foreign experts about sea-based warning systems.

Has anyone noticed that nearly three months have passed since the last tsunami?

Will it take another wave and more casualties for the "authorities" responsible actually to do something effective and lasting?

I would love to read a story soon that proves my skepticism wrong.

Very concerned
Kamala

Where does the buck stop?

The recent Koh Yao ferry disaster is yet further evidence that Thailand's tourist industry does not deserve to attract large numbers of visitors.

This ferry was apparently licensed to carry 22 people but was overloaded with about 70 passengers, plus cargo and 10 motorcycles.

It will not surprise anyone familiar with safety standards in Thailand to read news reports that this boat did not carry the required number of life jackets and that the captain and owner

was the first to abandon ship, "fleeing the scene" in the fashion we have come to expect in this country.

Ten people, including several children, have needlessly lost their lives due to the neglect of this individual.

In light of the recent Koh Samui speedboat disaster, not to mention the dire effects of the tsunami, surely someone in national government is supposed to be responsible for ensuring that the very simple safety regulations that would have avoided this disaster are being properly enforced?

If that is the case, who is that person? And why is he or she not removed from this position of "responsibility" forthwith?

Or are tourists to assume that the government of Thailand has no interest in their safety whatsoever?

John Edwards
By email

Consultation and control are vital

It's curious that while there seem to have been endless discussions, meetings, analyses and documents about Patong Beach, there appears to have been no actual consultation with its users. Yes, there are tourists like me who love this place and come year after year.

Why not include tourists on the planning bodies? Why not survey those actually on the beach to find out what it is they most would like to change?

If asked, I certainly would not be that concerned about the colors of the umbrellas.

Of far more importance would be to establish some con-

trol and limits to the jetski and parasail operations.

Before the tsunami there were defined places for swimmers and areas for jetskis and parasail boats. Today it seems the motor craft have been given free reign to operate anywhere.

This can only lead to a disaster; it is only a question of time before a jetski crashes into a swimmer.

Mike Feldstein
Patong

Parasailing perils

I would like to know if there is any kind of law about how close to the beach parasailing boats can come, and how their operators should behave?

They come in close to the swimmers and their arrival is announced by a whistle, to tell the people in the water to move out of their way.

These operators show no respect or consideration for others. We were at Kata Beach a few days ago with our one-year-old son, and we had to grab him and just run for it.

The following day, the parasailers landed a customer amid the umbrellas, almost crashing into tourists lying on the sunbeds.

Wouldn't it be better if parasailers had a place specially set aside for them, so they don't put everyone else in danger each time they come in?

At present, you just cannot relax while on the beach because you don't know whether you are going to get hit by the rope, or even whether someone is going to land on you.

Micke
By email

The Phuket Gazette

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Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials or business owners are published as *Issues & Answers* on the facing page.

Streetwise solution to sunbed dilemma

We must spread the message around the world that people really should come to Patong to see for themselves what things are like here.

The tsunami took out only the area along the beach, and that has already recovered. Nothing elsewhere was very damaged, and three days after the tsunami, everything reopened.

People are coming back; there are more flights from Europe, but the Thai [national] carrier [THAI] must give more support. It no longer offers direct flights to Phuket to people coming from Korea, Japan and Hong Kong. The company is just not being supportive enough.

I'm Singaporean and I'm proud that Singapore Airlines and Tiger are doing all they can to bring people back.

The people who have come here have been happy in Patong; the resort will soon have recovered completely. The beach isn't smelly, it isn't dirty, the recovery is coming along; in time everything will be back to how it was before. We want to thank people who have supported us so far – their support makes us feel really good.

But without the tourists, though, what is Patong going to do? Without the beach, without the sun worshippers, what tourism will there be?

People come here for a sun-tan but now [the authorities] are going to cut down the number of sunbeds [on the beach], from 6,000 to 2,000. What about the tourists who want to use the other 4,000 beds? What about the people who have come here to make a living from them?



FIRST PERSON

Robin Lee was well known on the Patong entertainment scene as managing director of various high-profile establishments, until he decided to take a break to work as a teacher in Bangkok.

But Mr Lee, originally from Singapore, was lured back again by the bright lights of Patong, arriving back in the resort town soon after the tsunami, as managing director of the vast "Crocodile" pub.

Concerned that the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)-sponsored plans to "improve" Patong in order to attract more tourists may have quite the opposite effect, Mr Lee here puts forward some novel ideas on how to mitigate the effects of the TAT plan.

Perhaps we could allow them to make use of the sois? It's always very hot, and people who want a suntan could use the soi just as easily as the beach. We could put lots of sunbeds in the sois, and people who just want a suntan, but aren't interested in the beach itself, could use the sois around the beach.

If you cut down the number of beds on the beach, you will have fewer tourists, because they will find somewhere with more beds and go there instead. So here's a solution.

The local government must realize there are only a few categories of foreigners who come here, and the sunworshippers are the most significant among them.

When the temperatures in their countries are zero, they come here for the sun, and more of them come to Patong than anywhere else.

I really think the local government should think about using the sois as a substitute for the beach. It wouldn't be every soi, just certain ones.

Every bar has a TV, so people could watch sport, or music, or chat with the girls, if that was what they wanted.

The government is telling everybody it has reduced the number of sunbeds; they want to tell people everything is OK, but the tourists who have been here before are used to there being 5,000 or 6,000 beds within one or two kilometers; will they want to come here again if there are not enough sunbeds?

Fewer tourists would mean less tax for the government ... when [tourists] spend so much money here, why have them going to another country?

Many, many people have invested money in Phuket; it has

been a very popular destination for sunbathing, watersports, diving. But if local government cuts the number of sunbeds, then there will be fewer drinkers, too.

There are more and more bars opening every year, but the number of people coming here would be less and less.

In fact, another important factor [in Patong] is nightlife. At least half the people who come here are drinkers.

But the first customers don't arrive in the bars until 11 pm; if they close at 1 am or 2 am, what use is that for the tourism industry?

There are only things to do during the day, and no nighttime activities. The government needs to understand it has to let businesses actually do business.

I have heard that some people are not coming here because they are worried about

ghosts. After the tsunami, when I was working as a volunteer, I looked for dead bodies and I went to temples to help arrange cremations, but I saw no ghosts.

Journalists from Singapore came here and they were on the beach at 2 am and they didn't see any ghosts. People shouldn't be worried about ghosts.

People from cold countries want to come to a warm place. Because of the tsunami, they now tend to go to the South China Sea side of this country. They want to go to the beach, and we want them to come back to the beach here in Patong.

That's why there must be more than 2,000 sunbeds here; in fact it may be a good plan to have more than 6,000 beds. The authorities definitely should not cut the number to 2,000.

We could, though, have lighter beds, made from plastic, so that if there were another tsunami, they wouldn't knock people unconscious if they hit them, as the wooden ones did.

More beds would mean more people would come to Phuket, to Patong, even if, for the moment, they have found alternatives.

All the people who have been here before will come back, because Patong is good and safe.

After the tsunami, it was agreed there should be a tsunami warning system. I agree, and I believe it must be tested regularly.

Maybe, too, people who work at the beach should be trained to get people off the beach if the alarms sound, and obstacles such as stalls should be banned from the sois so people could run away from the beach more easily if there were an emergency.

Work permit worry for a small family business

I run a small business and have had a work permit for the past six years. Everything used to be OK, but when I recently applied for a work permit extension, the Employment Services Office (ESO) said they could not do this.

They explained that the law had changed and that I must now employ another Thai and pay their tax, insurance and salary.

I cannot afford to take on another member of staff, but the ESO maintains that if I don't employ another Thai, I must forfeit my work permit. What can I do?

Worried foreigner
Phuket

Khitti Nuisri, the Deputy Chief of the Phuket Provincial Employment Service Office, said:

The work permit rules have changed and foreigners cannot be exempted from the law.

In essence, the law states that a company can employ one foreign worker for every 2 mil-

lion baht of paid-up capital if the company is locally registered, and one foreigner for every 3 million baht of paid-up capital if it is registered abroad.

If the person registering the company is married to a Thai, the amounts are halved.

The firm may employ no more than 10 foreigners unless it meets one of the following criteria: if it has paid more than 3 million baht in tax in the preceding year; if it brings in more than 30 million baht in foreign currency to Thailand per year; if it is in the tourism industry and has brought in at least 5,000 foreign visitors a year in previous years, or if it employs 100 or more Thai nationals.

The Gazette adds:

More detailed information on the new rules may be found on the Gazette website, at: <http://www.phuketgazette.net/news/index.asp?Id=3737>

Building on contoured land

Is it illegal in Phuket to build on land that slopes more than 30° from the horizontal?

Peter
Phuket

Tawee Homhuan, engineer of the Phuket Public Works and Town and Country Planning Office, replies:

The maximum legal slope ratio is 1:3, which means the slope is such that the land rises, say, one meter vertically over three meters horizontally or, in degree terms, up to 33.33°.

Seeing red over Orange phones

Is Orange trying to drive me away as a customer? If not, why was I woken up at 2:45 am, 5:45 am and 6:13 am in one night recently by SMSs from them telling me how much longer my credit was valid for?

GB
Thalang

Saovanee Limmanont, Deputy Director, Corporate Communications and Public Affairs, True Corporation, speaking on behalf of Orange replies:

First, let me apologize for the inconvenience caused to you by the reminders you received.

We have a system that

sends them – and reminders about remaining active days – out automatically by SMS.

For a brief period, there was a fault which caused customers to receive repeated warning SMSs. We are, however, confident that the fault will not happen again.

Issues & ANSWERS

Want to know how to get something done? Can't understand some of the dafter things that seem to go on in Phuket? Want to pitch an idea to Phuket's authorities or institutions? Then this is the forum for you.

Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people to respond to them.

Write to: The Phuket Gazette, 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Muang, Phuket 83000. Fax 076-213971, or submit your issue at www.phuketgazette.net

Dots before your eyes: printing digital photos

QIf I were to print a 3.2-megapixel picture, how big would it be? 6 inches x 4 inches? 7" x 5"? I've tried making pictures "smaller" (in terms of kilobytes) to make it easier to send them by email – especially before Hotmail increased the maximum size of attachments – but I usually ended up with a picture that appeared on screen the same size as the original, but wasn't as sharp.

Is it possible to make a picture smaller in terms of the area it covers, but without losing quality? I once sent a person a picture that, on my computer was about 6" x 6", but was, so I was told, "poster size" when it reached its destination. Why was this?

Ned Ludd
Phuket City

ATo answer your first question, it's best to focus on the end result – "printing" the photo, which could be either printing a hardcopy photo or displaying a photo on a computer screen. In either case, the "output resolution" is what determines the size the photo will be.

To state the obvious, printers print at specific

resolutions, such as 300 dots per inch (dpi), 600 dpi or even 1,200 dpi or more; the more dots per inch, the sharper the image will be.

But it is important to remember that a photo that prints at 6" x 4" printed at 300 dpi will be only 3" x 2" when printed at 600 dpi – and this is the key to understanding the printing of digital pictures.

If you take a photo with 3.2-megapixel camera at maximum resolution, depending on the

HOW BIG YOUR IMAGE WILL PRINT: A ROUGH GUIDE

Image Size (in pixels)	Megapixels	Native Print Size at 300 dpi (in inches)
4,064 x 2,704	11.1	13.50 x 9.0
3,264 x 2,468	8.0	10.90 x 8.2
3,088 x 2,056	6.3	10.25 x 6.8
3,008 x 1,960	5.3	10.00 x 6.5
2,048 x 1,536	3.0	6.80 x 5.1
1,600 x 1,200	2.0	5.30 x 4.0
1,280 x 960	1.2	4.25 x 3.2
640 x 480	0.3	2.10 x 1.6

make, model and settings used, the photo will most likely be 2,048 x 1,536 pixels.

Doing the math, you will notice that this is only 3,145,728 pixels; a little short of 3.2 megapixels but I'll leave that to the digital camera manufacturers' marketing departments to explain (they tend to like "rounding up" their products' capabilities).

Now, printing a 2,048 x 1,536-pixel photo at 300 dpi can produce a sharp image up to 6.8" x 5.12". These numbers aren't plucked from the air; they are determined simply by dividing the dimensions of the digital photo by the output resolution.

All that means is that if the photo is 2,048 pixels wide then, at 300 dpi, the printed photo will be $2,048 \div 300 = 6.826$ inches wide. Likewise, at 300 dpi, the photo will be $1,536 \div 300 = 5.12$ inches high.

However, if you print a picture any larger than the determined dimensions for a particular dpi setting, then you will get a lower-quality picture, with greater "pixelation".

Pixelation is like looking at a newspaper photo with a magnifying glass – you can see the dots that make up the print. The larger you print the photo, the more exaggerated will be the pixelation.

For a rough guide to how large you should print a digital photo at certain resolutions, see the table above.

When it comes to displaying a digital photo on a computer screen, the principle remains the same. But what must be remembered is that a computer screen displays all images at a particu-

lar resolution set for that particular computer.

Some people like to see smaller but sharper images and set the monitor resolution to, say, 1024 x 768 pixels or higher, while those who like chunkier, larger images might set the monitor resolution to 800 x 600 pixels, or even as low as 640 x 480 pixels.

To change the monitor resolution on your computer, simply right-click on the desktop, click Properties | Settings and slide the bar in the "Screen area" box.

This brings us to your problem of the photo you sent by email arriving at "poster size".

The person you sent the photo to may have his or her monitor set to display at a lower resolution than you have on your computer, which means that the photo will appear larger on your friend's screen than it will on yours.

Another potential difference in settings is that you and your friend may be using different software to view the image, or, even if you have the same software, you may each have it set up to display images differently.

For example, you both may view images with Internet Explorer, but you may have your version set up to "shrink" large images so that the entire picture can be shown on the screen, while your friend may not.

To make sure that Internet Explorer shrinks images so you can see the entire picture without scrolling, launch IE, go to Tools | Internet Options, click on the Advanced tab and in the Multimedia section, put a tick beside Enable Automatic Image Resizing. To switch this function off, simply remove the tick.

Oceans of greed and folly

As the recent horrific tsunami has shown, the sea murders with impunity. In *The Outlaw Sea* (North Point Press, New York, 2004, 239pp) William Langewiesche presents some gripping tales of how man often helps the sea in its murderous work.

Subtitled *A World of Freedom, Chaos, and Crime*, the book comprises six stories of investigative reporting Langewiesche wrote for the *Atlantic Monthly*. They expose the rising threats of piracy and terrorism, the sorry state of the international merchant marine, the chicaneries of "flags of convenience", slipshod rules and the crushing economic forces that send all too many ships to a watery grave.

He cites as an object case the foundering of the *Kristal*, bearing 28,000 tons of molasses, in a storm in the Bay of Biscay.

"The *Kristal* was a typical casualty of modern times," he writes. "It was an all-purpose tanker, 560 feet long, that had been built in Italy in 1974 and for more than a quarter century had restlessly wandered the world, riding the downward spiral of the maritime market under a progression of names, owners, and nationalities. By the winter of 2001, at the advanced age of 27, it was flying the flag of Malta – a registry of convenience with a typically shoddy track record and a reputation for allowing owners to operate their vessels nearly as they pleased."

The author skilfully interviews the survivors of the sinking to provide a meticulous and thrilling account of a thoroughly unnecessary maritime disaster.

He turns next to the threat of terrorism – Osama bin Laden owns 20 aging freighters dubbed the "al-Qaeda Navy" – and continuing piracy attacks in the Straits of Malacca and Sulu Sea.

"The new pirates have emerged on a post-modern ocean, where identities have been mixed and blurred and the rules of nationality have been subverted," Langewiesche writes. "Their goal in general is to hijack entire ships: they kill or maroon the crews, sell the cargoes, and in the most elaborate schemes turn the hijacked

vessels into 'phantoms', which, posing as legitimate ships with all the requisite paperwork, pick up new cargoes and disappear."

The case he cites here is the hijacking of the *Alondra Rainbow*, loaded with 6,972 tons of aluminum ingots from Indonesia, off Sumatra on October 22, 1999. Langewiesche carefully reconstructs the story through extensive interviews with the victims and the pirates, now imprisoned in India.

The bulk of the book, nearly 100 pages, is devoted to an investigation of the sinking of the ferry *Estonia* in a Baltic storm on the night of September 26, 1994. En route from Tallin to Stockholm, the huge car ferry carried 803 passengers and 186 crew. The ship sank so fast that only 137 people survived.

The author's interviews with a wide range of survivors make for a gripping account of a maritime horror, worthy of comparison with *A Night to Remember*, the famous account of the *Titanic*'s sinking. His terse prose is up to the task:

"Survival that night was a very tight race, and savagely simple. People who started early and moved fast had some chance of winning. People who started late or hesitated for any reason had no chance at all. Action paid. Contemplation did not... A pitiless clock was running. The ocean was completely in control."

The cause of the disaster was the ripping apart of the bow ramp under heavy seas while the ship was forging ahead at full speed.

Faulty German design or poor Estonian maintenance? Langewiesche investigates both views.

Finally, he travels to the ships' graveyard of Alang Beach in India. You can't beat the labor costs. Exposed to hazardous chemicals and dangerous working conditions, men hand strip the big ships foot by foot.

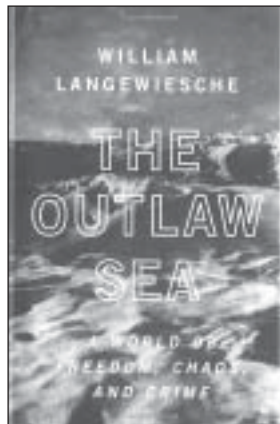
Western environmental groups like Greenpeace are in uproar. But the South Asians need jobs. Again, Langewiesche interviews everyone involved and presents both sides of the case.

The overall impression of *The Outlaw Sea* on a reader is that the awesome power of the sea is only compounded by human greed and folly.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt



COMPUTER Q&A

By Chris Husted

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PHUKET PROVINCIAL
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

SME assistance in full swing

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: Two Khao Lak hotels damaged by the tsunami are the first to receive government assistance to rebuild after forming joint venture (JV) partnerships with the Ministry of Industry's Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP).

The OSMEP invested 90 million baht in the Mukdara Resort and 50 million baht in the Pakarang Resort, and has received a total of 78 applications from other tsunami-affected businesses seeking similar partnerships. Most of these applications, representing a total investment of about 1.6 billion baht, are from tourism-industry companies, about half in Phuket and half in Phang Nga.

The joint venture scheme is one of several assistance packages being offered to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through the OSMEP's temporary office at the Baan Sukhothai Hotel on Soi Bangla in Patong.

As of early March, a total of 767 tsunami-affected companies applied for some form of assistance from the OSMEP, either through the joint venture scheme, through debt restructuring, or assistance in securing loans from a commercial bank.

OSMEP Director-General Jhitraporn Techacharn told the *Gazette* that government policy is to have all businesses damaged or destroyed by the tidal wave up and running by the beginning of the next high season for tourism, beginning in November this year, as this would help return the region's tourism-driven economy to normal. This policy applies both to Phuket and the devastated regions of Phang Nga.

"If all businesses are able to open by that time, the situation in the tourism industry will quickly return to normal," she said.

The OSMEP has a total of 2 billion baht available to invest in tsunami-damaged businesses under the JV scheme. According to regulations, investment must

range from a minimum of 25% to a maximum of 49% of a company's total registered capital.

After investment, the OSMEP acts generally as a silent partner, allowing the company's directors and management to continue directing policy and making management decisions.

However, one SME official is appointed to each company's board to serve in an advisory and oversight capacity. In addition, all JV companies are required to submit an annual performance report to the OSMEP at year's end.

The OSMEP reviews applications for a JV partnership on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration such factors as pre-tsunami financial performance, business redevelopment plans, credit ratings with banks, insurance coverage and pending claims, and the need to restructure existing debt, if any.

K. Jhitraporn said that of the 78 JV applications received, the OSMEP has already examined 20 in depth. These represent

a total investment of 450 million baht, she said.

Once an application is approved, the OSMEP will hold shares for a period of five to seven years, after which time they will be made available to private investors through a fund listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand. The OSMEP will retain any profits accrued from the sale of shares, she explained.

Applications for the scheme accounted for only part of the assistance measures available through the OSMEP office.

K. Jhitraporn said that between January 13 and February 4 the office had filed 767 applications for assistance, representing a total of 3.2 billion baht.

Most of these – 661 companies – were seeking OSMEP assistance in obtaining credit from commercial banks, with applications representing a total of about 1.6 billion baht. Of these, 378 were retailers, 94 were

resort or spa businesses and 48 were restaurants, the remainder being other types of small businesses.

A further 28 companies contacted the office for debt restructuring assistance, she said.

K. Jhitraporn noted that the OSMEP needed to liaise with other government agencies, such as the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning, when reviewing applications.

She said that in many areas affected by the tsunami, particularly Khao Lak, the law was still unclear as to which companies would be allowed to rebuild in their former locations. She said that this had slowed down application approval procedures.

She noted that resorts in areas near the shoreline were those with the highest potential for recovery due to their attractiveness to tourists.

New Zealand, new frontier?

New Zealand is rarely considered by the average speculator as a place in which to invest. However, it does have an interesting story to tell, and at present it is a highly successful country.

New Zealand covers an area of approximately 268,680 square kilometers – around the size of Colorado. It has a population of just over 4 million people, of whom a million live in Auckland on North Island, which is the principal port and economic powerhouse of the country.

The economy had been based mainly on agriculture, and sheep still outnumber humans by almost 10 to one, but has diversified in recent years away from the once near-total dependence on agriculture and animal husbandry to tourism.

More than 2 million tourists a year visit New Zealand, the number having been given a substantial boost since 2001 and the release of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which was filmed there, along with many of the outdoor scenes in *The Last Samurai*.

New Zealand has become very focused on the tourist market and although 2 million visitors may not seem to be a great number, one must remember that this number is equivalent to 50% of the country's population.

The choice of activities for tourists is wide-ranging; all clichés aside, the country offers something for everyone. It must also rank as one of the friendliest countries in the world.

Another significant money-earner for the economy is education. The country attracts thousands of university students every year, many of them from Asia. The population of Dunedin, a city on South Island, swells by almost 20% during university semesters.

That the economy is growing strongly is reflected in many ways. The currency, the New Zealand dollar, has reached its highest level against the US dollar since the former became a free-floating entity some 20 years ago.

Interest rates are high, making the country attractive to investors. Banks offer more than 6%



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

on fixed deposits and finance companies around 8% – depending on the term. Bond yields on government and corporate bonds are also attractive and substantial foreign investment is coming into the "Kiwi" bond market.

New Zealand is a member of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a group comprising the 30 most-advanced economies in the world.

The country's overall unemployment rate is 3.6% and for those of European descent – who account for around 80% of the population – it is 2.3%. The unemployment rate is currently the lowest of all OECD member states.

Residential property prices have soared and, in a fashion similar to that of Britons, New Zealanders have jumped into this market eagerly. A substantial portion of the purchases are made to let to tenants, not to be owner-occupied.

New Zealand levies no taxes on capital gains from residential property. Many investors in this sector are borrowing money from the banks and building societies to fund the purchase of multiple properties. Deposit requirements are low and finance is readily available.

The banking sector is sophisticated and highly competitive. Among the larger ones and a number of foreign-controlled concerns, such as Westpac and ANZ, which are Australian. This is to New Zealand's advantage, as Australian banks have always been well-managed and innovative.

In contrast to an experience I had in Malaysia last year when the local subsidiary of an international bank refused to cash a US\$500 travelers' check, describing it as "too large an amount", banks in New Zealand – even those in small country towns – readily cash travelers' checks for more than twice that sum without raising an eyebrow.

Richard Watson runs Global Portfolios Co Ltd, a Phuket-based personal financial planning service. He can be reached at Tel and Fax: 076-381997, Mobile: 01-081-4611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th.



(bold listings are Thai-flagged boats)

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39 Ft 90/00	Searay 390, Custom Caterpillar, 2 x 385 Hp	THB	7,500,000
36 Ft 1994	Island Gypsy Europa Perkins, 2 x 225 Hp	US\$	169,000
29 Ft NEW	Prowler Motor Cat Honda 4 stroke, 2 x 50 Hp	THB	POA
21 Ft 1997	Searay Laguna 21 Mariner 200 Hp (50 hrs)	THB	1,200,000
Sail			
63 Ft 1993	Wooden Penisi Ketch Isuzu, 115 Hp	Reduced to Euro	100,000
60 Ft 1982	Penisi Ketch Hino 175 Hp	US\$	51,500
47 Ft 1989	Vagabond 47 VolvoTMD 31A	US\$	175,000
40 Ft 1992	John Pugh Steel Cutter Isuzu 50 Hp	US\$	82,000
39 Ft 1996	Prout 39 Catamaran Volvo MD 2030	US\$	199,000
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The events of December 26, 2004, have left most of us with an education we would rather not have had. One hopes the lessons learned will never again have to be put into practice.

However, as the media have pored over every facet of the killer waves, it's time for me to chip in a few more thoughts of my own, namely on how to make golf courses "tsunami-proof".

This is probably one of the most specialist subjects in the golf construction business, and one that will hopefully prove completely redundant in the years to come.

I felt guiltily voyeuristic when I inspected Thai Muang Beach golf course and the Royal Thai Navy course at Tab Lamu. I was simply curious about how, if at all, the courses had been damaged.

Everything still looked normal up at the clubhouse and there did not seem to be any real damage at all.

Closer inspection, however, revealed problems. The Bermuda 419 grass on all of the low areas of the course was now light brown instead of a healthy green, thanks to saltwater damage.

"Saltwater acts very like a herbicide," said Loch Palm's Course Superintendent, David Medlin, adding, "Bermuda grass has an especially low salt tolerance."

Thai Muang's Bermuda

Long haul to resurrect Phang Nga's courses



grass is unlikely to recover from its briny bath. The good news is that most elevated areas, including the majority of the tees and greens, are likely to survive.

Thai Muang's Dye-designed mounds are therefore also likely to survive, no doubt to the vexation of the maintenance team, who have the questionable privilege of mowing these monstrosities daily.

Thai Muang also suffered damage to the lagoons where the tsunami cut into the looser sandy banks. Waterways are clearly the Achilles heel of golf courses.

Other than that, the course was remarkably unaffected. My vision of the clubhouse, which sits just a long putt from the Andaman Sea, being torn apart by the killer waves could not have been further from the mark.

I had heard that the Tab Lamu course had suffered significant damage, although I could not fathom how, bearing in mind how little damage had been wrought on the nearby Thai Muang course.

It soon became clear, however, that the damage was significant. The usual entrance to the course was closed. We could see cars that had been washed as much as 100 yards from the road, some of them on their roofs.

The wall of the Royal Thai Navy base had been completely swamped. Hundreds of trees were standing at an eerie 45° rake and there was debris everywhere.

Worse was to come. Every bridge on the course had been washed out and sections of the irrigation system lay exposed, although only the PVC pipes were broken. The greens at holes 1 and 16 had disappeared and the fairways on the holes nearest to the beach were buried beneath a thick layer of silt.

The greens were lost but much of the zoysia grass elsewhere survived. Tab Lamu's fairway zoysia appears to be highly tolerant of salt; perhaps it had

developed an immunity from so much saltwater having been sprayed over it during storms and high tides. The zoysia on the greens had perhaps suffered from too shallow a root system.

Sections of the grass on the greens had been rolled up like a carpet, and in some cases carried 50m or more from the green. The waves had penetrated the greens' exposed sandy bases, and did the same to the bunkers gouging them out to a depth of as much as four meters.

Indigenous coconut palms were, on the whole, unharmed and many of the larger trees of various species looked as if they will survive. Oil palms – especially those planted in low-lying areas – were, however, dying. They had always looked somewhat out of place and clearly they did not belong so close to the sea.

The scattering of miscellanea testified as to the awesome power of the waves. Rock tee markers, some the size of a large refrigerator, had been moved from the tees to the landing areas. Golf bags and suitcases were strewn around the course.

A large Tab Lamu Golf Course sign now lay across the 10th fairway; the words had been written in Christmas lights, a poignant reminder of the tsunami's cruel date. A wrecked golf buggy sat between the sign and the 18th green. I quietly hoped that the buggy's driver was safe.

Close to the clubhouse, a breathtaking view of the sea had been revealed by the waves that had demolished a low dune previously blocking the view.

The clubhouse was not spared. The ground floor had been "spring-cleaned" every bit as effectively as if a tornado had ripped through the building.

The saddest inventory we had to take was of the course maintenance equipment and building. David reckoned the coring machine might be salvageable. Everything else, including the modest building that housed the staff and machinery, was gone with hardly a trace.

We wondered about the future of the course. Tab Lamu is owned by the Royal Thai Navy, which is not without financial resources. My sources tell me that "the authorities" are eager to have the course up and running before this September.

It is not just a renovation, but a significant upgrade that is being planned. Such a task – to be undertaken during the wet season – is a labor worthy of Hercules. Only time will tell if it can be achieved.

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Going...



Going...



Gone!

Natthawut Tanpien, 13, falls and loses his first round against Taweechock Sangsuwan, 12, in the under-16s "sea boxing" (boxing while sitting astride a greasy pole suspended over a *klong*) competition, part of a day of sports to honor Phuket's Heroines, Tao Thepkrasattri and Tao Srisoontorn, on March 13.

Natthawut recovered, however, and won the next two rounds to clinch the title.



Fed Cup tennis comes to Phuket

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PATONG: A 4,000-seat tennis court will be built in Patong so that Phuket can host one of the Group II quarterfinals of the premier international women's tennis competition the Federation Cup, between Thailand and Croatia, on April 23 and 24.

The Federation Cup is an annual team tennis competition. After round-robin play last year between 88 countries, 16 teams have won places in the quarterfinals, eight playing in Group I and the other eight in Group II.

Thailand and Croatia are in Group II of the contest, along with Switzerland, the Slovak Republic, Germany, Indonesia, the Czech Republic and Japan. In 22 years of competing in the cup, this is the first time that Thailand has made it into the final 16.

Thai players Tamarine Tanasugarn, Napaporn Tongsalee, Suchanun Viratprasert and Montheen Tangpong, are due to compete against Ivana Abramovic, Ivana Lisjak, Jelena Kostanic, Matea Mezak and Darija Jurak.

Thailand won all its matches in the preliminary rounds, beating China, the Philippines, New Zealand, India and Australia to take a place in the final eight of the competition's Group II.

Under the complex rules of the Fed Cup, as it is known, Croatia played only two preliminary tournaments to go into the Group II quarterfinals. The Croatians beat Brazil, but lost to Belgium.

The Patong tournament

promises to be close; Croatia is currently ranked 13th overall in the Fed Cup rankings, just one place ahead of Thailand.

It had been suggested that the matches be played on a temporary court built on Patong's Loma Park soccer pitch, but authorities decided instead to build the 60-by-80-meter hard court on spare land near the pitch.

Songsak Kitakarnkul, Chief of the Phuket office of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), told the *Gazette* that construction of the court would start on April 4 and should be completed in two weeks.

It has not yet been decided whether the court will be permanent or whether it will be removed after the tournament.

He said that the court itself would cost around 1.5 million baht to create, but the total budget for staging the event will be around eight million baht.

K. Songsak said it was hoped the tournament will help in the recovery of tourism, and could lead to more such events being held here.

"This could be Phuket's chance to show it is capable of hosting big [tennis] events, such as the Thailand Open," he said.

The matches in Patong will take place between 10 am and 6 pm on both days. Organizers have yet to decide whether there will be an admission charge for spectators. For more information contact the SAT, Phuket, at Tel: 076-250110.

Somtarn awarded cup in Langkawi reversal

LANGKAWI: Scott Duncan's *Securicor Somtarn Express* has been declared winner of the Sports boat class of the 2005 BMW Royal Langkawi Regatta in a reversal of the regatta racing committee's decision that named the Royal Malaysian Navy's entry *KDP II* as winner.

Somtarn Express and *KDP II* finished the regatta's six-race series with seven points apiece. However, the race committee awarded *KDP II* the honors of Sports class winner on the grounds that *KDP II* had won the final race.

Mr Duncan explained, "Under the International Yacht

Racing Rules a tie is broken in favor of the boat that places better in the final race. In the final race *KDP II* finished first and *Somtarn* finished second. Hence the regatta win went to *KDP II*," he told the *Gazette*.

"However, in the BMW Royal Langkawi International Regatta there was a clause in the official Notice Of Race [NOR] stating that a series tie would be broken in favor of the yacht with the better discarded race.

"*Somtarn*'s worst result and discard was a second place while *KDP II* discarded a third-place result. Hence, *Securicor Somtarn Express* was the overall winner."

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It's nearly spring and it's eight degrees celcius below: it must be Geneva. Show-time to be precise. The Geneva Salon d'Automobile, to give it its full title, is the first major European motor show of the year, and for that reason alone, arguably one of the most important. It is also held on neutral territory on the beautiful shores of Lake Geneva, in the shadow of snow-clad Mont Blanc, Europe's tallest mountain.

There were a number of new and remarkable exhibits at the show, along with the inevitable upgrades and face-lifts masquerading as new models.

The eagerly awaited third-generation Mazda MX-5 – the world's best-selling two-seater sports car – while all-new under the skin, looked suspiciously like the old one on the outside and, apart from the lights, would be hard to distinguish from the original MX-5 that made its debut as far back as 1989.

It is slightly heavier – by 10 kilograms – but now boasts a two-liter power plant and a choice of either a five-speed manual gearbox, or a six-speed automatic. Braking is considerably improved with larger discs, front and rear, and more rigid calipers.

Another exciting model was the expanded but still stylish Bentley four-door, the Continental Flying Spur, a name evocative of the old Bentleys from the '50s and '60s. The basic styling of the sleek Continen-

Show stoppers



The Subaru Mini made its debut at the Geneva show.



Lexus revealed its Lexus IS, which is claimed to be the most powerful model in its class.

tal GT is retained, but the roof line is extended to allow either four or five occupants to be accommodated. Buyers may specify individual bucket seats for the rear or a wide, sumptuous bench seat.

Last year Bentley produced a commendable 7,562 cars from its Crewe, England, factory.

Over at Subaru, parent company Fuji Heavy Industries had taken the strange step of introducing a minicar, the R1. The new vehicle is a departure from the company's well-established 4x4 sports sedans and wagons and will have to compete in an already overcrowded segment of the market.

A Subaru spokesman said that the company was "gauging public reaction" with the R1.

At the other extreme, DaimlerChrysler introduced a sports version of the Maybach, the 57S. Based on the shorter-wheelbase Maybach that was launched in New York in the summer of 2002, the 57S features an uprated 12-cylinder engine producing a staggering 612 bhp (450 kW).

Lexus sales in Europe have been suffering due to the absence



Honda unveiled its Civic Concept model.

of a diesel motor, much favored in many European countries. This will be rectified in 2006 with the introduction of a 2.2-liter all-aluminum diesel-engined Lexus IS. Claimed to be the most powerful in its class, the in-line four churns out 175 bhp (129 kW) and 400 Nm of torque.

The latest, second-generation IS shown in Geneva is larger and features better interior layout than the outgoing model. There is also a new, di-

rect-injection 2.5 liter V6 engine with six-speed paddle-operated gear shifting.



By Jeff Heselwood

Other notable exhibits at the top end included a long wheelbase Rolls-Royce Phantom. The Phantom is big enough to start with, but this version adds 250mm (9.84 inches), most of it in the rear passenger compartment.

General Motors' Cadillac division introduced a Europe-only model, the BLS, which will

be built at Saab's facility in Tröllhattan in Sweden. Production of the Saab 9-3 will be transferred to the Opel plant in Russelsheim, outside Frankfurt.

Attracting huge interest was the beautiful Aston Martin V8 Vantage, but more practical was the new hybrid Lexus SUV, the RX400h. This uses twin electric power plants, combined with a sophisticated 3.3-liter V6 gasoline engine delivering 211 bhp (155 kW). Lexus claims the 400h is the most powerful 4x4 hybrid on the market. It will be on sale by May this year.

Other notable appearances in Geneva included Italian sports sedan maker Alfa Romeo, which has vowed to return to the US market after an absence of several years, and which launched its new Brera model, an elegant replacement for the GTV.

Also at the show, Toyota introduced the three-door Aygo; rival Honda its new Civic Concept; and Opel its latest Zafira, which will probably be badged a Chevrolet in Thailand when it eventually makes its debut here.

Jeff Heselwood may be contacted by email at: jhc@natvigator.com

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On this main level, there is a lounge and living room, which have doors opening onto balconies with ocean views, and a full

The height of luxury



Western-style kitchen with all appliances. There is also a Thai kitchen housed in an annex next to the main kitchen, a separate TV and music room and an office.

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Construction Update

By Anongnat Sartpisut

KOH SIREH: Construction of the 247-million-baht Horisun Ville housing development, on Koh Sireh's east coast, is approaching the halfway mark, with three villas complete and all major infrastructure, including water and power, already installed.

3K Property Management began work on Phase I of the project, comprising eight villas on nine rai of land, in September last year and is expecting to complete that phase by the end of this year. The master plan includes another nine rai located further up the hill behind Phase I, though plans for Phase II have yet to be drawn up.

Mareeyana "Anna" Pohmea, Sales and Marketing Executive of Horisun Ville, said, "This is a place where you can enjoy a beautiful sea view, even in the moonlight."

With the major infrastructure installed underground, focus is now on completing the villas, which are available in three designs, all in a modern Thai-Balinese style and each with uninterrupted sea views.

The Leelawadee design houses, on the most expensive plots, have a living area of 602 square meters, including three bedrooms, five bathrooms, maid's room, dining room, living room, storeroom, sauna, ground-floor swimming pool and parking space for two cars.

Priced at 32.9 million baht, this design features four ponds throughout the home: one adjoin-

Rising on the Horisun

Artist's impression of the 32.9-million-baht Leelawadee design.



ing the master bedroom on the upper level, which also has a private terrace and a roof garden; another by the pool; one just off the dining room; and one on the opposite side of the dining area.

The Sirayna design is also a two-story villa, but with 661 sqm of living space, including four bedrooms, six bathrooms, dining room, living room, storeroom, a swimming pool on the upper level and parking space for two cars. Setting this design apart from the others is the outdoor Jacuzzi off the master bedroom

where guests can relax in natural surroundings. Prices for the Sirayna design start at 25 million baht.

The third design, Dusita, offers up to 600sqm of living area in a single-story villa, with three bedrooms, five bathrooms, a sauna, open-plan living area, living and dining rooms, kitchen, maid's room, storage area, swimming pool and parking space for two cars. Prices for Dusita homes start at 28 million baht.

Larry Cunningham, Managing Director of property agent

Phuket One Real Estate, said, "Our target customers are foreigners who like Phuket's quiet, natural environment and beautiful sea views. The concept is to provide sea-view mansions in a quiet location on large pieces of land, and with high-standard, quality furnishings."

"Before the tsunami, we had a lot of people coming and seeing the plans, but now some have postponed their viewing appointments."

"However, we are receiving good feedback; people who inspect the site love it. It is very quiet and has easy access to the Royal Phuket Marina and the Boat Lagoon," he added.

For more information contact 3K Property Management Co Ltd. 25/2 Soi Phusak, Phuket City. Tel: 076-224622. Email: info@horisunville.com. Website: www.horisunville.com.

The man sat at the bar. "Some things you just can't explain," he reflected sadly.

This fellow had a reason for his lament to which I will return later, but he may well have been describing my efforts to catch a plane from Bangkok to Phuket recently, or my friend's efforts to understand the reasoning behind the tax collected on advertising signs.

My flight – with the Thai national carrier – was confirmed for the evening, but as I had concluded my business by 9:30 am, I decided to try and catch an earlier flight.

"It'll be simple," I thought, reasoning that there are so many new airlines but so few people flying to Phuket.

As events transpired, it was not that simple. It was pandemonium in the domestic departures terminal. There were people everywhere, sitting on the floor, sitting on boxes, even asleep on their backpacks.

The national carrier had no seats available except standby, with 20-30 people on the waiting list.

A staffer at a certain boutique airline informed me that the next flight was at 6:30 pm.

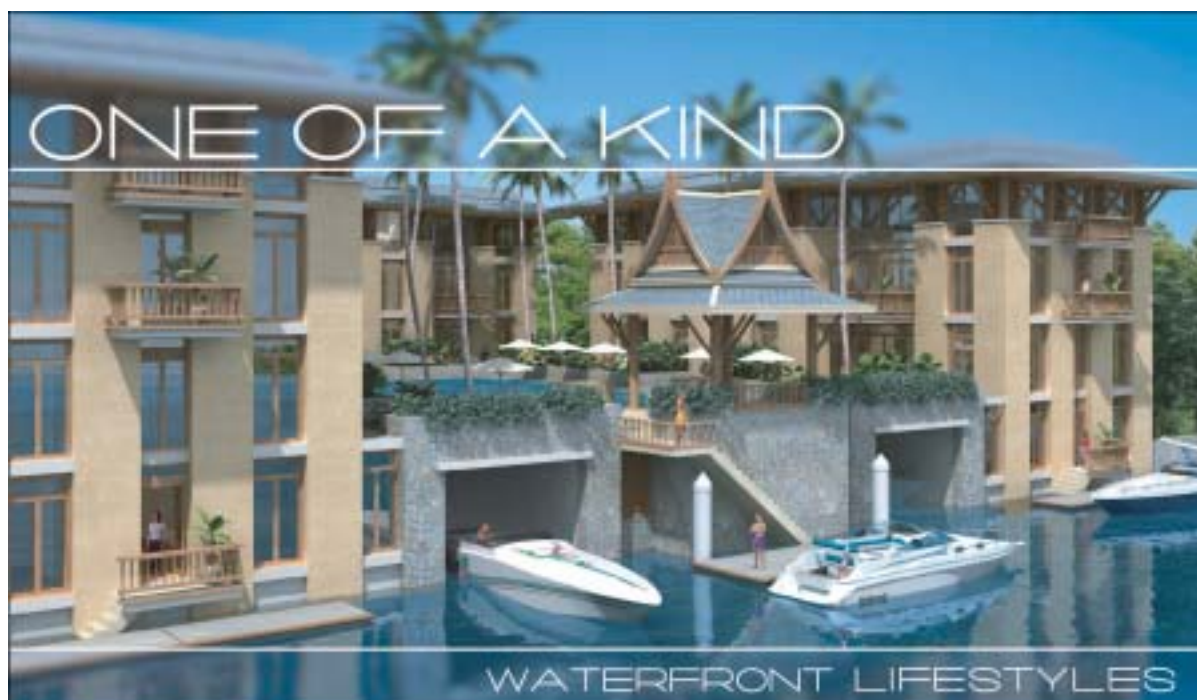
"What about the flight that leaves in an hour?" I asked.

"Full" she answered.

Another airline had a flight around 11 am, but the plane had been delayed by few hours and the counter staff couldn't say when it was going to actually depart.

One of the new low-cost airlines, the one owned by a relative of a certain national leader and that operates in competition with his country's national carrier – another thing that you just can't explain – had hundreds of people crowded around the check-in counters, with no semblance of order such as queues.

I didn't even bother to brave that lot. Then there was the



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Understanding beyond the pail

airline with planes as old as or older than me.

Next to me at the standby counter was a line of people who clearly knew something that I did not. The counter belonged to the new "bird" airline, a subsidiary of the national carrier, they say.

Although the counter had no staff nor any identifying messages announcing a destination, still the line kept growing. I decided to investigate this possibility, but with only five minutes to wait before I knew the results of my standby status for the next flight, I would leave it until after that.

However, before I had a chance to walk off, a man popped up behind the counter, stuck up a sign that said "Phuket" and handed out boarding passes to the whole line in a few minutes.

"How do you get a ticket?" I asked a girl who had just collected her pass. "You book on-line," she explained. "What if you don't have a computer?" I whined. She smiled sadly and walked off.

When I was waiting for my bag in Phuket - I made the standby flight - the boutique

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

airline's aircraft arrived. I asked one of the disembarking passengers about the flight.

"It was okay, but only half full. That isn't surprising when you think of all the trouble down here," he told me. Some things you just can't explain.

When you erect an advertising hoarding here, in English or another foreign language, you must have the same text in Thai even if the script is minuscule and tucked away in the corner. You have to pay about four times as much tax for the sign otherwise.

The tax collector came to see my friend about his sign and explained that the levy on it was 5,000 baht. "There is no Thai version on the sign," he explained. My friend reasonably pointed out that was no language of any sort on the sign, just an arrow. "You must have Thai language," said the taxman.

My friend suggested that a small arrow in the corner made from red tape might be a solution, but the taxman insisted that there had to be wording in Thai. Some things you just can't explain.

If you recall, this story started with the introspective fellow at the bar. The barman, having heard his patron say "There are some things you just can't explain" for the umpteenth time, asked for an explanation.

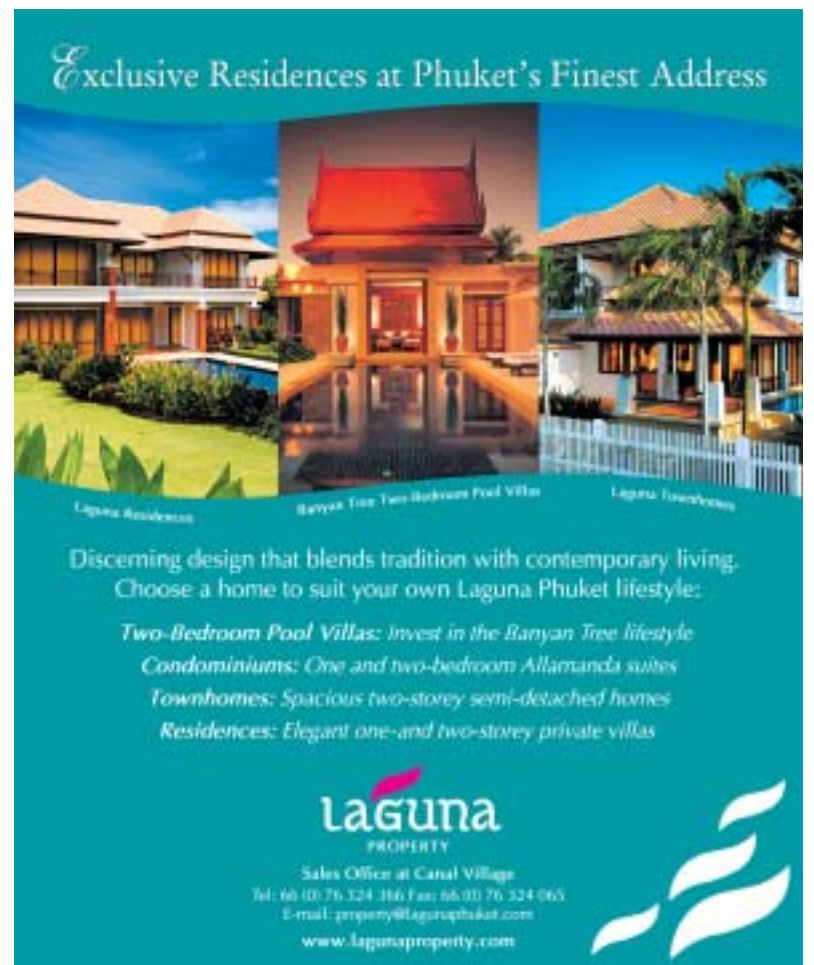
"I was milking the cow," began the solitary dairyman, "and just as the bucket was full, the cow lashed out with its right hind leg and knocked it over. I tied the leg to the railing and started again.

"Just as the bucket was getting full, the cow lashed out with its other hind leg and knocked the pail over again. I tied the left leg to a rail and started for a third time. The cow then lashed out with its tail, but I didn't have any more rope.

"I held up the tail to tie it to the rafter, took off my belt, making my trousers fall down. It was then that the wife walked in.

"Some things you just can't explain."

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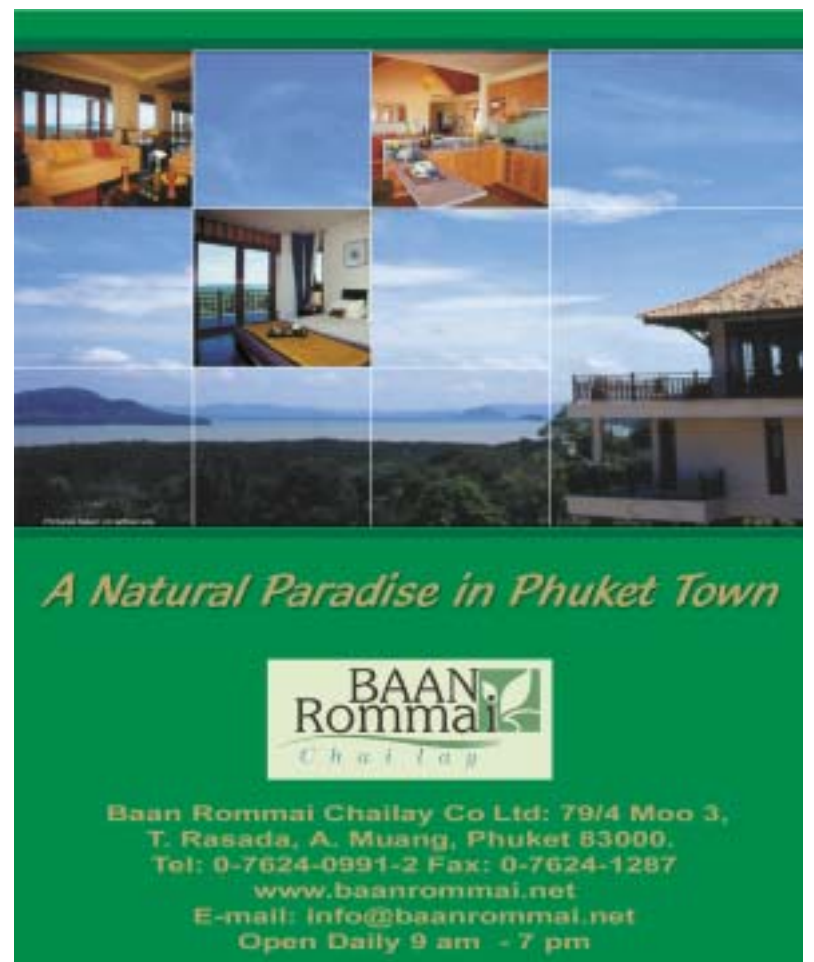
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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

Most of us have five senses, although some might argue that an extra one is rather useful when negotiating Phuket's roads. All five senses are stimulated to the extreme on a daily basis in Thailand, so much so that we don't even notice some of the ways in which this happens.

One of the less appealing assaults on our nasal passages are the *klong* that seem to line almost every street on the island. It doesn't take much for these open drains to start stinking like a half-baked skunk with a bowel problem.

But the reek from the dodgy drains is more than offset by some of the delightful odors here.

There are some amazingly fragrant plants in Phuket. I'm sitting with the outside door open as I type this and – no word of a lie – the scent from a plant of unknown species has just drifted in from the garden. I have absolutely no idea what it is, but it smells wonderful.

In the world of aromatic plants, the frangipani most certainly reigns supreme. It's a little like the durian, in an odd kind of way. Not because it smells as if it's emerged from the depth of Satan's inner crevices (absolutely the opposite is true), but because you can smell it before you see it. It's a distinctive smell, a little like those "genuine" imitations of

LEI LADY LEI

rather expensive perfumes you can buy in Patong.

Something else that makes the frangipani stand out is its long list of alternative names: plumeria, temple flower, dead man's finger, egg flower and cayenne jasmine are just some of its alternative monikers – enough names to give this unassuming plant an identity crisis.

Frangipani aficionados have been arguing for years over the source of its most common name. Some say it was inspired by an ancient perfume from Italy, and others are insistent that it was named after the white sap that oozes from a cut stem.

It's said that the sap reminded the early French visitors to the West Indies – it is native to sub-tropical America – of *frangipani* or coagulated milk. Who knows? Come to that, who cares?

In the past, frangipani trees in Thailand were rarely found outside temple compounds. This was because the Thai name for the plant, *lantom*, which means "sadness", and no one wanted to bring sadness into his garden.

However, a few years ago, HRH Princess Maha Chakri Si-



Popular all over the tropics, the frangipani is delightfully scented.

rinthorn renamed the plant *leelawadee*, meaning, roughly, "attractiveness", with the result that it can now be found in many more gardens than before.

I have to say that the tree itself is nothing to write home about. It is a bit of an ugly duckling. It looks a rather stunted, as if it hasn't quite decided which direction it wants to grow.

What makes the tree so appealing is the dramatic flowers, which always appear on the tips of its branches; it kind of gives you the impression that the other parts of the tree are just there by accident.

The waxy, scented flowers with the tropical fragrance appear almost non-stop year-round in Phuket, and in an almost endless number of varieties and colors. The most fragrant variety of frangipani is probably the Singapore plumeria, with its brilliant white flowers.

Always with five petals, but with varying shapes, other colors include pink, red and yellow, and delicate mixtures on some hybrids. Even off the tree, the flow-

ers continue to produce that smell. They are often used at some of the more exclusive establishments in Phuket as natural air fresheners. Just float a few blooms face-up in a bowl of water.

Luckily, the frangipani is ridiculously easy to grow in Phuket, in garden or pot. If you like the look of a friend's frangipani, all you need to do is cut off a branch and stick it into a well-drained pot full of rich soil.

It will then look a bit miserable and sulk for a while, and some of the leaves will inevitably shed. But once it's over the initial shock, it will quickly start to liven up and grow rapidly. It isn't particularly fussy about how much sun it gets, but it does need a fair amount of water in the initial stages.

Worldwide, the frangipani is associated with a number of different religions and cultures. Many southeast Asian Muslims plant it in their cemeteries, and Hindus use it as a temple offering.

In Hawaii, ceremonial *lei* (welcoming garlands of flowers put around the necks of guests) are made from the frangipani. It is a feature of many Buddhist temple gardens, too.

Here in Phuket, most of us enjoy the frangipani for what it is – an everlasting natural air freshener. Perhaps somebody up at Provincial Hall should insist that they are planted next to every *klong*.

Want to know more
about a plant
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Property Gazette

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Property Gazette

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- Split air-conditioners (2): 4,500 baht each

- Avent baby bottle sterilizer w/ bottles: 1,000 baht

- VCD: 500 baht

- Child car seat: 500 baht

- Outdoor metal lampost lighting w/matching sconces (200cm tall [4] and 140cm tall [5]): 3,500 baht for all

- Indoor light fixtures and dimmer switches: 2,000 baht for all. Tel: 076-288850, 01-6930767. Email: mikaam@hotmail.com

WHIRLPOOL NEW

refrigerator. Whirlpool refrigerator with water dispenser, only used 4 months, looks like new, selling because we bought a much bigger one. New in Tesco at 18,200 baht. We sell ours at 12,000 in Patong. Tel: 05-8394211. Email: info@bjjthailand.com

Do Not Drink Tap Water!

Household Products

DECKCHAIRS

and furniture. All types of wooden furniture made to order. Damaged furniture also repaired locally in our workshop - all at very competitive prices. We also buy damaged teakwood furniture. Please call or e-mail with enquiries. Tel: 01-6764849, 09-729-9747. Fax: 076-256101. Email: info@etwood.com

FURNITURE

and appliances. Half-price refrigerator, chest deep-freezer, twin-tub washer, 4 beds, 2 cabinets, teak sideboard, kitchen utensils and equipment. Quality polished teak grating settee, 2 armchairs, coffee table, cushions: 60,000 baht. Unpolished teak table, 4 chairs: 10,000 baht. Available at GM Storage, near Wat Chalong. Tel: 01-812-4800, 06-2818876. Email: brgonc9@supanet.com

Household Services

LOCKUP STORAGE

500 sqm steel shed. 24-hr security. Purpose-built storage compartments. Call Tel: 01-0825707 for more info.

PHUKET STORAGE

cars, boats + containers, large + small storerooms 100 baht/sqm. Tel: 09-9088675.

SAFeway SELFSTORE

Secure lock-up and covered areas, 24-hr security. Tel: 01-8924804, 01-125-1873. For more information, please see our website at: www.safewayphuket.com

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Handymen and home improvement contractor available for repairs and more. Floor/wall tiling, painting, ceiling, lighting system, kitchen, bathroom, wood and furniture. Tel: 09-5913996, 01-8953185. Email: hservice@phuket.ksc.co.th

HOME REPAIRS

and garden service. All kind is of service for home repair and garden maintenance. Expert handymen with fast service and guaranteed work. Tel: 076-225556, 01-6941284. Fax: 076-225556. Email: marisara@isaylight.com

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Island Job Mart



Baan Mai
COTTAGES & RESTAURANT

Deluxe boutique resort of 8 Cottages & 1 Thai Villa located on Lone Island, in Ao Chalong, off Phuket, is seeking the following personnel to join our team:

Executive Secretary, Accountant, Head Gardener, Waitress, Cook Helper

Benefits: Salary, Accommodation (electricity & water free), 3 meals a day, Uniform, Social Insurance

Interested people should apply in person or send an application letter and current CV providing details, qualifications and work experience with recent photo, by post or e-mail to:

Baan Mai Cottages Co., Ltd.
35/1 Moo 3, Lone Island, T. Rawai, A. Muang, Phuket 83130
Tel: +66 (076) 223 095 Fax: +66 (076) 223 096
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Minimum 28 years old with 4 years' experience and a good command of English. Motivating salary.

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- Selected candidates will receive high earnings and full, comprehensive training

Please submit application in English only, with curriculum vitae and recent photo, to:

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2nd. floor room no. 209A Central Festival Phuket rd.74 Moo 5 Chalermpakiat Rama 9 Road, Tambol Wichit, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000

SENIOR OFFICE

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- Thai national.
- Excellent English, spoken & written.
- Excellent telephone sales skills.
- Minimum 3 years' experience in office secretarial work.

- Must use Word, Excel and be capable of learning a new database.

- Have a friendly, positive attitude towards organising bookings and scheduling appointments within a busy environment.

Please email or fax your resum  to the following address: Helicam, 241/22 Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, Patong, Kathu, Phuket 83150, Thailand or contact Tel: 076-292772. Fax: 076-292773 Email: info@helicam-asia.com Learn more about Helicam at: www.helicam-asia.com

LANGUAGE

teachers. Phonics and pronunciation to be emphasised. Good pay. Tel: 076-282232, 01-9794140 for more info.

MANAGERESS

Entertainment night club seeks stylish, motivated, experienced, English-speaking person for 5-star venue in Patong. Contact Peter. Tel: 07-0170135. For more info please see our website at: www.homebarphuket.com

WAITRESS NEEDED

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NEW RESORT AT SAMUI

We are looking for enthusiastic members to join our team for the opening of a luxurious new hotel at Koh Samui called 'BANDARA Resort and Spa'.

- * Financial Manager
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- * Boat Captains and Boat Men
- * Guest Activity Supervisors
- * Housekeeping Supervisors
- * Room Maids

Please send your CV to gm@bandararesort.com or simply fax it to 077-427340. Walk-in interviews will also be accepted by calling 077-245795 for an appointment.

BOUTIQUE HOTEL

A Boutique Hotel in Patong is looking for females with good English-language skills, personality and a sense of responsibility.

1. Chief Accountant;
2. Junior secretary.

Pls contact for more information. Tel: 076-263737, 01-5354108. Fax: 076-224-113. Email: recruitment@bowentraining.com

POOL CLEANER

Full-time position, own transport required. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-8934661. Email: valiant@loxinfo.co.th

RECEPTIONIST/ASST

Law office seeks active, hard-working individual: Thai, female, 23-30 years old, bachelor's degree, fluent in spoken and written English, good computer knowledge (MS Office & Internet), willing to take responsibility and work under pressure. International service-mind person. Call Tel: 06-0349383 or email resum  & recent photo to: Email: cv_staffs@hotmail.com

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wanted for shop selling OTOP herbal and beauty products. No previous experience required as training will be given. Attractive salary, etc. Tel: 09-8794859.

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Looking for accountant and secretary. Part- or full-time. Email: scphuket@yahoo.com

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Director. Looking for a creative, energetic person with good experience. For more info, send email with full resum . Tel: 076-330530, 06-6894883. Fax: 076-330128. Email: frank@katagroup.com

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Admin. Marine electronic company needs a Thai national, 22-30 years old, with good command of English & computer skills. Duties: invoice, quotation, visa application, work permit and basic accounts. Please contact for full details. Tel: 076-273379, 09-4741246. Email: info@octopusasia.com

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Min 2 years' sales experience in the Thai travel industry. Good understanding of sales environment and processes in local markets (Phuket travel agencies, hotels, etc.) Highly organized, with proven sales abilities. All positions are available to Thai nationals only with degree or higher in related field. Proficiency in English is a must. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-239111. Fax: 076-238-974. Email: management@thaimarine.com

SECRETARY/SALES

persons wanted for villa property development.

- Female (Thai)
- Degree in Management, Secretarial College or any other related field.
- Minimum 2 years' work experience in related field as property administrator.
- Good command of English.
- Service-minded, good personality.

Contact Tel: 076-271319, 01-7371688; Fax: 076-273083 or send resum  and photo to Project Manager at: info@phuket-suriyaestate.com

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teacher. Native speakers required with a TOEFL certificate and/or degree. Fax: 076-248976. Email: info@kajonkiet.com

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therapists wanted. Phuket Home Massage in Cherng-Talay is now looking for therapists. We provide massages on a top-class level; therefore we seek applications only from excellent massage therapists. If you are one of the best and want to learn more, please call me at Tel: 01-0827703 or 01-9561901 for an interview, or send me an email at: dellapietra@mysunrise.ch

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for new bar and restaurant in Nai Harn. Must be able to cook Thai and international food. Please contact us to apply or for more information. Tel: 076-288676 or 01-893-9471. Email: sihilton@hotmail.com

Employment Wanted

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Teacher. I am a friendly Australian looking for work teaching English in Phuket. I have excellent qualifications available on request and my time is flexible. If you are interested, please call me at Tel: 01-6933479 or email details of job opportunities to: nicontour02@yahoo.com.au

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or guide. I am Javi, a Spanish native looking for a full-time job as a Spanish teacher or tour guide. Please contact with job details. Tel: 037-351958. Email: jcampolier@hotmail.com

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Experienced foreign-going navigator with long experience is seeking to work as a captain on a motor yacht that goes on day trips with a company or private owner, for a permanent contract. Holding 1st Mate competency certificate for 500 gross tonnage vessels and over, and all mandatory certificates. Well aware of ISM and G.M.D.S.S, safety equipment and all navigational equipment. High salary required; accommodation and yearly air ticket to be provided. Can also teach navigation in local sailing school(s) without extra salary. Tel: 01-9700859, 00120101817789. Email: marklover2@hotmail.com

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Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

FOR SALE

Home Jacuzzi tub. Barely used, beige color, new 90,000 baht. 30,000 baht. Large, two-sided "Room for rent" light sign on wheels, 1,000 baht. Tel: 07-246-6546.

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PLAY STATION 2

Urgent sale: Play Station 2, including 30 games. Brand new; only used a few times. New: 13,500 baht. I will sell for 7,500 baht. Pls call for inspection and testing. Tel: 07-9820422. Email: moodiving@yahoo.com

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Haier stereo AV: 8 months old, 3,000 baht. Two speakers: 400W, 500 baht. Tel: 09-2913641. Email: sayan40@hotmail.com

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for lease. Hotel, Rat-U-Thit Rd, Patong Beach. 22 rooms, highest offer over 5 million baht. Tel: 04-6255470. Email: kongenafthailand@yahoo.com

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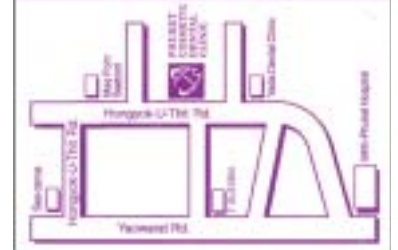
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