

20 Baht

## IN BRIEF

## Danish royals to visit

PHANG NGA: Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark and his Australian-born wife, Crown Princess Mary, accompanied by Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen and his wife Anne-Mette, are to visit Phang Nga on April 15 and 16.

The party will inspect areas devastated by the December 26 tsunami and take part in a memorial service for those who died.

## Bike 'Week' dates set

PATONG: The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Phuket Bike Week will be somewhat short of a week this year, taking place on April 15 and 16, with more than 2,000 bikers expected to join in.

One of the highlights of Phuket Bike Week will be the traditional "rumble" – a convoy of big bikes – around the island on April 16, starting at 2 pm.

For more information, contact Event Organizer K. Sumon at Email: [sumon@ridethailand.com](mailto:sumon@ridethailand.com)

## Man stabbed to death

PHUKET CITY: A man was found dead in Tambon Rassada on the night of March 30, shortly after he was seen being attacked by three others.

Police said the man, as yet unidentified, had died of multiple stab wounds.

## Austria funds B25m health center

PHUKET CITY: The government of Austria has pledged to spend around 25 million baht on establishing a health center for the fishing community of Tambon Rassada.

The money will cover construction of the center and staffing. The initial purpose of the center will be to improve the health of the fishermen and their



## Local girls scoop literary prizes

BANGKOK: Phuket girls Thip-ratri Saenkam, 18 (center), and Ella Micheler, 17, (left) took top prizes in the Second Junior Impac Dublin Literary Awards beating some 300 entrants from around Thailand.

Pictured with them are, from left, Dr James Irwin of sponsor Impac, Irish Ambassador Daniel Mulhall and John Magee, publisher of the *Phuket Gazette*, which organized and co-sponsored the southern Thailand round of the contest.

## Crackdown on crime during Songkran

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Police have revealed plans to keep crime and disruption during the Songkran holiday period to a minimum.

Phuket City Police Superintendent Pol Col Paween Pongsirin told the *Gazette* that the government has set a target of a 15% reduction in the number of accidents compared with last year, so there will be a crackdown on motoring offenses.

Col Paween said statistics showed that traffic accidents soar during Songkran, so his officers would be especially vigilant for drunk drivers, those who drive too fast and those driving without licences. The crackdown will continue from April 9 to 18.

He explained also that the number of "zones" where Songkran can be celebrated with the traditional water throwing will be increased, after the traffic problems of last year. However, powerful water pistols, ice and powder will be banned.

"We're planning to increase the areas for Songkran festivities," he said. "Last year, we arranged zones, and people were banned from celebrating at the side of the road, but people went off to party at Saphan Hin, and that just caused more traffic congestion and accidents."

"So this year there will be more zones where celebrations are allowed, although we haven't yet decided where these will be."

In addition, police will, if requested, monitor homes of people who celebrate Songkran away from Phuket, said Col Paween.

"During this period, offic-

ers will monitor houses left empty while the residents are on vacation elsewhere. They should contact us before they go, by calling 191."

Teerayuth Prasertphol, the Chief Technical Officer of the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office (PPTO), said his staff would check buses between April 7 and 10, to make sure they are mechanically sound. Officers will also test bus drivers for alcohol or drug use.

## Minister appeals for fuel-saving

From page 1

what are we going to do?" he asked.

"Even if the government subsidizes us another two baht, that still means we have to pay more than 16 baht a liter for diesel, and we still can't make a profit."

"So what can we do? We can't set the price. The government must give us support either with fuel prices or by setting fish prices," he said.

"Nobody knows the fishing business better than fisherman. Often, when we go to sea we meet bad weather, with big waves, and we can't find fish – but we still use fuel."

## Drug abuse 'may rise' in tsunami aftermath

PHUKET: Drug abuse and drug-related crime could rise as people lose their jobs because of the slump in tourism brought on by the tsunami, the Deputy Commander of Phuket Provincial Police has warned.

Pol Col Kokiat Wongvorachart said, "The tsunami affected so many people. Employees of big, medium-sized and small companies, laborers and the self-employed have all found themselves out of work."

"Only a few tourists are coming to Phuket, but the labor force is still the same size, and people still need money to survive."

"If people have no job and no income, they may well turn to crime to get the money they need, or to drugs in order to escape from the reality of their situation."

Col Kokiat added that the government's so-called "Wars on Drugs" had led to a 40% reduction in arrests for drug dealing and drug use in Phuket last year.

He continued, "We are still on the lookout for big dealers, but we haven't detected anything around Rassada Port or Bang Rong Pier that could be related to the shipment of illegal narcotics."

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## IN BRIEF

## B1bn budget for three provinces

PHUKET CITY: Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi Provinces will, between them, receive more than a billion baht from the government in their budgets for 2006.

Phuket will receive 337 million baht, Phang Nga 335 million and Krabi 378 million.

Around 70% of the money – or 695 million baht – is earmarked for supporting the tsunami-battered tourism industry in the three provinces.

Of the remaining 355 million baht, 159 million has been budgeted for developing agriculture, 96 million for infrastructure projects, 42 million for combating social problems, 11 million for protecting nature and the environment, and 1 million for developing the One Tambon, One Product initiative. The final 46 million baht has been budgeted for “other” expenditure.

## 70 artists on show

PHUKET: Former Prime Minister Chuan Leepai was due to preside over the April 8 opening of an art exhibition entitled “Painting Phuket, the Pearl of the Andaman”, at Central Festival.

The show, open until April 21, features 210 pictures produced by 70 artists, Thai and foreign, who were invited to Phuket by the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization.

## Body ‘likely a foreigner’

NAI HARN: The body of a man was found in the sea about a mile from Laem Promthep on March 29. Police said the man was at least 30 years old and was probably Caucasian. He was dressed only in blue underwear.

Investigators suspect he may have drowned while swimming at Nai Harn Beach.

## Work advice center to open in Patong

PHUKET: Phuket Provincial Employment Service Office (PESO) has opened a center at Patong Hospital to give advice on employment matters.

Visitors to the center, which opened on April 4, will be able to study boards carrying information on jobs in Thailand and overseas, find out about training courses, speak with consultants about employment, work permit and social insurance issues, and register if they have lost their job.

Patong is one of five places in Thai-

land where the center is being piloted; the others are Yala, Lumphoon, Tak and Bangkok.

PESO Deputy Chief Suthep Terdkiatkajorn told the *Gazette* the PESO was running the center in conjunction with Phuket Labor Department.

He said, “We thought it would be good to provide a service for people in Patong so that they would not have to trail over the hill to Phuket City.”

He said six officers from the Labour

Department are being trained to work in the advice center.

He added, “If the shop proves popular, we may arrange for more senior officers to be based there too, ones with the power to authorize documents, so we could provide a more comprehensive service.”

The one-stop shop is on the second floor of the hospital; it will be open Mondays to Fridays between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm. For more information contact the PESO at Tel: 076-354035-6. – *Sangkhae Leelanapaporn*



## Tsunami victims get homes

PHUKET: Forty families left homeless by the December 26 tsunami took possession of new homes on March 28 during ceremonies at Koh Sireh's Laem Tukkae and along Klong Pak Bang, at the southern end of Patong Beach.

At the Sea Gypsy Village at Laem Tukkae, 24 Sea Gypsy families moved into new permanent dwellings at a ceremony presided over by Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura, while at Klong Pak Bang, a further 16 families got homes.

The 40 dwellings were funded privately but built under government guidance.

## Ceremonies mark 100 days from tsunami

PHANG NGA: A long weekend of events was organized in Phang Nga to mark 100 days since the tsunami.

The three-day long commemoration included Buddhist, Christian and Muslim religious ceremonies and a wreath-laying

event where people could pay their respects to Khun Bhumi Jensen, grandson of HM King Bhumibol, and others who died in the tsunami.

Local Sea Gypsies carried out a *Loi Reua* ceremony, during which unmanned boats with offerings are set adrift to appease the spirits of the sea.

The event also featured entertainment, including music and dance, and exhibitions of crafts, photographs and sculptures.

## Gov calls for urgency in tsunami plan

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura has ordered the provincial branch of the Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (ODPM) to speed up its planning for coastal evacuation and work more closely with local government bodies in order to prevent a repeat of the confusion that followed the March 28 tsunami alert.

Gov Udomsak made the call at the March 30 monthly meeting of senior officials at Phuket Provincial Hall.

He said he had ordered evacuation planning after the first tsunami, but had so far seen little real progress.

The central government's tsunami early-warning system should be operational in Patong by the end of April, said the Governor, but in the meantime, he said, there should be better training of local officials to allow them to conduct an orderly evacuation of danger areas within 15 or 20 minutes.

He noted, for example, that a large earthquake centered on Port Blair in the Andaman Is-

lands would produce tsunami waves that would reach Phuket in just 45 minutes.

Gov Udomsak also announced that a “hazard map” is now being produced by Chulalongkorn University researchers in conjunction with a team of Japanese tsunami experts.

The map, which will be ready in about a year, will show which parts of the island are most vulnerable to inundation by tsunami and will include evacuation routes based on this information. The map will initially cover only the most popular tourist beaches of Patong, Kata-Karon and Kamala, he said.

Pattanapong Aikwanich, President of Phuket Tourist Association, suggested that an evacuation manual in Thai and English be distributed to local people and tourists alike and said that last Monday's served as yet another wake-up call.

“The traffic gridlock that occurred – extending the entire length of Phrabaramree Rd from the top of Patong Hill down to the beach – would have resulted in many casualties had there been a tsunami,” he said.

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## Queer News

### Abbot gets defrocked for bad habit

NAKHON PATHOM: An abbot and well-known fortune teller was defrocked after offering to perform a lewd "good-luck" ritual on a young woman in a short-time hotel.

The woman, 20, told police she had gone with her boyfriend to pay respect to the monks at Wat Maeng Mum Hill Temple (Temple on Spider Hill).

While there, the woman's boyfriend had his fortune told by famous monk Phra Srilasang Walow.

The 28-year-old monk was renowned for conducting the *salika linthong* ritual, in which small carved images of mynah birds are used to convey the gift of the gab.

As the couple were leaving, the monk gave the woman his card, warning her that she was cursed by bad luck and advising her to call him back when she wanted the *salika linthong* ritual performed.

When the woman's luck turned for the worse she called the monk, but he offered to perform the ritual only under certain conditions: one-on-one; outside the temple in the Follow Inn short-time hotel; and, most importantly, nobody else could ever know about it.

The ritual would involve her stripping naked and being rubbed, inside-and-out, with gold leaf and *salika linthong* amulets, she said.

The woman tipped off police, who caught the monk at the hotel, dressed in white and preparing for the "ritual". Inside his shoulder bag they found an ATM card, gold leaf, many amulets – and a contraceptive of the "morning after" variety.

Source: Daily News

Yonob Phetdee is *Phu Yai Baan* of Koh Maphrao and he has mixed feelings about the island's future.

He says, "I don't see there being anything to worry about if we have proper development controls and good town planning, and we limit the number and size of hotels. We must insist that each has proper waste disposal facilities and a system for treating waste water before it is discharged into the sea. Also, the development should not harm existing industries such as rubber and fishing."

"Anyway," he points out, "we can't really prevent outsiders investing here. They aren't taking the land unfairly – they have bought it legitimately and they have the land title for it."

"I feel they will believe it will be in their own best interests to protect their investment by not causing damage to the land around their development."

K. Yonob says it is easy to see why businesses might want to move to Koh Maphrao – many properties have their own well water, and there are no land title problems either, as families have lived there for generations, and each house has a Chanote title.

"Actually, I would like to see development here, especially because it might help us get an electricity supply."

"I have asked the Phuket Provincial Electricity Authority to install electricity here during each of the 16 years I have been *Phu Yai Baan*, but they have always told me it wouldn't be worth their while to do so. They say they wouldn't be able to recoup the cost of installation because there is no tourism, no investment, no commercial business here."

"They have given us solar cell arrays, but the supply from them isn't that reliable. However, just as I was told that we couldn't have mains power because there is no business here, then, equally, if we have business here, then we should get electricity."

The Phuket Provincial Administration Organization has allocated 2.5 million baht to build a six-meter-wide, 500-meter-

# Koh Maphrao

Koh Maphrao (Coconut Island) is just 800 metres east of the main island of Phuket, but in character it is almost a world away.

There is no electricity and few other facilities, and the population of 700 – mainly Muslims, and comprising only some 100 families – forms a tight-knit community.

There is no crime and no drug problem, residents say, and everyone works together to improve their lives and solve any problems that do arise. They live uncomplicated lives, mostly fishing or working in rubber plantations.

At present, the only way to reach Koh Maphrao from Phuket is via a 10-baht, three-minute ride in a fishing boat from Laem Hin Pier in Sapam.

But now there are rumors that plans exist to build a bridge to link 2,860-rai Koh Maphrao to Phuket.

Already, locals are selling land to outsiders, to foreign investors likely to use it for luxury housing or leisure or tourism facilities. How will this affect island life, particularly if (or when) the bridge is built?

The *Gazette's* Sangkhae Leelanapapon and Anongnat Sartpisut find out.

long stretch of road on Koh Maphrao. K. Yonob says he would like one day to see a road circling the entire island, along with the installation of mains power and water.

"As for the bridge, well, some residents are in favor of it and some are against. A bridge could put the mangroves, forests and other land under threat from more development ... but development could bring benefits for us – by raising the local economy, for example. We must be prepared to make sacrifices for development."

Rapin Suwansin, the Chief Administrative Officer of Koh Kaew Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) – which oversees Koh Maphrao – is more circumspect.

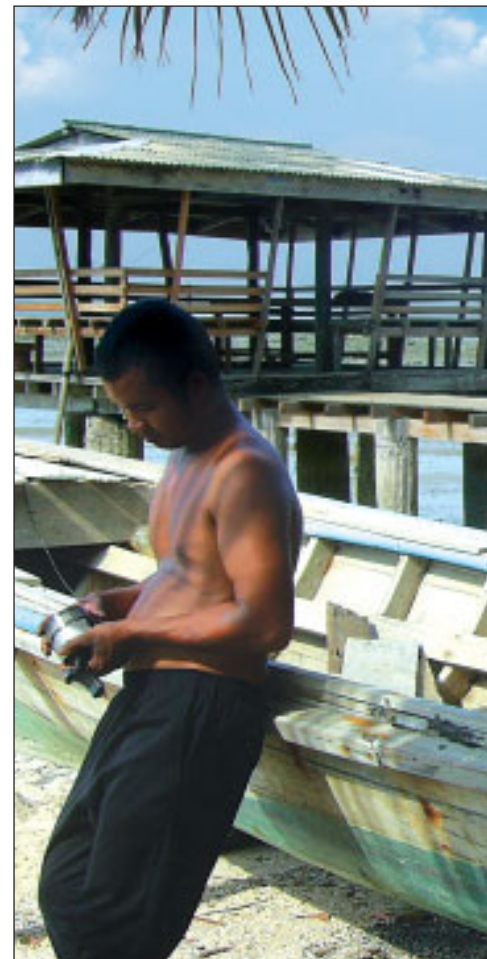
Stressing that Koh Maphrao is home to a tightly-knit community with no social problems, he says he can see the island's attraction to outside in-

vestors, particularly as land is relatively cheap – around one million baht a rai – and there are no problems with land titles.

He says the *OrBorTor* has heard that three foreign concerns have already bought land on the island, with a view to launching some kind of development, although none has yet asked the *OrBorTor* for permission to start building.

The *OrBorTor* is wary of supporting the exploitation of Koh Maphrao, says K. Rapin, because it is afraid the community spirit may be damaged.

However, he concedes that the majority of residents do not regard their home as a tropical island paradise. He believes many of them, deriving low incomes from fishing and rubber, would have no qualms about selling their land to outsiders and looking for a better life elsewhere. This, he feels, would be accelerated if the bridge was built.



He says, "I would like the people of Koh Maphrao to have a more comfortable life, with a good basic infrastructure, a road, water and electricity."

And he says the *OrBorTor* is doing what it can to help the community, for example by supporting islanders' demands for mains electricity. It also plans to subsidize ferry fares for children going to school on Phuket Island.

He would also like the island to have access to UBC TV, to give children there more information about the outside world.

"The community leaders of Koh Maphrao do want business-people to invest there and create jobs," he notes.

"At the moment, young university graduates who come from Koh Maphrao, if they want a job in which they can use their de-

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# eyes future cautiously



Community life: Left, fishermen on the shore of Koh Maphrao and, above, the island's quiet main street.

grees, have to leave the island. But if there were opportunities on the island, they could work there. "So I do support some development, as long as it doesn't come at too high a cost for the environment or the potential for tourism.

"Governor Udomsak [Usawarangkura] once suggested building the international convention and exhibition center on Koh Maphrao, and I would welcome that, although I still would not want there to be a bridge between the island and Phuket; a nice ferry would be better.

"Whatever happens, I would

like the island's cultural identity to be preserved. I think it has a stronger identity than many places in Phuket [Province].

"But everyone wants a comfortable life, and I'm sure that if the local people are offered a chance to change their lives, they will take it. This is more likely to happen if there is a bridge.

"But this is a lovely peaceful island, and the last thing I want is for it to become another Koh Phi Phi Don," he concludes.

Lily Udomkhunatham is Managing Director of Phuket Resort Club Co, the parent com-

pany of the Burasari Hotel Group. Her company has been planning for some time to open a boutique resort on Koh Maphrao.

The plans have been put back a year because of the tsunami. K. Lily says that the project is still in the very early stages, but the company will ensure that the development is done in an environmentally sensitive way.

She stresses that the company is committed to the project. "We believe the investment will benefit local people; we will hire local people to help us develop quality tourism."

There seems to be strong local support for developing Koh Maphrao.

Rubberworker Koma Na Rangsi, for one, would be happy to see her home island develop, so long as local people benefit.

"It would be good if a hotel or even a golf course were to be built here, and it brought work for Koh Maphrao people," she says. "I wouldn't support [any project that] didn't recruit island residents. Something should be done to prevent too much disruption to life on the island.

"I don't want to see a construction free-for-all, as there has been in Patong. We have to preserve facilities for nature tourism," she says.

"I don't want to leave the area, and I'm not looking to sell my land, but I am not against opening the island up to modernization, which I'm sure is coming soon.

"In the meantime, if the government really wants to help us, it could provide free or subsidized transport between here

and Phuket for schoolchildren. Most people here have low incomes and it is enough of a struggle finding money for lunches and equipment without also having to pay for transport to school," she concludes.

Somsak Naree, a fisherman, also says he would welcome tourism and development in general.

"It would be a good thing. We could sell more seafood and the development would mean more jobs for local people."

But K. Somsak, like K. Koma, does not see a bridge as a priority. "It's not as important as electricity," he says. "What we need is mains electricity."

Student Weerasak Phetdee agrees that Koh Maphrao needs electricity and mains water.

Development of tourism would be a good thing, he says, but the island's natural resources must be preserved, particularly as the unspoiled nature of the island already attracts tourists.

At 80 years of age, seafood vendor Koh Saisangkaew is perhaps the kind of person one might expect to be strongly opposed to change on Koh Maphrao, but this is far from the case.

"I would love to see major investment come to Koh Maphrao, because it would mean jobs for my children and grandchildren, and that would mean families could stay together and have higher incomes," he says.

He also supports "150%" the erection of a bridge to Phuket Island. "We could drive to Koh Maphrao then," he explains, "and we wouldn't have to climb up all the steps from the jetty."

He is wary about the possibility of building a golf course on Koh Maphrao, because it might create a water shortage, he points out. However, he believes it is possible to develop the island while still preserving its natural heritage.

"That's what we need to do," he says. "We don't want to end up as another Patong."

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# Learning through a Phuket adventure

By Benjamat Srisuwan  
and Rungthong Naknueb

Phuket may be well-known around the world as a tropical holiday isle, but one day it could become notable as the birthplace of Juk, the cute main character of a new children's book entitled *Juk's Adventure in Phuket Thailand*.

The colorfully-illustrated, hardcover book is sure to appeal to the youngest of readers. Its simple plot, which is bound to get a big thumbs-up from the people at the Ministry of Culture, can transport children through their fertile imaginations and give them an insight into life on Phuket.

The book is a day-by-day narrative of Juk's one-week adventure, co-written by Phuket resident Meng Lin Chen and her husband Michael Kirjon, who also illustrated the book. The Thai-German couple have a five-year-old son named Valentine.

Not only did young Valentine serve as the book's inspiration, he was also involved in its production. In order to make the illustrations appealing to the difficult-to-discern tastes of the five-year-old mind, Michael showed all of the paintings to his son – and if Valentine didn't like them, it was back to the drawing board – literally.

"We thought about writing the book for a long time," says Meng Lin.

"We have lived in Phuket for nine years, so we wrote the book about Phuket using Juk as the main character. He is modeled on our own child, who is always smiling, because Thailand is the Land of Smiles," she adds.

What a pleasant life little Juk leads. One day finds him snorkeling among colorful fish, the next day he is running off to visit his grandmother in Old Phuket Town. On another day, after releasing sea turtles, young Juk finally loses his trademark topknot, when he enters the



monkhood and has his head shaved. This is to show his gratitude to his parents, the authors say.

Oops, we just gave away the whole plot!

In addition to English, the tale is also presented in eight other languages, the text skilfully worked into the pages to enhance the artwork, not detract from it.

"We used nine languages; English, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, Swedish and Thai," says Meng Lin, explaining that she wants the book to have as wide an appeal as possible. The different texts will also expose children to for-

eign languages and may even inspire them to want to learn a few words, she says.

Michael admits that he favored beauty over accuracy when painting some of the illustrations – such as when Juk goes out rubber-tapping at night with a hand lantern instead of a lamp fixed to his helmet.

He explains that he believes that children learn better through active use of their imaginations than through the more conventional approaches, such as rote memorization, used in many schools. His use of bright oils on canvas is intended to inspire young minds.



ABOVE: Meng Lin reads *Juk's Adventure in Phuket Thailand* with her son Valentine, who Juk's character is based on.

LEFT: As part of his adventures, Juk drives a *songtaew*.

If young readers are inspired by the artwork, they also have a place to try their own hand at coloring Juk. The front and back inside covers, and their facing pages, have pencil sketches of Juk for children to color in themselves – though some parents might balk at the idea of allowing their kids to take crayon, marker or paint to a book that cost them 250 baht, the price at B2S Bookstore at Central Festival Phuket.

The authors expect the first print run of 3,000 books, published by the Thai Watana Panich Company to be "well-accepted". It is currently available around Thailand through B2S bookstores, which has an exclusive contract to distribute the book, and on display in some hotels in Phuket.

So is Juk to be just a one-book wonder? What will become of the intrepid young explorer and model of Thai cultural correctness after he "does" Phuket?

If all goes well, the authors expect Juk's adventures to con-

tinue – perhaps in Chiang Mai.

"We think if we have good feedback about the book we will do the next book about Juk's Adventure in Chiang Mai, or maybe with the elephants of Thailand. In the future, we intend to write about Juk's travels around the world. We would like to present some of the culture, lifestyle and attractions of places such as China that many people are unfamiliar with," Meng Lin says.

In the meantime, Meng Lin and Michael are just happy to see their labor of love finally sitting on shelves in bookstores.

"Now we are very glad – and can recover from the exhausting effort that went into producing the book," says Meng Lin.

*Juk's Adventure in Phuket is on sale at 250 baht at B2S Bookstores across Thailand, including the branch at Central Festival Phuket. For more information contact Meng Lin Chen (Tel. 01-8922419) or visit the website at: [www.juksadventures.com](http://www.juksadventures.com)*

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# Health Ministry to tackle sexy spas

**T**he Ministry of Public Health is drafting a bill to regulate spa and massage businesses in an attempt to eliminate sex services disguised as rubdowns and soap baths.

Medical Services Support Department Director General Rewat Wisarutavej said his department would push for the bill's enactment so that officials would be empowered to check whether spas and massage parlors are being operated as brothels, as he suspected was the case with more than half the country's spas.

Currently, the Medical Registration Division needs the co-operation of law enforcement officials to inspect spas and massage parlors. Health officials can issue certificates to spa and massage businesses, but have no authority to conduct inspections later.

K. Rewat said that when health officials sought police permission to inspect establishments, the police were routinely slow to comply, giving owners time to conceal signs of prostitution.

If enacted, the new bill would empower the Medical Registration Division to supervise spas and massage places in the same way it does clinics and hospitals. The bill should be tabled in Parliament by the end of the year, he added.

**Give peace a chance:** Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra retreated from his hard-line position on the violence in the Muslim-majority South, saying he would try peaceful measures to address the problem.

In an apparent about-face from his usual uncompromising position, PM Thaksin said "violence breeds only violence" and



**FIRST GRADE HERE WE COME!** Students from five kindergartens in Pattani gather for a photo session during a mass graduation ceremony.

that his government would from now on give greater consideration to the due process of law and cultural understanding, instead of resorting to conventional security measures.

The Prime Minister said his change of heart came during a brief vacation in Japan, when he was able to rest and rethink his policy, which has failed to bring an end to 15 months of violence that has left more than 630 people dead.

**Sgt Somchai's secret spy:** Pol Sgt Somchai Wisetsingh, accused of murdering two British backpackers in Kanchanaburi last September, told the court that a "secret spy" carried out the shooting of which he is accused.

"I didn't have a gun. It was pawned. Whenever I had to use a gun, I had to borrow one from a colleague or do without. But my

spy, Mr Ya, he had a .38 revolver. Nobody knows Mr Ya [Mr Drug], not even my boss. He's one of my spies, and I cover for him. I don't know his phone number, address or real name. But I've used him on 10 investigations," he told the court.

He added that he fled to Burma after the alleged murders because he was afraid inmates at the Kanchanaburi Provincial Prison would exact revenge on him for putting them behind bars on drug-related crimes.

**Horrorscope for Pisces:** The Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning revealed that more than 200 species of fish in the Kingdom were at risk of extinction.

The agency's list of endangered species includes sawfish, whale sharks, napoleons, the common silver barb and the

Mekong giant catfish, said Chavalit Vidtayanont, head of the World Wildlife Fund's Thailand Marine and Freshwater Unit.

Fish most at risk were those with high economic value, he said.

In Thailand, 90% of the locations studied were under threat, he said. These sites included the Mekong basin, Songkhla Lake, and the Surin-Similan archipelago.

**Supergrass:** In the face of the ongoing drought, many farmers in Isarn are now growing grass instead of rice.

"Many farmers in Ban Pakkudwai are opting to grow grass because it's easy to cultivate and there's no need for pesticides. We've even formed a collective of grass farmers," said Rassamee Thongyeun, 48, a farmer in Ubon Ratchathani Province.

Techniques for growing grass are similar to those for rice, but grass takes less time to mature and yield seeds, she added.

Wirat Donprajong, an officer at the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives in Khon Kaen Province, said the bank paid up to 60 baht a kilo for Ruzi grass seed, which it then sold as fodder for use by cattle farmers, giving grass farmers a dividend of 13 baht per kilogram.

**Back in black:** Thailand's current account swung back to a surplus of US\$106 million (4.15 billion baht) in February — thanks mainly to greater tourism income — after recording its largest deficit in almost eight years in January.

The small surplus came despite low export growth of 5.9%, the slowest annual increase in two years. While the trade deficit narrowed to US\$596 million, the services and transfers account recorded a surplus of US\$702 million, according to the Bank of Thailand's monthly economic data.

**Roach alert:** Four out of 10 Thai children suffer from allergies, many of which may be caused by cockroaches, the Public Health Ministry announced.

A Ministry spokeswoman said foreign specialists recently found that cockroaches produce substances that cause allergies in children.

The substance is found in the pest's saliva and excrement. People should keep their homes cockroach-free or their children will run the risk of developing allergies, she said.

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

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# Persevering through scary times

Three months after the tragedy of December 26, sheer terror again struck Khao Lak residents late on March 28 after an earthquake of magnitude 8.7 on the Richter scale rocked Northern Sumatra.

The combined and immediate efforts of police, army and volunteers to evacuate areas of Khao Lak that could have been at risk from a tsunami succeeded, with hundreds of people arriving at safety zones, such as the Khao Lak viewpoint, just minutes after the first warning was issued.

Although the dreaded tsunami never came, several people were badly injured in traffic accidents caused by panicking drivers.

The owner of a local dive center reported that two motorbikes smashed into his truck during a one-kilometer drive from his office to the viewpoint safe area. One motorbike driver lost four fingers. The other escaped with just a few bruises.

Despite these events, the spirit of Khao Lak residents to put the area back on its feet as fast as possible is unbroken. Reconstruction efforts continued the next day as if nothing had happened.

Government officials gave the green light on February 19 for reconstruction within the bounds laid down for buildings on – or rather near – the beach. One of the rules is that there must be no buildings within 30 meters of the high-water level.

Several houses and resorts in the Bang Niang and Nangthong area are now being rebuilt and heavy trucks laden with sand to refill the lost beach areas drive in and out of Khao Lak day and night.



Smiling in the sunshine, but when the first squares of turf were laid at the Cousin Resort, the weather conveniently turned to rain.

Observing all the action going on, one is reminded of a swarm of ants, busily rebuilding their nest after the rains. Ants do not ask why disaster struck or whether there is a chance that it might strike again. They simply get back to work to rebuild what was lost.

It takes courage and strength to do this, and Khao Lak residents are blessed with such noble characteristics.

**Thank you, volunteers:** Talking about nobility and noble characters, on behalf of everyone in Khao Lak, I would like to thank all the foreign volunteers currently helping to rebuild resorts in the Bang Niang area.

While being threatened with “severe penalties” by government officials – who have no idea how hard it is for tsunami victims to rebuild their lives and businesses with the maximum financial government help of just 20,000 baht per head (just where

have the billions of baht in aid gone?) – their collective spirit remains unbroken.

Whether removing debris, planting trees or simply assisting wherever needed, this busy and currently endangered sub-species of Homo Sapiens is one that deserves praise and gratitude instead of government threats.

Many people – mostly Thais – hope that Prime Minister Thaksin will say a few words to enable volunteers to continue their work unharmed.

One Khao Lak businesswoman, who lost her home, business and employees to the waters, said, “Every single helping hand is needed and we can’t afford to lose volunteers as a result of government officials treating them like criminals.

“I wish from the bottom of my heart that our Prime Minister would step forward to correct this mistake made by the [provincial] Employment Services Offices.

“The volunteers are my

only hope,” she continued. “I simply can’t afford to pay workers at this moment. If the volunteers go, my trust in human rights and fairness and the Thai government will fade.”

She said that the volunteers have, with their friendliness and support, kept her spirits up during the difficult times.

“I couldn’t bear to lose them. We are like one big family,” she said.

Anyone who is willing to support the efforts of tsunami volunteers in Thailand in person or by donations should visit the website [www.tsunamivolunteer.net](http://www.tsunamivolunteer.net)

**Welcome rain arrives:** Reports from the Bang Niang area say that the first rains of the year fell

directly after the first donated trees were planted on March 12. A second belt of showers came immediately after the first squares of donated turf were laid down at Cousin Resort in Bang Niang on March 15.

The German district of Loewenberger has donated some 9,000 euros (approximately 450,000 baht) for plants and grass.

Bang Niang Beach has now officially been declared priority beach No 1 for repair and reconstruction of the infrastructure.

Obviously, the ray of hope mentioned in the previous Andaman Coasting, that the first private home on Bang Niang Beach is being rebuilt, has sown seeds.

Other developments include a petition signed by 36 Bang Niang residents stating that mains electricity is a necessity and must be connected immediately, which was handed to the Phang Nga Provincial Electricity Authority on March 14.



**ANDAMAN COASTING**  
By Franky Gun

For lovers of Khao Lak, willing to support the area by traveling here, there is some very good news. There are now 24 resorts in Khao Lak – five of them on the beach – that are operational again.

For a complete list of operational resorts in Khao Lak, visit the website at [www.khaolak-coop.com/khaolakbeach/KLHotelList.htm](http://www.khaolak-coop.com/khaolakbeach/KLHotelList.htm)

Local dive operators have scheduled frequent day and live-aboard trips to the Similan Islands, where the reefs are reported to be 90% intact following the tsunami.

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## This week



**TANTALIZING TERRACES:** Chairman of Plantation Holdings, Anthony James (right), with company directors Suchana Chaloehtoom (front, 2<sup>nd</sup> from right) and David Curtin (left), guests and colleagues at the recent launch of The Terraces apartments in Kata.



**GOOD TASTE INDEED:** Phuket Vice-Governor Winai Buapradit (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) samples what's on offer during the recent Phuket Good Taste, Good Food festival at Saphan Hin.



**CANADIAN CLUBBERS:** (above) Although not a lumberjack or Mountie was in sight, the first gathering of Canadian expatriates in Phuket, held at Jimmy's Lighthouse, saw, among others, Wayne "Red" Graham (2<sup>nd</sup> from left), organizer Marshall Rudko (kneeling, in hat) and Darren Michelin (6<sup>th</sup> from right) plainly enjoying themselves.

**THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE...** (left) Students from Dulwich International College putting on another energetic performance in *Showbusiness*, a musical about the internecine goings on behind the scenes in an am-dram (amateur dramatics) company.



**TEAM STRIP:** (above) Although not in rah-rah togs, these lovely ladies and dapper chap are one of the cheerleading teams at JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa's sports day.

**MANY HANDS:** Relief group Hands on Thailand celebrate after completing their work rebuilding houses and repairing boats in battered Bang Tao.



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On December 28, 2004, two days after the tsunami, members of Patong Beach Rotary Club traveled around Phuket looking for people and places that needed help.

One member, Larry Amsden, drove out of Phuket and into Phang Nga, to Kuraburi, where he found people living in a mosque. They told him they were from the fishing village of Baan Pak Trium, which had been washed away by the tsunami.

"I didn't have any plans," Larry told the *Gazette*. "I just drove around, then I found the villagers and it was clear they were in pretty bad shape."

"I talked to them, then came back and reported to the club, and we started to help immediately."

Rotarian Brad Kenny, told the *Gazette* how he would go to the supermarket and load his truck with food, then drive up to the mosque, 3½ hours away.

Jeroen Deknatel, another Rotarian, explained that he and his colleagues were happy to help the villagers, because they were trying to help themselves.

"And," he said, "they are sticking together. They have got themselves organized and they are trying to find people to help them."

"Also, they have a strong sense of belonging; if they are Muslim, they have their imam at their center. They have also realized that if they stick together, they will be in a better position to put their lives back together and live in the way they choose."

At first, the Rotarians thought it would be enough just to ask the villagers for lists of things they needed, and supply those items. But they soon realized the villagers would need more than just immediate relief.

From Pakawin "Chet" Sangkong, a member of a non-governmental organization (NGO) that had been working with the villagers before the tsunami, the Rotarians were alerted to the

# Rotarians helping 'because we can'

Rotary Club International is a global organization of thousands of clubs known for their long-standing support of good causes. From Wigan to Washington DC, Rotarians make donations, offer scholarships, run fund-raising campaigns and offer what help they can, to causes local, national and international.

But what happens when the biggest disaster of modern times happens right on a Rotary Club's doorstep?

The members of Patong Beach Rotary Club have proved that they were more than capable of meeting the challenge of ameliorating the misery that the tsunami left in its wake. **Rungtip Hongjakpet reports.**

plight of the local ethnic Thais.

Of Thai origin, these people were born on the Burmese side of the Thai/Burma border. They are not recognized by the Burmese government because of their Thai heritage, but, at the same time, they cannot get Thai ID cards because they were not born in Thailand.

Without a Thai ID card, they could not receive aid from the Thai government.

Of the 26 families in Baan Pak Trium, nine were "stateless" (ethnic) Thai. With such a high proportion of its population ineligible for help in rebuilding their homes or boats, the village would plainly struggle to get back on its feet.

Before the tsunami, the 119 residents of Baan Pak Trium had lived on a beach at Ao Koi. The village was on a peninsula, surrounded by mangroves, and accessible only by boat.

The waters of the tsunami washed right over the peninsula,

sweeping the entire village away, and claiming the lives of two children.

Some villagers survived because they managed to cling onto trees and mangroves; others got into their boats and escaped that way.

The wave turned the far end of the peninsula into an island.

After taking shelter for a week in a nearby mosque, the villagers moved into tents in a camp for displaced people, two kilometers from their former home.

Before the tsunami, the villagers' lives were basic and simple, and they did not have much contact with outsiders. Immediately after the tsunami, they

Villager Ya Supon amid the mangroves:  
'We are doing OK now with the help of these *farang*.'



said, they had lots of contact with outsiders, many of whom came and made grand promises of the help they would bring, but rarely delivered on those promises.

And this was what they expected of the Rotarians – at first. "It took them a while to trust us," said Larry. But, with so few of the population eligible for government aid, the villagers had no choice but to give the Rotarians a chance.

The Rotary Club's main long-term project is to build homes for the 23 remaining families (three families decided to move elsewhere after the tsunami).

The Rotarians, the Thai NGO and the villagers united to

buy a plot of land where the new village could be built. All 23 families have a share in ownership of the land on which it is being built.

The villagers are also designing their own homes, in conjunction with NGO employee Kingkeaw Yomjinda.

Patong Beach Rotary Club President Sam Fauma estimates that the club has spent 5.1 million baht so far on supporting Baan Pak Trium.

Around 200,000 baht was spent on aid immediately after the tsunami. Another 207,000 baht was used to buy three months' supply of food and 100,000 baht went on a water purification system.

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Left: Making sarongs is an alternative source of income for the women of Baan Pak Trium. Above, Patong Rotary Club member Jeroen Dekantel (left) discusses boat engines with villagers. Behind them, construction of homes continues.

Patong Rotary Club has budgeted 2.369 million baht for building houses and 1.585 million for repairing and rebuilding boats, around 306,000 baht for the installation of a water supply and a further 323,000 on a wastewater-disposal system.

Somboon Kompal is a member of the committee planning the village's renaissance. He said, "All the men in the village are working together to build the houses.

"Four or five men will work together on one house then, when that's built, they'll start work on another, and they'll do that until all 23 houses are built."

The Rotary Club pays the villagers for their labor, and the

villagers are being helped by a professional builder, also paid by the Rotary Club.

So strong is the community spirit among the villagers, Lama Uoonruan told the *Gazette*, that although six houses have now been completed, they will remain empty until all 23 houses are ready and the whole village can move in at the same time. It is hoped that this will happen before the start of the season sets in.

While the men are working together to rebuild their homes, the women are busy too. One group does all the cooking, for example, while another takes care of the children.

The Rotary Club is also

helping the villagers to improve their long-term prospects, by making them less reliant on a single source of income – fishing. The villagers have learned from the bitter experience of seeing many of their boats smashed by the waters of the tsunami that it pays to have more than one way of earning a living.

So the Rotary Club is help-

ing them set up schemes making sarongs and handkerchiefs for sale. They may also set up a homestay service, whereby tourists would pay to stay in the village.

Villager Ya Supon commented, "In a way, we were lucky, because we didn't lose many lives here. Yes, we lost our homes and our boats, but we are

doing OK now with the help of these *farang*.

"I haven't really spoken to them, though, because I've never had any dealings with *farang* in my life. They talk with K. Chet, the NGO people and some men in the village. It works just fine," she smiled.

For Rotarian Jeroen Dekantel, the work in Phang Nga is a way of showing how grateful he and his fellow Rotarians are that they and their families came out of the tsunami so lightly. They are also helping "because we can".





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If anyone should have the secrets of healthy, attractive skin at her fingertips, it is probably Dr Nantapat Supapannachart. The author of the popular *Khon Rak Nah* (People Who Love Their Faces), she is a dermatologist at Apex Skin Centre, which has a clinic in Central Festival Phuket.

In conversation with the *Gazette's* Rungtip Hongjakpet, she debunked a few skincare myths, and imparted some surprising tips.

**Q: Is it true that if you drink too much water it will make your face swollen?**

**A:** No. In general, if you drink a lot of water, you will need to go to the toilet often, but it won't cause any swelling. That could be caused by eating too much salt, or by a kidney problem.

**Q: If people don't like to wear sunblock, can they wear a long-sleeve shirt to protect them from the sun?**

**A:** Yes. There is a theory that it depends on the color of the shirt – that UV rays are less likely to pass through dark-colored clothes than light ones. There are also special fabrics designed to protect the wearer from UV rays, and they are made into clothes such as golf shirts.

**Q: Many cosmetic products state that they contain a sunscreen of some kind. If I wear foundation and powder which both contain sunscreen, do I still need to apply a sunblock?**

**A:** The sunscreen in beauty products usually has a low SPF (sun protection factor), only between 4 and 8. It will probably be OK if you go to work indoors early in the morning and come home after it is dark.

If your lifestyle involves being outdoors a lot, or even if you are an office worker and you go outside for lunch, you should wear a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or 20 every day.

**Q: If I do not wash my face completely clean after wearing make-up, as happens sometimes after a late night out, what will happen?**

# THE SECRETS OF HEALTHY SKIN

*(From someone who really knows)*



For young women, life is simple – just clean your face thoroughly, says Dr Nantapat Supapannachart.

**A:** If you have dry skin, you may not have any problems, but if you have oily skin, any make-up left on your face will block your pores and may cause pimples and other problems.

**Q: How should I choose beauty products, such as moisturizer and make-up?**

**A:** Do not choose any beauty product on the basis of the brand name or price. You should choose something because it works well with your skin.

If you have oily skin, you should choose a very light lotion, although that doesn't mean baby lotion. Many people think that if a

product is safe enough for a baby, it'll be good for their skin, but that's wrong.

Baby soap, for example, is highly alkaline. If it is used by adults with dry skin, it will hurt their faces.

As for make-up, such as eyeshadow, lipstick and mascara, well, that's really easy: just pick the colors you like. It's that simple for most people, although there are some who are allergic to certain ingredients.

**Q: When is a good time to introduce my teenage children to beauty products? Someone told me they should start early to get maximum benefit.**

**A:** The biggest skin problem in teenagers is pimples. If a teenager has a problem with spots, they can do something to fix it, but if they don't have that kind of problem, there's no need to use any product.

Actually, girls can leave it until they are 25 or even 30 before they start paying attention to their face.

In general, teenagers have quite balanced skin. It usually has enough natural moisturizer, and if a teenager uses too much of any kind of skin product, it may actually cause pimples or other problems.

Someone who has oily skin as a teenager probably

won't have to do anything with her skin until she reaches 30.

Don't forget that the skin renews itself all the time, in a cycle that lasts around 28 days. As you get older, however, the renewal process slows down, and you need to take more care of your skin. You may need to "feed" the skin with vitamins, for example.

**Q: As skin care varies according to age, how should you take care of your skin when you are in your 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s?**

**A:** For a woman in her 20s, it is quite simple – just make sure to clean your face thoroughly, so the pores do not get blocked.

When you reach your 30s, you should start to worry about the sun, and always wear a sunblock.

In your 40s and 50s, you will probably want to focus on using products that reduce the signs of aging and pay extra attention to moisturizing. Don't let your skin get dry.

People in this age group may also want to try treatments to counteract the signs of aging; there are many options nowadays, such as laser technology to accelerate collagen production, or radio waves to remove marks or tighten the skin – we call it non-invasive rejuvenation.

*The Apex Skin Centre is on the 2nd Floor of Central Festival Phuket. Tel: 076-249621-3.*

**Model: Kulpreeya (Nam) Duijkers.**

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# On the move in Myanmar

Somewhere in the sky on the way to Myanmar, the pilot clicked on the intercom: "Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls..." – a thoughtful pause – "...tiny tots."

It was a characteristic announcement from the representative of a country that imbues even the routine with charm. Even the very basic matter of getting from A to B in what most people still think of as Burma is a journey rarely handicapped by the ordinary.

And the quintessential Myanmar journey is made on foot, wearing the soft cloth *longyi* that is the national, everyday, unisex costume of the lower body.

Mr Levi Strauss's artifice of twilled cotton may garb much of the rest of the region, but on this last frontier of Asia, traditional dress is just that: what everybody wears.

Wound around the waist, the *longyi* needs to be hitched up several times a day, or per hour

## TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

if you're a novice. Cool and practical, it is not designed for speed, and progress for its wearer is necessarily slow and sedate, as indeed are most journeys in Myanmar.

In *longyi* land, bicycles are all ladies' style, as modesty prohibits swinging a leg over a crossbar. Expect no flashy, gear-festooned tribute to wheeled dynamics – your hired velocipede is much more likely to be a clanking, Chinese-made sit-up-and-beg.

It's good for fitness, and a liberation from the quacking of a tour bus guide or the travelling gold fish bowl of an air-con hire car. In the saddle, the scent of Myanmar and its gorgeous dry heat are all around.



**TICKET TO RIDE:** (above) Half the fun of a bus ride in Yangon is figuring out its final destination. (Right) Even tractors are a rarity in agricultural Myanmar.

Or there is the motorbike; foreigners are not allowed to drive, so the average Suzuki 125 comes with a chauffeur. It is faster than a bicycle, and infinitely more hair-raising.

With the chauffeur comes a

disregard for on-coming traffic, personal safety and an all-consuming quest for high speeds. Safety helmets are not readily available, and this means that squeaks of terror are heard more easily.

More exotic is the bus: few visitors try a long-distance trip by bus, but occasionally some board one in town under the mistaken belief that they know where it's going and will be able to get off when they want to.

Devoid of destination boards, their engines open to the elements and roaring like Jurassic monsters, the ancient Fords that bump and grind their way round the capital, Yangon (or Rangoon as most of the world still calls it), are a delight to behold – but not to ride.

When it comes to home-grown transport, if *sai-kaa* sounds like "side-car", that is opportune. Hong Kong calls them rickshaws, Vietnam dubs its eco-friendly people-movers *cy-*

*clos*, but Myanmar's version of the mobile chair is, typically, of its own devising.

Powered by an intermittently willing cyclist, one passenger faces forward, another to the rear, or the additional space may be taken up with luggage, a block of ice or a trussed pig.

Then there is the horse and carriage: another candidate for the seminal holiday snap, these four-legged, two-wheeled contraptions are usually under the nominal command of a biped with certain *idées fixes* about the likes, dislikes and financial propensities of a group he and fellow anthropologists label *tooriss*.

After 500 yards on a metalled road the attractions of driver, carriage and horse can start to pall. But you couldn't ask for a more genuine Burmese ride.



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KIDS

THE FUN PAGE

FOR ALL

THE FAMILY

# Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are the names of at least 20 precious or semi-precious stones. The words may read vertically, horizontally or diagonally. They may also read right-to-left or down-to-up. See if you can find more than your family or friends. Score: More than 10, good; more than 15, very good; 20 or more, excellent.

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

Brain Buster!!

Q: If March is 43 and May is 39 then, by the same logic, what is July?

A. July = 68. (Each letter is replaced by the number of its position in the English alphabet. Then the numbers are added together.)

Solution to last week's crossword

A	P	O	L	O	G	I	E	S		G
E	E	R		A						O
C	A	S	I	N	O		G	O	L	D
E	U		A	L	L					F
A	E	G	E	A	N		E	Z	R	A
S		A		D	N		A			T
E	A	R	L		P	O	L	I	S	H
L			E	A	U			R		E
E	P	E	E		M	E	T	E	O	R
S		C	P		A		V			
S		P	H	Y	S	I	C	I	A	N

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz

1. The Society of Friends is commonly known by what other name?

2. Who was the first American to orbit the Earth?

3. What did the US buy on April 9, 1867, and from whom?

4. What is the occupation of American Matt Hardy – Version 1.0?

5. What was notable about St Simon Stylites?

6. Korrigans are part of the folklore of which French region?

7. Who, in 1964, coined

the phrase “the white heat of technology”.

8. What is the correct term for an obsession with eating only healthy food?

9. Would one wear, eat or dance a baretté?

10. *Mr Brightside* was a 2004 hit for which alternative rock band?

11. Who is the band’s lead singer?

12. What, in Tibetan Buddhism, is a *tulku*?

13. Who said “No man really becomes a fool until he stops asking questions”?

14. In DC Comics’ publi-

cations, who or what is Mxyzptlk?

15. The hormone ghrelin controls what?

16. *Tamale* is a dish associated with which cuisine?

17. What is the term for the process of classifying living organisms into groups?

18. What is the capital of Anguilla?

19. In English, what eight-letter word has five consecutive vowels?

20. At 5,881 meters, Hkakabo Razi is the highest point of which country?

Answers next week

# Never a Cross Word!

## Across

1. Place of abode.

8. South American mountain chain.

9. Uniform color.

10. Got away.

13. Mr Chaney, horror movie actor.

14. Not very bright.

15. Author of *A Tale of Two Cities*.

16. Puccini’s forte.

18. Pleasure boat.

20. Accused in court.

## Down

2. Finish.

3. Colorless.

4. Moose in Europe.

5. Between Bravo and Delta.

6. Listen furtively.

7. State west of the Dakotas.

11. Master of ceremonies.

12. Rotted away.

17. The Red Baron, for example.

19. Rob through trickery.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

1. Haile Selassie; 2. The European Renaissance; 3. F. Scott Fitzgerald; 4. Drums; 5. Drum 'n' Bass; 6. Clio; 7. Barcelona; 8. Knight Commander of St Michael and St George; 9. Øresund Bridge; 10. www.symbolics.com; 11. March 15, 1985; 12. -268.93°C; 13. Private Johnson Beharry; 14. He is the first living recipient of the VC in 36 years; 15. Typefaces; 16. A mullet; 17. Aomori; 18. Veal; 19. Iceland; 20. ( ).

Solution next week

## In The Stars

by Isla Star

**ARIES** (March 21-April 20): If it is your birthday this week you should make an effort to leave your cares to one side. There's no point in acting like a wet blanket while others are joining in the spirit of the water festivities. Nothing is ever as bad as it seems, and an astral bolt from the blue is about to relieve you of one problem that you thought had become a permanent fixture.

**TAURUS** (April 21-May 21): Smooth talking will not be your forte this week. If you are aware that your fuse is short, count to at least 10 before speaking. If possible, any dealings with bureaucracy should be put off until next week. However, any sparks that fly in the romantic area of your life will be positive – Sagittarius is waiting for the right moment to make a move.

**GEMINI** (May 22-June 21): A game of cat-and-mouse is forecast this week. The chances are that you'll be playing a feline role, but don't tease your prey too much. Property matters are highlighted during the coming days; this is an auspicious time for relocating. On Tuesday it is likely that crossed wires will cause an important appointment to be missed. Confirm beforehand to avoid disappointment. The color ruby red will enhance your sensuality.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 23): You are strongly advised to avoid taking steps sideways and to keep moving forward. A slight downward turn is forecast, after your positive mood of last week, but you need to continue inspiring confidence in places where it counts. This week brings a business opportunity too good to be missed, so get ready to pounce. The climate is ripe for romance to grow – Leo is becoming more and more impressed.

**LEO** (July 24-August 22): Distant jungle drums are beating out a message for you. If you put your ear to the ground, you should be able to tune in and act accord-

## What the heavens hold for you

ingly. Gemini is gearing up to ask you a favor which may be hard to refuse. Your charisma is particularly irresistible on Thursday, when more than one admirer is ready to pay a compliment. Number 3 is lucky on Sunday.

**VIRGO** (August 23-September 23): You can look forward to a smoother week than the last one. Take a deep breath and enjoy the peace while it lasts, as the middle of this month will be the peak days for your social life. Health is a minor concern on Monday, when feeling low could mean more than just the usual start-of-the-week blues. The color sky blue boosts your attraction to someone who has taken your fancy.

**LIBRA** (September 24-October 23): You will be spending time tying up loose ends. The hunt is on for those hot on the trail of an irritating mystery that has been affecting progress in a relationship. This weekend you receive a strong hint of what lies behind this particular riddle. If you can't manage a tedious work-related task early next week, ask Gemini to lend a hand.

**SCORPIO** (October 24-November 22): The home front will be a hive of activity for Scorpions this week. Unexpected family visits could upset plans made for this weekend but you are advised to go with the flow, rather than get upset about changing arrangements. Next week sees an improvement in your finances coming from overseas. The color

mango yellow will improve your mood.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians can look forward to a more enjoyable week as the astral climate warms. Romance is still a touchy subject, so focus your attention on other areas for the time being. If you're on the verge of signing an important contract, Tuesday is the most auspicious day for doing this. Agreements won't be reached easily after then. Listen to Cancer's advice this weekend and you won't regret it.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22-January 20): Steamy weather could cause Capricorns to blow their tops this week. You don't normally get worked up over nothing and those close to you may be taken aback by such uncharacteristic reactions. Try to keep things in perspective and distance yourself from pressing issues. Love is closer than you think and is about to bring some much-needed joy into your life. The number 5 brings luck on Monday.

**AQUARIUS** (January 21-February 19): If April has yet to turn out as you were hoping, be patient for a few more days. Toward the end of next week many Aquarians will be on the receiving end of a welcome gift. You will soon be in a much better bargaining position in the business area of your life. Your partner is tired of playing guessing games and needs to know the depth of your commitment.

**PISCES** (February 20-March 20): You should dare to say what's really on your mind this week. You may be surprised by the positive reactions, as certain people have been waiting for you to reveal your true colors. This advice particularly concerns personal relationships. Aries is considering making a work-related offer and would be motivated by seeing a more confident demeanor. The color hibiscus red makes the right statement on Thursday.

# At snail's

On almost every dive I make, I love to explore reefs, rocks and sandy bottoms and watch the wide variety of sea snails that inhabit them. Sea snails are gastropods, a class of mollusc so named ('gastro' meaning stomach, 'pod' meaning foot) because they, quite literally, walk on their stomachs.

Marine gastropods are remarkably diverse, ranging in size from giant conchs and tiger cowries down to tiny snails less than a centimeter in width. Colors are also quite varied. Big conchs may be white or pinkish; cowries are often black or brown with contrasting spots. There is also a little snail commonly found in Phuket waters that is yellow with brown bands.

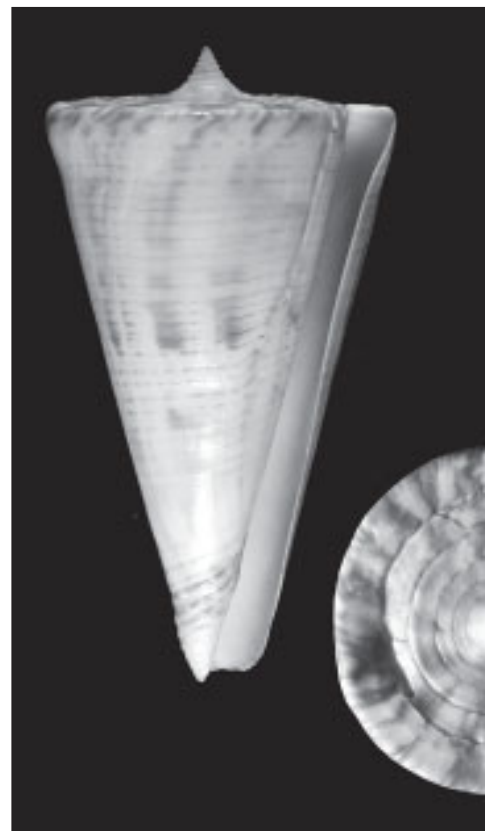
Most snails have a spiral shell into which they can withdraw their bodies for protection. They are noted for their muscular foot and external mantle which, in many species, extends out to cover the shell. Eyes are frequently located at the end of a pair of tentacles that stick forward from the forehead, though in some species they are at the base of these tentacles, which also have sensors to detect chemicals as well as light.

While most sea snails simply rely on their ability to pull back into the shell for protection, some have evolved more aggressive defenses to deal with those who infringe on their privacy when the "do not disturb sign" is out.

Cone shells, for example, hide deep in their shells when not out walking. If you disturb one by picking it up, it will likely stab you in the hand with a small, poisonous dart. The toxicity of the poison, which acts on the neuromuscular system, varies from species to species.

At least six species of cone shell live in Thai coastal waters. Most will only make you ill, but two species are very dangerous and often fatal. If you are stung by one of these, you must get emergency medical treatment immediately – a few minutes can make the difference between life and death.

It is best not to collect live cone shells; there are usually good specimens that have died and been washed up on the beach



## EARTH WATCH

By Robert Cogen

where they can be safely collected.

Cone shells also have poisonous teeth at the end of a proboscis, which they use to feed on small fish, worms or other gastropods. They quickly extend their proboscis and harpoon their prey with the poison-bearing teeth. The venom is rapidly injected when the cone shell con-

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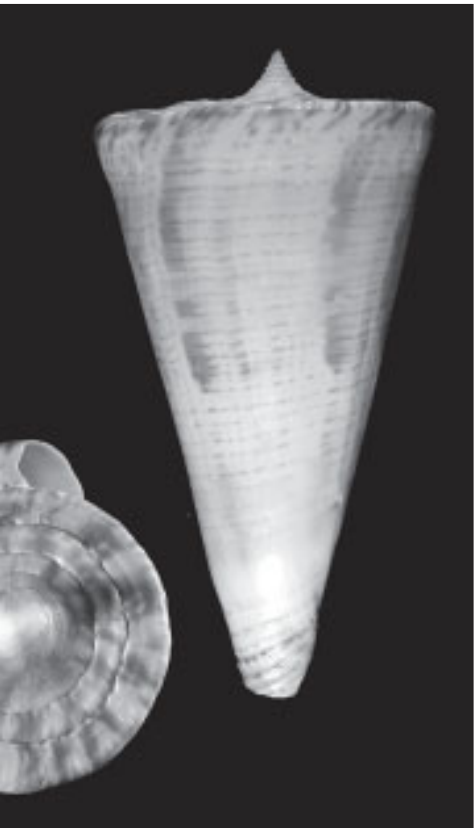
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# place



**Pretty deadly:** Some cone shells (above) in Thai waters can deliver a sting so venomous that it can kill.

tracts its venom gland. The prey is then drawn directly into the gut.

Keep an eye open for cowries, which have a very glossy exterior and are often brightly colored. You may see one walking among soft corals and anemones on a reef. Search nearby. Most of the time when I have seen one, I have found its mate within a meter or so.

Many sea snails, such as abalone, feed on debris. They have marginal teeth that act as tiny brooms, sweeping particles to the lateral and medial teeth for chewing and swallowing. More highly-evolved sea snails have powerful scraping teeth that are used to scrape up algae.

Some more advanced predatory snails use medial teeth to rasp and bore their way through other gastropod shells and then eat the flesh inside. The boring teeth are assisted in some species by a gland that applies a chemical to weaken the prey's shell. These predators cause millions of baht in damage to oysters and other edible shellfish.

Many sea snails are very good to eat. Conchs, for example, are the main ingredient of ceviche. In this dish, the raw foot is cut up and marinated in lemon juice with chilies and other seasonings added.

My favorite is abalone. It can be prepared in many ways. I like to pound the foot until it relaxes, then stir-fry it quickly in butter and garlic. I hope you enjoy them as much as I do.

*Robert Cogen is a well-known California lawyer and a broadly experienced naturalist with a degree in zoology. Email: indepth@asis.com.*

We have been working around the clock for the past three months. We have had over 40 volunteer vets and nurses here from Britain, the US, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Sweden and the Netherlands, operating at clinics throughout the region.

A Thai vet, whose clinic in Khao Lak was destroyed, has also been employed, along with Thai assistants. Since the tsunami, more than 1,500 animals have been sterilized and many others treated for injuries.

Reports that few dogs and cats had survived in Khao Lak proved to be untrue. In Baan Nam Khem alone, more than 100 animals were found. Most of the dogs and cats were in reasonable condition, although one is still at the Phuket Animal Hospital after breaking three legs.

On the Phi Phi Islands, where it was believed that all of the animals had been removed, we have found close to 200 cats as well as several dogs.

All of the dogs in Baan Nam Khem and 180 of the cats on Phi Phi were treated, vaccinated and sterilized.

One of our most positive results was on Phi Phi. The dry season meant that no drinking water was available and the lack of tourists and resort staff meant there was no food to scavenge. There was also little prey left to hunt.

Mother cats and kittens in particular would have suffered immensely before dying of dehydration, starvation and disease. Besides having prevented countless new cats from being born, only to suffer and die soon afterward, the number of cats sterilized there accounts for more than the "magic number" of 70%-80% of the population.

This suggests that unless fertile cats are brought into the islands, the population should continue to shrink naturally.

Food has also been an issue here in Phuket. Most of the dogs that lived on the beaches depended on handouts from the local restaurants and tourists.

With many of these establishments destroyed – and the ones that survived or were rebuilt still struggling for customers – there is little

food for these dogs and cats.

Volunteers who feed animals at temples and at places unaffected by the tsunami also faced problems. Most would collect leftovers from hotels and restaurants. Again, many of these businesses have either closed temporarily, or do not have the same quantity of food they had before.

Without food, these animals will leave their usual territory and start to come into the towns and villages to scavenge.

With the aid of generous donations of food from Nestlé Purina, in particular, and also Royal Canin, we have been able to

With 100 days having elapsed since the tsunami, Top Dog caught up with Margot Homburg Park – founder of the Soi Dog Foundation – to ask what her group has been doing these past months, and what the future holds. Here's what she told him.



**Margot Homburg Park:** Soi Dogs is in a much stronger position to make a significant impact.

## Tsunami has meant hard times for animals too

sustain a feeding program for these animals.

Laguna Phuket has kindly given us storage space for the tons of food donated to us. Paul Cooper of Core Seafoods has also donated hundreds of kilograms of fresh tuna.

We have employed a number of Thais who are responsible for the entire west and southern coasts of Phuket, as well as the Phi Phi Islands. Their responsibility is to feed the animals directly or supply food to people we know are sympathetic toward animals, and who live and work on the beaches.

Volunteers who feed animals at temples and other locations are also being given food to supplement their normal supplies. We hope the situation will

return to normal, but until then we will continue to support this program.

Thanks to the enormous

amount of publicity our work has received in Britain and US in particular, we are now in a much stronger position to make a significant impact on the stray animal population here.

Although we will continue to bring over volunteers from overseas, we are now focusing on turning Soi Dog Foundation into a mainly Thai-run organization.

From now on, we will employ two Thai vets and other local staff. We are in discussions with individuals who wish to see a permanent sterilization clinic here, and are prepared to provide the funds for such an enterprise. This will help us accelerate our

catch-neuter-release program, which everybody now agrees is the only effective and humane means of controlling a stray animal population.

We receive total support and backing from the Thai people, whether they are government officials, local vets, or ordinary people. Having said that, I do agree that this *is* a Thai problem, and that the Thai people should be leading the effort.

For this reason we are currently going through the final stages of becoming a registered Thai foundation. The majority of our board members are prominent Thai people and we are increasingly using Thai people to run our clinics and go into the community to collect animals.

Unfortunately, there is little money available over here to sup-

port this work, so we must continue to raise funds from the international community to pay for it. I also believe that any country can learn from the experiences of other regions, whether in the West or here in Asia.

But we are making a difference. Since we started in October 2003, we have sterilized close to 3,000 animals. More than half of these have been neutered since January this year.

Both the Atigaro Project and DIDIT (Dogs In Distress In Thailand) have now become part of our organization and we are confident that within two years people will see a drastic reduction in the number of stray dogs here.

Of course, all of this depends on people continuing to support us.



**MAKING TRACKS**

By Top Dog

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## Unwelcome echoes of 1997

There is a distinct echo of the economic crisis of 1997 in the recent hikes in the price of diesel. In both cases, the government spent vast sums of money trying to preserve an artificial status quo and in both cases failed, later admitting that the costs were too heavy to sustain.

In 1997, attempts by the government of Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh to shore up the value of the baht failed disastrously. When the government finally admitted defeat, the value of the baht halved and the economy went into an uncontrolled dive. Even today, that mess is still being mopped up.

Fast forward to 2005, and the government of Thaksin Shinawatra backs off from its battle against rising world oil prices, reducing its diesel subsidy first by 60 satang and then, shortly after, by three baht a liter, with the result that the price of the fuel leaps 24%.

The ripple from this is, inevitably, washing through the entire economy. Inflation is predicted by some economists to rise to 4%, up from 3% last year, as prices of everything from bus fares to food swell to accommodate the increased cost of transport.

Economic growth is widely expected to slow to 5% or 4.5% from a previously predicted 6%.

Some industries, such as fishing and transport, will be hit directly – and the fishing boat owners are showing their disapproval by staying in port – but everyone in the country will feel the effect.

Prices of exports will rise, reducing demand for Thai goods abroad and cutting Thailand's competitiveness at a time when the world economy appears to be slowing.

There is another echo that will have particular resonance for the people of the Andaman Coast provinces: the earthquake off Sumatra that triggered the December 26 tsunami.

In that case, pressure built up in the fault line until something had to break. And break it did – with disastrous results, the “ripple” washing clear across the Indian Ocean to Africa.

The difference between the Sumatra earthquake and the sudden jolt in the diesel price is that the latter was by no means inevitable. Smaller increases gradually introduced over the past year might have been easier for people to adapt to, allowing them time to adjust to circumstances.

Cynics will undoubtedly note the timing: the cut in the diesel subsidy came only after PM Thaksin was re-elected – and a full year after many analysts had predicted it would happen.

The *Gazette*, of course, does not believe that political expediency is in any way to blame for the current wave of fuel-price pain.

– The Editor

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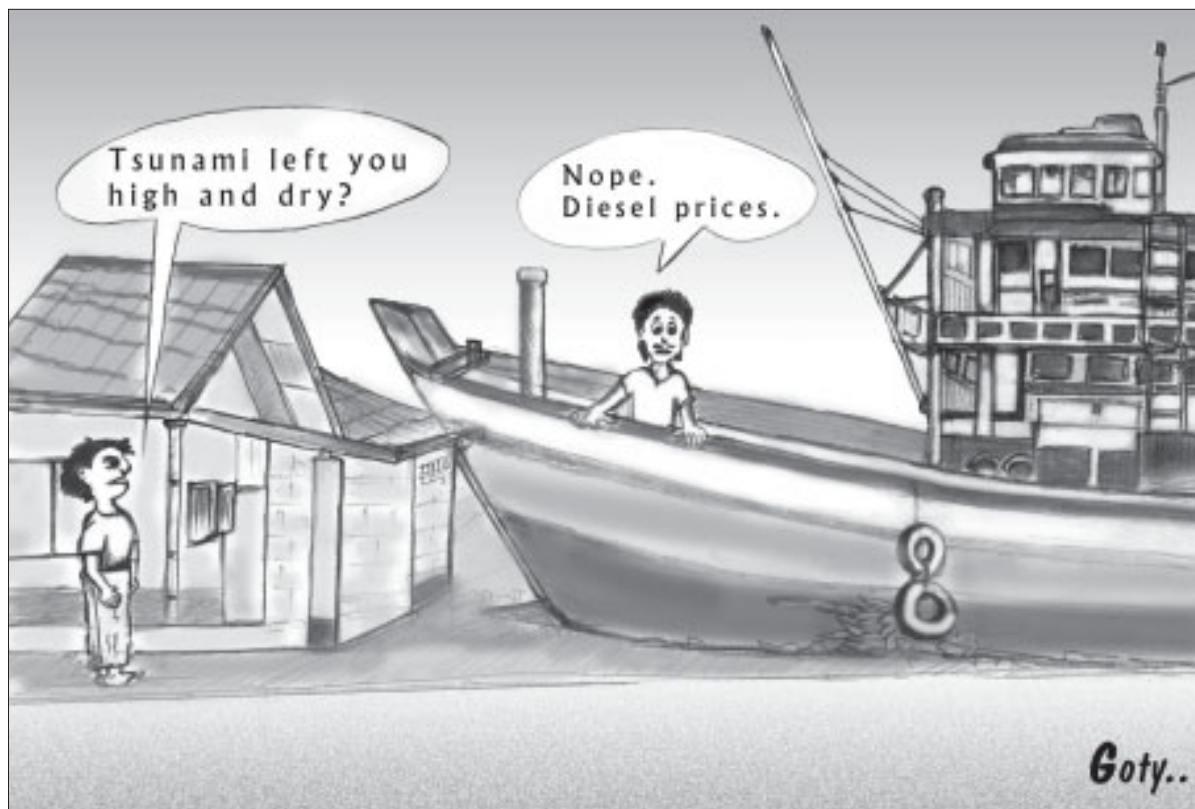
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## Letters

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.

### Maritime defense

The Immigration Division and the Harbour Department have both come under some fire in the *Gazette* recently and I would like to point out a few facts in their defense.

First, the issue of yachties getting upset about having to post bond (March 26 issue, page 5).

In many countries, boat owners have to post a guarantee whenever a crewmember “signs off” the vessel in a foreign port. This is to prevent the crew from jumping ship and settling in countries more prosperous than their own.

Yachties may not like this rule and wish that Thailand had laws just to accommodate their requirements. Most countries have maritime regulations that are based on merchant shipping and any yachtie worth his salt has learned to work around this situation.

The bond issue can be avoided by listing only the skipper as crew and the other people on board as passengers. If unsure on how to proceed, boat owners should use one of Phuket's yacht service companies or a shipping agent.

The argument that the yacht itself should be sufficient surety does not hold: yachts left behind always have unpaid bills and a maintenance backlog and are a burden on whoever ends up having to deal with them.

Recently, the Thai government has changed many laws in favor of visiting yachts. The one-stop check-in procedure at the Phuket Port Control Center in Chalong Bay is but one example.

Meanwhile, spare a thought for the owners of Thai-registered

boats, whose tax money helped create this one-stop service. Often, depending on the officers on duty, they are told to do their port clearances in town because the Chalong Center is “for foreign vessels only”.

Actually, Thailand is not so bad. Try signing off a Thai crew member from a Thai boat in Indonesia. They make you pay for two immigration officers to fly to wherever you are to take your crew member to Jakarta for “processing out”. The total airfare plus bond adds up to several thousand dollars.

Phuket Marine Office Chief Surin Theerakulpisut's frustration is understandable (same issue, page 19). Each time an overloaded, badly maintained boat with inadequate safety equipment goes down and innocent lives are lost, the blame is put on his department.

This is similar to blaming the police every time a crime is committed. Crimes happen when individuals choose to break the law.

Boats sink because their owners do not spend the money required to make their vessels safe. The moral and legal responsibility for building, maintaining and operating safe (passenger) vessels lies with the boat owners.

The Marine Department has been trying for years to get boat owners to comply with International Maritime Organization (IMO) standards, but penalties for non-compliance are negligible.

The problem is not limited to Thai boat owners. Many of Phuket's commercial passenger boats are sportfishing and diving vessels owned by foreigners

who, like their Thai counterparts, value profits more highly than safety and knowingly operate boats that do not meet international safety standards.

Upgrading and maintaining a boat to IMO standards is expensive, but that is no excuse for endangering the lives of passengers and crew.

Boat operators' attitudes must change and those responsible for sending unsafe vessels out to sea must be severely punished.

Jeroen Deknatel  
Ocean Rover Cruises

### Freedom of speech

How could your correspondent, S. Herbert, so insult the pride of the Filipino and Malaysian peoples, the same people who were his hosts when he lived in their countries [*Gazette* Letters, issue of April 2]?

He wrote, “... those places have more sex and bodies than Phuket”, again referring to the Philippines and Malaysia.

Yes, sex has led to overpopulation in the Philippines, but the number of Aids cases in that country of about 85 million is – proportionally – far lower when compared to the Aids statistics of Phuket, which has a relatively small population.

Your idea of “clean, censored papers”, again referring to the Philippines and Malaysia, is now a thing of the past in my own country.

The Philippine media was instrumental in toppling the Marcos dictatorship and, in more recent years, the Philippine media exposed Estrada's abuses.

Elnar D Nalangan  
The Philippines

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

As soon as we felt the earthquake March 28, everyone headed for the higher ground at Wat Koh Sireh.

The wat is about 1.5 kilometers from the village. We managed to get all 1,000 people from the village to safety within 30 minutes, but it wasn't easy, as we had to get 500 children, and 20 or so disabled people and the elderly up there.

In fact, it was pitiful to watch the elderly and disabled trying to make their way up the steep slope to the wat.

We felt the earthquake strike, but by the time the government started broadcasting warnings on TV, everyone was already on the hill.

The reason none of the Sea Gypsies of Rawai, Sapam and Koh Sireh died on December 26 is because we knew as soon as we felt the earthquake that we should head for higher ground.

This was something we learned from our grandparents, who had seen what happened when a tsunami hit Satun in 1967.

They warned us that if the tide receded a kilometer or more after an earthquake, we should move to the hills; we have not forgotten their advice.

My house was destroyed on

# What about us?

## FIRST PERSON

Since the tsunami hit, there has been much talk about establishing warning systems, both national and regional.

Patong is the first area to be included in Phuket's own warning system. The March 28 seism demonstrated that, bar some shortcomings, the system works. There are also plans to expand the warning network, and to link it directly to the national Meteorological Center.

But the Sea Gypsy village of Laem Tukkae on Koh Sireh – which is home to around 1,000 people, and had more than 100 properties destroyed or damaged on December 26 – does not appear to be included in the system.

**Nuek Pramongkij, a 37-year-old resident of Laem Tukkae, asks why he and his neighbors appear to have been left out of the loop.**



December 26, so I have been staying with a friend. The March 28 tremor woke me, and everyone else here.

But it wasn't the first time since December 26 that people here have headed for the hills.

It has happened many times – people hear a rumor, and they

remember the bad experience of before, and off they run.

We may be less inclined now to panic and more inclined to listen to the government news before escaping, but we still have to start moving the elderly, the infirm and the children every time there is an alert.

But if there were a proper early-warning system, everyone wouldn't feel they had to run away from the village every time they felt the earth move.

They would know when they should head for higher ground and when it was safe to stay put.

If there was just one warning siren or whatever here, then that would be enough.

Another point to consider is that people of my generation know about the signs that a tsunami could be on the way, because of what our grandparents told us, but future generations may not.

I've heard that the government, in addition to Patong, is planning to install warning systems at other tourist areas, such as Kata and Karon. However, I haven't heard anything about a proposal for a warning system for our village.

Maybe the government thinks we are not important enough, or we don't generate enough money for the province to merit having a warning system. The government didn't do much for us immediately after the tsunami, that's for sure.

Before the tsunami, they tried to move us from here to Klong Mu Dong in Ao Makham, so this area could be redeveloped.

We refused to go, and although we have no land titles, we have lived here so long that we have a right to be here. They cannot force us to move.

Maybe that's why the government doesn't want to help us – because we refused orders.

## What are my legal rights in an issue over non-payment?

I have a small boat-repair business on Phuket and I have recently run into a major problem of a boat owner refusing to honor agreed prices for work already carried out on his vessel.

The owner is in breach of our informal contract on agreed prices and work specifications, but without the finance I was promised I am going to find it very expensive and long-winded to fight a legal battle through the courts.

We are a 100% legitimate company, with all taxes paid and all our work permits and social security papers in order, and we have the paperwork for all specified work carried out on this vessel and confirmation of the owner's agreement to the prices and tasks involved.

I would like to know if there are any government agencies or government-aided lawyers who can help small local companies seek payment for services already rendered.

I would also like to know what the legal process is for impounding the vessel until full payment has been secured.

Mr D.  
Phuket

**Adisorn Janta LLB, of the International Law Office, Patong, replies:**

You could go directly to the Oublic Prosecutor's office for help; the legal department there will try to arrange an out-of-court settlement between the parties.

If the owner of the vessel does not make payment as agreed for work you have done (you must have a signed contract), you have the right to impound the vessel until you have been paid in full.

If this doesn't help, you can appoint a lawyer and go through the courts, and you can continue to impound the vessel until the case is finished and the court has made a decision.

Impounding a boat is as simple as chaining it up. There is no need even to put up a notice stating that it has been impounded.

You could even move the boat, with the owner being liable for the removal expenses.

However, it is essential that you are aware that the Civil and Commercial Law of Thailand states that someone who impounds a boat is liable for any damage caused if appropriate care is not taken of it while it is impounded, and that:

"The holder of a right of retention cannot use or let the property retained or give it as security, without the consent of the debtor, but this does not apply to such use as is necessary for the preservation of the property.

"If the holder of a right of retention acts contrary to any provisions of the foregoing paragraphs, the debtor may claim the extinction of the right."

## 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](http://www.phuketgazette.net)**

## Is it a public right of way?

Am I right in thinking that the stretch of road that connects Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd to Thawee-wong Rd (the beach road) by going through Patong Resort/Patong Tower is a public right of way?

Kanti Shah  
Australia

**Chatree Thananuwat, Executive Assistant to the General Manager, Patong Resort, replies:**

The stretch through Patong Resort is private. It used to be open for public use, but we had a few cases of theft, so we stopped public access.

## Replacing a multiple-entry visa

I lost my passport which had contained a one-year, multiple-entry visa which was valid for another six months.

I have since been issued a new passport by my government and a replacement "permit to stay" from Thai Immigration.

Can I get a replacement multiple-entry visa for the remaining six months issued at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bangkok, or do I need to go abroad and get a new visa?

S. Klutz  
Samkong

**K. Sompong, an officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, replies:**

Here in Bangkok we are authorized to issue visas only to diplomatic staff.

According to our regulations, when you report a passport as lost or stolen, that immediately invalidates any visa that it may have contained.

You will have to leave the country and apply for a new visa at one of our embassies abroad.

My apologies for any inconvenience.

## Marijuana and marriage

I have a conviction for possession of marijuana from 36 years ago in the US. Do you think that it is likely to affect my application for permission to marry here and also for me to be granted a non-immigrant visa?

Mr M  
Patong

**Pol Col Chalermpong Vadhanasukha, Deputy Superintendent of Immigration Division 3 in Bangkok, replies:**

Thai Immigration staff will check with your country's embassy about your marital status.

Thai immigration may ask the police in the US if they think

your criminal record should be checked more thoroughly.

However, as you have – evidently – been allowed to enter Thailand, there is a good chance that your conviction, which is now from so long ago, will not affect your application for a visa today.

# Tracking tsunamis

Having spent the past two and a half months in the US, it sure is great to be back in Phuket. Unfortunately, I have to head to the US again soon, but this time the trip won't be nearly as long.

Fortunately, I've seen in the US a lot of interesting and important new developments in the computer arena, and I promise to regale you with tantalizing insights in the very near future.

On to more pressing matters. A friend called late on March 28 to warn me that the Thai government had issued an evacuation order for the coastal areas of Phuket. I stumbled out of bed and (barely) heard the stylishly subdued sirens in Patong.

Local TV reports covered the basics: an 8.2 quake off the coast of northern Sumatra at 11:09 pm, fears of another tsunami, the government warning people to get away from the beaches, and so on.

I flipped to CNN and saw gore-mongering reporters trying to coax sensationalized quotes from people on the ground. I heard precious little detail, and

nothing that would shed light on the most pressing question: should I gather my family and friends and run like hell to the mountain tops? Many people were doing precisely that.

On the Web, my first stop: the National Earthquake Information Center (NEIC) at: [neic.usgs.gov](http://neic.usgs.gov). Sure enough, the NEIC was monitoring seismic activity along the fault where the quake occurred – not surprising because initial reporting of all quakes at the NEIC website is entirely automatic; initially at least, no human intervenes between the sensors and the Web. Once a person has a chance to review the data, the webpage is updated with an indication that “This event has been reviewed by a seismologist.”

The main page of the NEIC site has a map of the world. The west coast of Sumatra had a big purple diamond on it. I clicked the diamond and read the latest on the quake – 8.2 magnitude, about



The National Earthquake Information Center ([earthquake.usgs.gov/eqinthenews/2005/usweax](http://earthquake.usgs.gov/eqinthenews/2005/usweax)) shows how the epicenter of the two most recent “great” quakes has moved slightly to the southeast.

1,100 kilometers northwest of Jakarta.

There was a link for the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii, which had posted a warning ([www.prh.noaa.gov/ptwc/wmsg](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/ptwc/wmsg)) less than an hour after the quake hit,

saying that everyone within 1,000 kilometers of the epicenter should avoid coastal areas.

Reading that, I really wanted to know how far Phuket lies from the epicenter. I stumbled onto a website called The Great Circle Mapper ([gc.kls2.com](http://gc.kls2.com)). If you type in the co-ordinates of two locations, or even two airport codes, The Great Circle Mapper not only tells you how far apart the points lie, it shows you the shortest route.

The NEIC site listed the epicenter at co-ordinates 2.065N 97.010E. On the Great Circle Mapper site I typed 2.065N 97.010E – HKT, and the site told me that Phuket airport sits 684 kilometers from the epicenter. Great program. Scary result.

As the night wore on, it became apparent that no tsunami was in the offing. I reasoned that an 8.2 earthquake is one-sixth as strong as the 9.0 quake of December 26, and we were far enough away that the chances of a tsunami hitting Phuket again were somewhere near zero.

I told everybody to go to bed, and managed to catch a few winks myself.

A few hours later I stumbled out of bed again, and checked the Web. What I saw worried me then, and it worries me to this day. Seems that NEIC underestimated the size of the quake. It's now pegged at 8.7, more than three times as forceful as 8.2. Only two earthquakes in the past 40 years, anywhere in the world, have hit 8.7 or above – and they both occurred in the past three months, off the west coast of Sumatra.

By 5 am, the PTWC advisory had been updated to say, “...when no major waves are observed for two hours after the estimated time of arrival, or damaging waves have not occurred for at least two hours, then local authorities can assume the threat is passed.” None of that was in the earlier advisory, when many people could've used the information.

The US government issued an official email warning to American residents in Thailand at 1:40 am – 2½ hours after the quake.

The warning didn't say anything beyond what appeared in the first TV reports. International TV and printed media reporting tried hard to come up with sensational tsunami headlines where there was no tsunami to be found. That alarmed my friends and relatives all around the world – and it sure won't help bring tourists back in droves. Thai websites didn't even cover the quake, as best I can tell: “Thailand's Official Tsunami and Disaster Center” ([www.thaitsunami.com](http://www.thaitsunami.com)) still has a two-month-old banner ad and no recent news at all.

We do, indeed, live in interesting times.

– Woody Leonhard  
[woody@khunwoody.com](mailto:woody@khunwoody.com)

# A labor of love

The book *Welcome to the Bangkok Slaughterhouse* (Periplus Editions, Singapore, 2005, 158pp) is about the people who live in Bangkok's slums. The author is Father Joe Maier, an American priest who has worked in Thailand since 1967.

In 1972, Father Joe moved into a squatter's shack in Bangkok's Klong Toey slum, originally as parish priest to the ethnic Vietnamese hog butchers of the neighborhood slaughterhouse (as Catholics, they had a monopoly on hogs, since Muslims wouldn't touch them) and later as a community organizer.

This is a collection of 25 stories originally written for a daily newspaper and the narrative tone is direct, conversational, informal and terse. It's as if this streetwise priest is buttonholing you on the street or in a bar and telling you what's up in his slum.

Writer Jerry Hopkins has written a foreword, which opens with him and his friend Father Joe drinking beer on January 2, 2000 when they're interrupted by a phone call: a fire in an ice house is releasing ammonia fumes throughout the slum. As the pair tear off back to Klong Toey in the priest's car, Jerry jokes about the movies where a cop in an unmarked car puts a flashing light on the roof: “I just had an image of you doing that, except you have a flashing crucifix instead.”

Father Joe is also the first to arrive at slum fires, to organize the squatters to rebuild quickly before the government can retake their land. Apart from dealing with emergencies, he has set up the Mercy Centre which, as Hopkins explains, “includes an expanded home for over forty mothers and children with HIV/Aids, a respite care facility for adults with Aids who cannot care for themselves, an Aids homecare and consulting center, four homes for the more than 250 children in the care of the foundation, a street child outreach and law center that sees 100 cases a month, a community service center responding to family and neighborhood emergencies, a jobs program for the handicapped, a three-story preschool with 500 neighborhood children in attendance...”

The book is divided into

three sections: The Children, Struggles, and Heroes.

The 12 stories in the first section are both heartbreaking and inspirational. Father Joe avoids any trace of sentimentality in simply telling the stories of the lost, the abandoned, the abused and the doomed kids born with HIV/Aids. In his just-

the-facts manner, he leads the reader through a world of childhood hurt.

Some children find refuge in the Mercy Centre and rebuild their lives; some fall through the cracks. The odds are steep.

The toughest kids to help are the

street kids.

“They are like the skittish deer or gazelle or the stealthy nocturnal animals you see on Discovery Channel,” Father Joe writes. “Except in this case, as they roam the wilds of Bangkok streets, they search for the next hustle, the next scam that might provide money for drugs or food while looking over their shoulder for cops and other street kid enemies.”

Yet Klong Toey, the slum that everyone fears, is also the nexus of a strong community spirit. In the “Heroes” section, the neighborhood bands together for a massive cleanup to fight

off a meningitis epidemic, the threat of government eviction and the spreading menace of drug gangs.

Father Joe writes about another slum, Tap Gaew, where the residents, devastated by a fire, pitched in together to rebuild their homes in a matter of days:

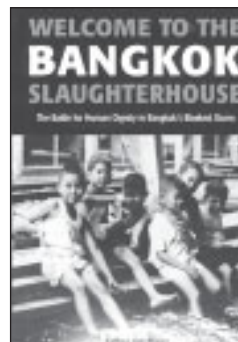
“You have to understand something about the slums: they are not always places people want to leave. Given a choice between living in Tap Gaew or one of the nice ‘uptown’ neighborhoods, there is no question. But it's not a question of choice. Slum people get used to their own communities. They form established neighborhoods that have a cohesive integrity. Some slums in Bangkok have been home to families for three consecutive generations, and more or less happily.”

The work of Father Joe and his 300 teachers and social workers is to tilt the fight for the soul of these slums against the drug lords and “dark influences” who menace them.



## Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt



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# US Congress visitors urged to back recovery fund for SMEs

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura has asked members of the United States Congress to back the establishment of a "Flexible Fund" to help small and medium-sized businesses recover from the tsunami.

Gov Udomsak told the representatives it would be a "great help" if the US would support the fund, which would offer flexible financing with minimum paperwork to traders who had not been insured, or did not have assets they could use as guar-

antees for loans from other sources.

The Governor was speaking on March 31 at Phuket Provincial Hall, after the party toured tsunami-damaged areas in Patong and Kamala. The group was due to visit Phang Nga the following day.

Sorasak Samonkraisarakit, First Secretary of the Royal Thai Embassy in Washington, who came with the group, told the *Gazette* that the American politicians were looking for ways to help the local economy after hearing from businesspeople about how they are struggling to recover.

K. Sorasak added that the American Chamber of Commerce, the US-ASEAN Business Council and the Asia Society were expected to take part in a meeting in June on reviving the local economy.

Gov Udomsak told the *Gazette*, "The members of the group said they would put what they have learned today before a meeting at the House of Representatives on May 12.

"They said that we could expect a delegation from Congress to visit us after that meeting to tell us what help they had decided to offer."

## Warning over diesel cheats

PHUKET: Shopkeepers who take advantage of the recent steep rise in diesel prices in order to hike their own prices unnecessarily should beware – the Phuket Internal Trade Office (PITO) is urging consumers to report such sharp practices on its hotline, Tel: 1569.

The office has also issued a checklist to help customers "Buy clever and save money" after the price of diesel soared by 24% in the space of a month, taking with it prices for many basic items.

First, it said, consumers should not believe all they read in advertisements or on packaging. They should buy items they need and that suit their purpose, rather

than be swayed by fancy words or pictures on packaging.

Second, they should compare the prices different vendors are charging. Does the product or service offer value for money? Could something cheaper do the same job for less money?

Third, they should be aware that the price on display is not necessarily the price they will be charged. They should check, for example, that a vendor is not advertising a product at one price, but actually selling it at another.

Buyers would also do well, when buying goods sold by weight or length, to check for themselves the size or weight, using a ruler or scale.

– Benjamat Srisuwan

# Argentina sets a dangerous precedent

For bond investors who bought Argentinian government bonds in the 1990s and the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it was an unpleasant trap.

Under International Monetary Fund (IMF) guidance, the Argentinian currency, the peso (referred to in financial circles as the ARS), had a formal link to the US dollar.

But, as in all situations where there is a currency linkage, it is vital that the economy of the junior partner is viable. Argentina made the linkage but lacked the political will to enact the many changes that were necessary to sustain viability.

Instead, it borrowed around US\$80 billion via bonds and another US\$14 billion from the IMF.

The bond component consisted of 150 different bond issues under the laws of eight countries and in a total of 14 different currencies. Many of the buyers were financial institutions but many thousands of individual investors from around the world were also lured in.

One of the countries that suffered most was Italy, where an unsuspecting public bought these bonds in large numbers.

In 2001 the Argentinian economy crashed and its government not only failed to repay the outstanding capital to investors but also froze all income payments and, until mid-March 2005, had paid absolutely nothing in return.

Institutional investors were quick to escape before the crash, leaving private investors in dire straits.

With Argentina recording economic growth of 8.3% in 2004, some might believe it is back on track. But this is an illusion.

The illusion was created by economic growth that was spurred by high commodity prices – a simple "bounce" from the depths of an economic collapse – and also because Argentina has not repaid one penny of its debt since 2001.

A legislative assembly elected Adolfo Rodríguez Saá president on December 23, 2001. Saá announced immediately that Argentina would default on its international debt obligations, but expressed his commitment to maintain the currency board and the ARS's 1-to-1 peg to the US dollar.

But Saá was unable to garner support from within his own party for his administration and this, combined with renewed violence in Buenos Aires, led to his resignation on just a week later.

He was replaced by Peronist Eduardo Duhalde on January 1, 2002. After another presidential election on April 27, 2003, Néstor Kirchner came to power after a near run-off with former president Carlos Menem.

Through their actions these successive political regimes have ensured that an estimated 75% of bond holders will lose at least two-thirds – some estimates say three-quarters – of their capital.

Argentina, instead of apologizing for this unholy mess, frequently blames the IMF and bond holders as being the cause of the problem. The country is not, of course, going to give the bondholders their money back; instead, it is issuing new bonds paying lower interest rates.

With the unpaid interest added in, the US\$80 billion – apparently the largest sovereign debt default in history – has now ballooned to US\$103 billion. If bondholders don't want to accept this proposal of lower-interest bonds, they should know that there will never be another offer.

Argentina passed a law on February 9 this year banning the government from making any new offers to bondholders.

The population of Argentina has not escaped unscathed. What was once a successful middle-class country – although one tainted by *El Proceso*, the "Dirty War" of the 1970s – is now estimated to have a poverty rate of



## MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

50%. Argentina's banks and pension funds are awash with low-yielding government bonds.

The worry is that the Argentinian solution to debt may be copied elsewhere in Latin America, or around the world. The more sensible route for individual investors interested in what is known as "emerging-market debt", is to use a mutual fund or unit trust as the vehicle.

This offers several advantages: the investor can spread risk across a number of countries; the political and economic risks are continually monitored and this also leads to opportunities which would most likely escape the attention of the individual.

Virtually all the mutual fund and unit trust managers, in the case of the Argentinian situation, escaped the collapse – in contrast to individual investors, who got caught out.

Fund managers are also in a position to make capital gains in bond markets where long-term interest rates are falling. This costs money, but it is better than living with Argentinian bonds.

Investors in emerging market bonds should be aware of another factor called "carry trade". Interest rates in America have been low for some years and this has encouraged many institutional investors to borrow money at low interest rates in the US and invest the money in emerging markets.

Now, US interest rates are

rising and many of these investments in emerging markets are going to be "unwound". In other words, the bonds will be sold and the debt in the US repaid.

The US's central bank, the Federal Reserve, wants this to happen in an orderly fashion. Consequently, it is being very careful to raise interest rates in small increments to avoid any massive amounts being withdrawn on carry trades.

The Fed was not so careful in a similar situation in 1994, which, in turn, caused a world bond-market crash and led to the collapse of the Mexican economy in December of that year.

However, investors in emerging markets should be aware that the capital values of their bonds may well suffer as these carry trades are unwound.

Investors in the Philippines would be well advised to review their holdings. Analysts are warning that the Philippines is facing a very serious situation and that the risk of default by the government is increasing.

International credit-rating

agencies have been downgrading Philippine debt (bonds), although these agencies do not operate on a forward basis. The situation deteriorates, they downgrade and the process repeats itself.

The IMF recommends that a country's public-sector debt should not exceed 60% of GDP. Five years ago the Philippines' government (public sector) debt stood at 100% of GDP. Today it is at 125% of GDP.

In 2002, repayment of principal and interest on this debt took 46% of total government expenditure and by 2004, servicing debt had grown to almost 70%.

The attempts at a remedy by the Philippines' government so closely resemble the policies of the Argentinian authorities before their crash in 2001 that it is almost a mirror image.

Who says it's a dull world?

*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.*

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## Shooters eye Phuket

CHALONG: The Phuket Rifle Shooting Association is set to host an international shooting contest under the aegis of the Thai Practical Shooting Association (TPSA) and the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) on April 23 and 24.

The competition, the Phuket IPSC Open Level 3 Championship, is open to members of the TPSA and the IPSC only. At least 30 participants from overseas, as well as more than 80 from within Thailand, are expected to compete.

Phuket will be host to one of three international-level matches in Thailand this year, with the others slated to take place in June and December, both in Chon Buri.

These matches, and others throughout Southeast Asia, are viewed by the organizers as a precursor to the discipline becoming part of this year's South East Asia Games, to be held in Manila in November.

Practical shooting differs from traditional target shooting in the diversity of firearms and calibers that can be used and the different types of targets arranged around the field.

The competition is split into two classes: Standard, in which only unmodified firearms are allowed, and Open, in which even heavily modified weapons are permitted.

It is also hoped that the two-day tournament will be a shot in the arm, so to speak, for the local tourism industry.

The contest will begin at 8 am and finish at 6 pm on both days at the Phuket Shooting Field on Patak Rd, Chalong. Spectators are welcome. For more information, call K. Jatuphul at Tel: 09-1090407.

# Playing it short and straight

By Andy Johnstone

It's a back-to-basics day today, following a hiatus since my last lesson due to the recurrence of a torn muscle brought on by laughing at a BBC comedy program. I really must get out more.

Standing at 90° to the near-mirror-finish door of the driving range office, I am invited to take up the stance. Looking as inscrutable and at-one-with-the-universe as a Jedi knight as I position my hands on the club – my coach Bruce comments that I am now doing this by second nature – I pivot forward from the hips and take the stance.

Bruce invites me to look at the door. The image I see is not, as expected, a cross between Obi Wan Kenobi and Arnold Palmer. It's more like Quasimodo. With my back rounded and shoulders hunched, it's a depressing sight.

I try again, mindful of the need for a straight back. "Better," Bruce encourages me. I try three or so times until I begin to be able to detect the muscle in my lower back tensing.

Bruce recommends repeating this exercise as often as possible to allow the muscles to "memorize" the position. "That way," he adds, "it will feel wrong when you do it wrong."

We'll be putting this into practice this week by playing an element of the short game, chipping. The ever-patient Bruce suggests I take a swing at the pin from about 20 yards away.

This is my first attempt at trying to land a ball on the green and, in a reverie before the downstroke, I visualize the ball arching neatly through the air before landing close – I'm a realist; even in a daydream I don't expect the ball to make it straight in the hole – to the flag.



**CHIPPING AWAY:** After his first time chipping on real grass, Andy Johnstone (left) reviews digital images of himself – to find that, after all, he looks more like Ernie Els than Quasimodo.

But it is also my first swing on real grass, which has far more resistance and is far less smooth than the AstroTurf on the tee of the driving range.

Result? The ball wheezes a paltry five meters. I have labored to produce a "fat shot", that is, a shot where the club has struck the ground behind the ball before connecting with it.

I attempt again, but go too far on the backswing; the ball has too much loft and ends up 20 yards beyond the pin.

Bruce makes three recommendations; position my feet closer together; put my weight slightly forward in my stance – for a right-handed player like me that means on my left leg – with

the ball in line with the inside of my right foot.

I whoop with delight as my third attempt sees the ball in a low arc in the early morning sunlight, stopping three meters from the pin, and, just as importantly, in line with it. I had positioned my feet correctly, in line with the pin, without even realizing it.

I take a few more shots until I am consistently – more or less – landing them within three yards of the hole. Bruce suggests filming a few shots for analysis back in the office.

The boffins have come up with a neat piece of kit called SwingView Pro, which allows downloaded video images to be played back through a computer

to enable the player to see where he or she is going wrong – or right.

The software can even show two players at once, ideal for a comparison between a pro and a novice – or between the novice at, say, week 1 and week 4. The playback – taken from behind me as I made my shot – shows the ball on a direct trajectory toward the flag.

"Straight and true," says Bruce, "straight and true."

For more information about Laguna Phuket Golf Club's coaching programs, contact Bruce Whitehead, PGA Professional, at Tel: 076-270991-2 or Email: golfteaching@lagunaphuket.com

## Baines reelected PEGS president

KATHU: The recent Phuket Expat Golf Society (PEGS) end-of-month tournament saw 76 players take up the challenge at Phuket Country Club, for what was a competitive day's play of Stableford and Stroke play formats. Results:

**Stableford, Division A:** Winner: Armin Muller with 38 points off 18 handicap; Runner-up: Daniel Darcy with 38 points off 17 handicap.

**Division B:** Winner: Martin Denecke with 43 points off 22 handicap; Runner-up Herman Ruedin with 42 points off 28 handicap.

**Stroke play:** Winner (Low Gross) Matt Richardson with a 72; Winner (Low Net) Mervyn Baines with a 66; Runner-up (Low Net) John Conant with a score of 66; 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up (Low Net) Felix Weber with a score of 68.

**Nearest the Pin:** Hole 2, Brian Phillips; Hole 5, John Conant; Hole 14, Matt Richardson; Hole 17, Herman Weibel.

**Longest Drive:** Ladies, K. Phongphan. Men, Matt Richardson.

The PEGS annual meeting took place the same day. Among those elected were: President: Mervyn Baines (second term) and Vice-President: Graham Blake; Tournament Secretary: Liam Stewart; Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Deputy VP: David Brook; Handicap Secretary: Wayne Fielder; Secretary and Starter: Mike Knights.

## Patong Darts League

PATONG: With their fifth consecutive three-point win, Off-Shore extended their lead in the Patong Darts League to six points. Meanwhile, second-place Queen Mary kept within striking distance with a 5-4\* win over Piccadilly.

**March 29 results:** Amigos 4 Nag's Head 5\*; Pickles 7\* Two Black Sheep 2; Offshore 6\* Didi's 3; Piccadilly 4\* Queen Mary 5; Valhalla 6\* Champs 3; Dog's Bollocks 3 Shakers 6\*. (\*Winner of beer leg.)

**Standings:** 1. Offshore (24 points); 2. Queen Mary (18); 3. Pickles (17); 4. Shakers (16) 5. Valhalla (15); 6. Didi's (14); 7=. Amigos, Champs (13); 9. Piccadilly (12); 10. Nag's Head (11); 11. Dog's Bollocks (6); 12. Two Black Sheep (3).

**April 12 matches:** Pickles v Valhalla; Dog's Bollocks v Champs; Queen Mary v Didi's; Piccadilly v Nag's Head; Shakers v Offshore; Two Black Sheep v Amigos. (Home teams first).

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# Dinghy racers gear up for a wet Songkran

AO YON: In a warm-up race held on April 3 in preparation for the April 10 "Songkran Regatta", competitors in the Skiff Asia event found themselves in a building Sunday morning breeze. The race committee set a windward/leeward course in Ao Yon Bay, the top mark just west of Cape Panwa.

In Race 1, the 59ers started well, but after rounding the top mark Savnac/Hallager quickly relinquished an early lead by capsizing in their first gybe.

Chookate/Lawson in a 29er – similar to a 59er but smaller – survived their first-ever hoist and gybe and took a fairly commanding lead. This was a notable effort because it marked the first entry of a Thai, Thanasorn "Nid" Chookate's, in a Skiff Asia dinghy race.

But Savnac/Hallager righted their 59er quickly, regained pace, and by the second downwind leg they were within striking distance of Chookate/Lawson. With the breeze now up to 15+ knots, and with capsized boats all over the course, Chookate/Lawson crossed the finish just centimeters ahead of Savnac/Hallager.

By Race 2, the breeze was a steady 15+ knots. Savnac/Hallager were once again first around the top mark. They hoisted well but once again capsized on the first gybe.

All of the boats capsized at least once in the second race, but by then everyone had improved at righting their boats. Savnac/Hallager "figured it out" by the second run, sailing flat and fast under spinnaker, and finished well ahead of Duncanson/Brookmeister. Bill Gray, sailing



15-knot winds made for exciting racing and frequent capsizes off Ao Yon.

solo, crossed the finish line in 3<sup>rd</sup>. Although the capsizes were exhausting and wore the crews down, the pace back to the clubhouse for food and "cold ones" was blistering. **Race 1 Results:** 1. Thanasorn Chookate/Phil Lawson (29er); 2. Azzum Savnac/Mike Hallager (59er); 3. Scott Duncanson/Richard Buckminster (59er).

**Race 2 Results:** 1. Azzum Savnac/Mike Hallager (59er); 2. Scott Duncanson/Richard Brookmeister (59er); 3. Bill Gray (c2Byte).

For more information about the April 10 Songkran Regatta, contact Philip Lawson at Skiff Asia (Email: info@skiffasia.com; Tel: 01-3970905).



Softies (from left to right): Silver medal winners Woralak Rekchaikan and Nattha Kongkaew; gold medalists Paolena Laksameesangjan and Tanyapat Kongkaew.

## Phuket soft tennis players take lead in national tourney

PHUKET CITY: Phuket won five golds to emerge as winners in the first round of the Thailand Soft Tennis Open tourney, held April 1 to 3 at the Saphan Hin tennis courts.

Phuket competed against six other teams in the tourney: Chon Buri, Surin, Nonthaburi, Chaiphaphum and two entries from Bangkok.

Sakan Tansiroj snagged two gold medals, in both the men's singles and as part of the men's team, which included brother Itti, Pakorn Niyom-Udom, Permyot Tansakul, Tanapong Anantantikul and Piranat Phromrak.

In the women's categories, Phuket took first place in every category except the under-19 doubles, with golds going to Woralak Rekchaikan (under-19 singles); Tanyapat Kongkaew (open singles) and the open doubles team of Tanyapat Kongkaew and Paolena Laksameesangjan.

The players will play in four more legs before going to Bangkok for the Soft Tennis Thailand Master's Championship.

**Medal count:** Phuket 14; Surin 10; Chon Buri 10; ASB (Bangkok) 4; Nonthaburi 1; Bangkok 0; Chaiphaphum 0.

## 'VIP' soccer match postponed

The soccer match between Tak Bai United, a squad of actors and singers, and Phuket provincial authorities, scheduled for April 2 has been rescheduled for May 1 at Surakul Stadium, starting at 4 pm.

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# Jurassic spark of innovation

Phuket may be one of the family-holiday destinations *sans pareil*, but finding somewhere to eat that is both diverting enough for the young 'uns and interesting enough for adults is not as easy as one might think.

The owners of the average hotel or stand-alone restaurant – jam-packed with tables if not diners – simply do not factor children into the equation of maximum covers in a limited floor space.

And I should know, having had my three-year-old niece, Poppy, and her parents over here on holiday recently.

It isn't enough to have a couple of high chairs or a packet of crayons for children; they do need a little more stimulation occasionally.

I, or rather we, went on a quest to find somewhere suitable and in 10 days of eating out, found just one place.

The full-on touristy evening begins with a tuk-tuk journey, Poppy's favorite mode of transport. We wait 10 minutes for one, not because there aren't any – there are plenty – but because Poppy wants one that is, to her, the right color.

I tell her that most of them are red. "I want a pink one," she replies, reminding me that pink is her favorite color. I spot a blue one. "No," she retorts, "blue is for boys. I'm a girl." This could be a long night.



ABOVE: A triceratops tucks into a sizeable salad. TOP RIGHT: Tigress woods, actually, putts after a monster-size meal. RIGHT: The Dino crab looks like Edward Scissorhands, but tastes better.



Finally, I see a yellow tuk-tuk approaching and hope that this neutral color will do. Poppy hesitates before noticing that the lights inside are electric pink. We pile in and sally forth.

"Dino Park," I say to our driver. He smiles a smile that says, "What do you mean?" I try again, aided by my niece, who does a convincing impression of an extinct terrestrial reptile of the Mesozoic era.

"DEE-noh Park," says the driver. "Dee-noh Park?" I wonder. Maybe it's not an archosaur-themed restaurant but a temple to Dino – Dean Martin – and perhaps the whole equally-extinct Rat Pack: Frank, Sammy, Dean, Peter and the other one...

We arrive, and dinosaurs it is. And a mini golf course. And a volcano, which appears to be attracting the attention of a CNN crew, perhaps attempting to drive another nail into the coffin of Phuket tourism.

It's busy, too; the temblor of the previous Monday has apparently not scared anyone away. Children are rushing around, deftly avoiding the ponds and streams full of fish.

The atmosphere is spot-on for children, most of whom, like Poppy, seem to be walking around making new friends, regardless of the diversity of languages I catch on the air. My eye is caught by the waitresses in their nouveau-Flintstones apparel.

Although it's a little on the pricey side, the menu offers a range of Thai and Western favorites that is more than adequate.

Seafood features heavily and we choose grilled squid, *yam woonsen goong* (glass-noodle salad with prawns) and *tom yam goong* – every tourist's favorite –

for starters. My niece has a lollipop for her appetizer.

We go for themed cocktails – Volcano, Dino (Dee-noh?) Dream and T-Rex Tequila – while we munch away.

The hot and sour soup fair takes my sister's breath away, although she insists that she likes it. Indeed it is good, and a welcome change to have it made traditionally.

No complaints about the other two starters either. Dressed with soy sauce and accompanied by a light *nam jim* dipping sauce, the squid is very palatable. The *yam woonsen* is cool and refreshing.

Fried crabs – which Poppy says look like Edward Scissorhands – with curry and green onions are the undoubted highlight of the mains and we are soon scooping out the sweet white meat like there's no tomorrow.

Honorable mentions, too, for the *gaeng ped moo* (red curry with pork), the *kapow gai* (minced chicken fried with chilies and basil) and Poppy's hot dog and chips.

Despite it being rather past Poppy's normal bedtime, we decide to take in a round of golf.

This elevates an evening from the slightly surreal to the vaguely trippy, in that all-too-common Edgar-Rice-Burroughs-meets-Tiger-Woods way. The occasional plesiosaur and lava cave make for a tricky round.

Wild life? Absolutely, but not, we concur, as much of a zoo as Patong.

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## On the menu with Andy Johnstone

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Rorya Saha is an engineer. He was born in Pattani in Thailand's Deep South and studied to be an engineer at Swinburne University of Technology in Victoria, Australia.

He graduated in civil, structural and transport engineering and returned to Thailand to work on government and municipal construction projects in the south, then later came to Phuket as a civil and structural engineer and site manager for a Bangkok company building a residential project.

Rorya is now Production Manager for Underwood, running the factory that produces decorative items and fittings for hotels and resorts such as Four Seasons, Langkawi, as well as JW Marriott, Hilton and Anantara in Hua Hin.

He is a devout Muslim who, on his return from Australia, spent two years at schools in southern Thailand as a coordinator and assistant, training the teachers and students in technology and English, in which he is fluent.

Rorya is a friend of mine, and his friends call him Zak. Although his work and career have

# My friend Zak

been going well, life hasn't been easy recently.

Zak and his wife, Ruqayah, lost their two young daughters while he was playing with them on Bang Tao Beach on December 26 last year.

"We always played on the beach on Sunday morning," he said. "But that morning, the wave came and I couldn't hold them. My wife had been at home and she was taken by friends up to the temple on the hill.

"She saw me return without the children and she knew. There was nothing to say."

We discussed his time in Australia. "It was a great experience for me," said Zak. "I am very traditional, coming as I do from Pattani Province, and I wore Islamic-type clothing and the headgear.

"People asked me if I was from Israel and I had to get another student from Israel to explain that I was wearing a Muslim hat!" he said.

## LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

We always played on the beach on Sunday morning but that morning, the wave came...



Zak with one of the latest creations at Underwood. "We all have difficult times, but you can't blame anybody," says Zak.

"Sometimes they gave me a hard time, but it was all in good nature and we developed good friendships and relationships, even with the teachers."

He said that it was necessary for him to learn how to stand up for himself. "You soon find out that no one is going to do anything for you. You have to do it yourself."

I asked Zak about the problems in his home province and those nearby. "Unfortunately, Thailand is not so good at devel-

oping a multicultural society. Australia has - it had to," he noted. "Of course, it's not perfect, but it does prove that many [different] people can live together."

There are, according to Zak, two factors causing the problems in Thailand's Deep South.

"We understand that there are foreigners there who can influence people with no education. The separatist issue has nothing to do with religion; it is

stirred up by people - many from Indonesia and mostly, we understand, from the Aceh region of Sumatra - with their own interests.

"For me, there is no logic to splitting Thailand, nor will there be any benefit from it.

"Second, there is the hatred of the government by many who have experienced neglect and misunderstanding of the unique problems of southern people."

He said, however, that neglect is not limited to the southernmost provinces of Thailand.

"You see the same thing in many parts of this country. If you need staff, people say 'Get them from Isarn' because the people there are looked upon as a source of cheap, uneducated labor.

"The government should be concerned about improving the education standards of all Thai people," he recommends.

"When you put neglect and lack of understanding together, you get the situation that has happened. Education is the key to solving these problems."

I asked him how he and his wife were adjusting to life.

"We all have difficult times, but you can't blame anybody or anything for what happened that day in December," Zak tells me.

"We're going to take a month off, go back to my home and then travel. Then I want to get back to the construction business. Engineering - that's what I enjoy."



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## Construction Update

by Anongnat Satpisut

# Project for the people

Construction of Phase I of the Baan Term Fan (House to Fulfill your Dreams) development is 30% complete, and the project is on target for the first 30 homes to be finished by September.

Supachoke Pupatarapokee, Assistant Project Manager, explained that Phase I covers 35 rai and will cost a total of 30 million baht. Construction started on December 24 last year, and the remaining 178 units in Phase I are expected to be complete by the end of March next year.

"Power cables and municipal water mains have been installed throughout the development, and a well has been dug as a backup water supply," he added.

The entire project, which covers 70 rai of flat land in Baan Manik surrounded by hills, is aimed at the lower end of Phuket's property market.

The Phase I units are available in two designs. There will be 114 semi-detached units each with a 144-square-meter yard and 55.8sqm of interior space, and featuring nine-meter-wide front-

age, two bedrooms and a bathroom. Prices for these homes start from 899,000 baht.

In addition, there will be 94 townhouse units in blocks of six, each with a 90sqm yard, 54sqm of interior space, six-meter-wide frontage, two bedrooms and a bathroom.

Prices for the townhouses start from 699,000 baht.

Each home will have air conditioning and anti-termite protection, while the entire estate will be protected by 24-hour security. Other facilities will include a playground and a communal garden, both of which will be maintained by a committee comprising residents of the project.

Both designs make use of good ventilation, with each unit having many windows and sliding doors. The 16-meter-wide roads throughout the estate add to a sense of space.

K. Supachoke said, "Developments in Phuket are currently mostly focused on the high end of the market; there are not so many affordable homes. We're giving people the opportunity to



Above: The show home at Baan Term Fan. Below, the kitchen in the show home gives a good idea of what can be done with the space inside.



own their own homes at monthly installments close to what they would pay for renting."

The payment schedule for townhouses is: 5,000 baht to reserve a unit, 20,000 baht payable on signing the contract, 12,000-baht down payment, 9,500 baht a month for the first 12 months and then 3,500 baht a month over 15 years, 3,000 baht a month over 20 years, 2,600 baht a month over 25 years, or 2,400 baht a month over 30 years.

K. Supachoke said that 87 units have already been sold, and that the remainder were going fast.

If the developer, Thongkul Real Estate Co Ltd, is happy with the success of Phase I, K. Supachoke said, they will launch Phase II, for which plans are being drawn up.

For more information about Baan Term Fan call at Tel: 076-272867 or 076-325437.



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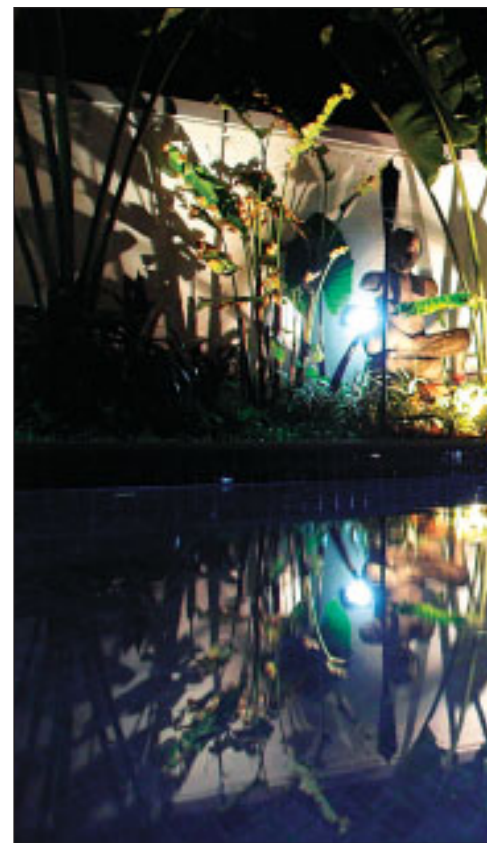
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## Home of the Week

# A bit



This week's home is an unusual property – something of an exercise in tasteful design – and thus stands out in Phuket. It is also for sale fully furnished, which means that the new owner will get Jim Thompson drapes, a Bose sound system, a Panasonic plasma-screen TV and a number of works of modern art.

Sitting on an 800-square-meter (half-rai) plot of tropical landscaped gardens, the house has a 25sqm floodlight pool, watched over by two images of the Lord Buddha.

The property boasts a Western kitchen equipped with a range of Teka appliances and a cavernous General Electric refrigerator. The kitchen also has marble worktops, recessed lighting and plenty of electrical sockets for culinary gadgets.

The large dining room leads out onto the covered terrace.

The house has three bedrooms, one of which – on the first floor – could be used as an office or maid's accommodation. It also has a bathroom, and there is a separate WC on the same floor.

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Rawai

# of a chic...



Left: Creatively-lit Buddha images look calmly across the swimming pool. Above: Inside, the home is full of carefully thought-out artistic touches.

The larger bedrooms, both of which have en-suite bathrooms and built-in *maka* wood wardrobes, are on the upper floor. The master bathroom features a Jacuzzi and an ultra-modern shower unit.

The upper floor is also

home to the airy living room, which incorporates a tastefully-styled bar.

The utilities for this property, which is offered for sale at 14.9 million baht, include UBC TV, a water-filtration system and well water.

The land title for the property is Chanote.

For more information, contact: Richard Lusted, Siam Real Estate at Tel: 076-288908 or 076-281-543. Email: [info@siamrealestate.com](mailto:info@siamrealestate.com) or [www.siamrealestate.com](http://www.siamrealestate.com)

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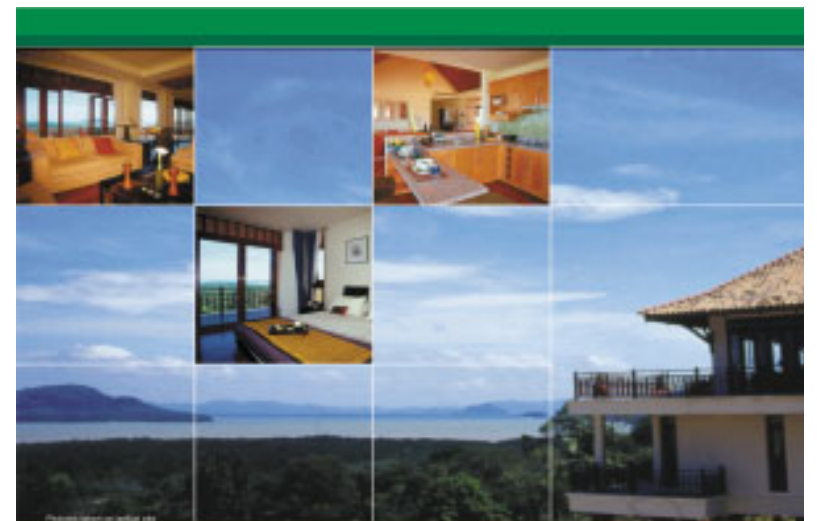
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Le Raffiné, Sukhumvit 31 Project developer and owner: Le Raffiné 31 Company Limited Registered capital 20,000,000 Baht fully paid up. Office location: 31 Sukhumvit, 31/31 Sukhumvit Road, Klongtoey Sub-District, Klongtoey District, Bangkok 10110. Planning Director: Pongthorn Nantawong, P.O. Box 10000, Sukhumvit 31/31 Sukhumvit Road, Klongtoey Sub-District, Klongtoey District, Bangkok 10110. Land area: 11-1-19 approximately 110 sqm. Project numbered and supported by Ministry of Land, Urban Planning and Construction. Construction permit has been approved. Construction progress: July 2004. Completion expected: November 2005. The project shall be registered at the condominium after completing the construction. Common area fee will be paid by buyers in accordance with registration of condominium price period.

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## Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

# Getting into Burma bloomers

I have never really been to Burma. I've done the old sprint over the border often enough, but I always seem to feel that I haven't exactly "done" Myanmar, as the Americans would say. And there's another problem – what should we call the country? Is it now Myanmar, or is Burma still diplomatically correct?

I still hear the BBC refer to our north-western neighbor as "Burma", so I'm a bit confused. Even the towns and cities in this identity crisis-stricken nation aren't quite sure of their names. Is Mandalay still Mandalay?

Plants aren't known to be as reliable as international diplomats in keeping up with the times. It's not just plants, either – look at the singer, Prince. He became a squiggle for a while, then apparently reverted back to a Prince

Fortunately, plants have yet to be affected by political correctness, or the whims of military juntas, so despite the demise of its namesake, the Rangoon creeper retains its name. Somehow the "Yangon-thing-that-moves-quietly" doesn't really work.

Many of the plants that flourish in Southeast Asia are imports from other tropical areas of the world, but this is a native to this region. All over Phuket You can see the Rangoon creeper, or *lep meu nang* (lady's fingernails) as it's known in Thai.

In certain circles, it's also known as the drunken sailor. I'm sure there are dozens of stories of how it came to be associated with intoxicated seafarers, but I don't know any of them, as I was probably also drunk at the time.

Once this aggressive plant takes root, there seems to be no stopping it. We have a drunken sailor outside the office where I work, which is hacked at mercilessly almost daily with a pair of

Once the aggressive Rangoon Creeper, also known in certain circles as the Drunken Sailor, takes root, there seems to be no stopping it.

But then, with its gorgeous display of flowers, why would you want to?



scissors pinched from my desk.

The Rangoon creeper really doesn't care; in fact it seems to sneer at such treatment. In an effort to show the pruner that it's made of sterner stuff, it purposefully grows back at twice the rate, almost as if it was on some kind of mind-altering substance.

The Rangoon Creeper has clusters of non-stop, sweetly-scented flowers that droop lazily. They're white when they first make an appearance, then turn pink or crimson.

One of the unusual things about this plant is that all three

colors can appear together on a single cluster at the same time. Is this a pink-flowered plant or a white-flowered plant? The majority of varieties are mostly pinkish, and there is even a type that sports double blossoms.

The best way to encourage this plant's amazing speed of growth is to put some kind of framework behind it, and then sit back and watch. Once established, it will need frequent attacks with the pruning shears if you want it to remain within boundaries.

Also, in a surprisingly short

time, it will wrap itself around any other plant life that gets in its way.

I didn't actually buy my first Rangoon creeper deliberately, as it happens. I invested in rather a magnificent giant dracaena several years ago. It had attained its height purely because the bloke at the garden center had forgotten about it and it flourished through pure neglect. I had to have it.

Over the years, a particularly voracious Rangoon Creeper had wound its clutches around this dracaena, to the extent that they

actually made quite a couple. I took them home together anyway, and the Rangoon creeper quickly became the alpha male in the garden.

Once this thing takes root and is given half a chance, it's the boss. It's so common in Phuket that some gardeners actually regard it as a weed. I have to say that I'm actually rather fond of it.

In India, they boil the seeds to treat a variety of ailments. Apparently, it's beneficial in the treatment of diarrhea, fever, rickets and various abdominal pains.

It's not one to just pop in a pot and expect it to do its thing. Train it a little, and it will do as it's told.

Given its speed of growth, along with its tendency to wrap itself around anything it happens to meet, it's a great way to cover a part of your garden that you would prefer wasn't there at all. Any brick or concrete wall – with a few nails knocked into it and connected by wire –

will be more than enough to point the Rangoon Creeper in the right direction. Soon, you won't be able to tell there was ever a wall there.

The drunken sailor will behave itself if shown a little discipline. Be firm, but join it for a beer anyway.

Want to know more about a plant in your garden?

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# Property Gazette

## Properties For Sale

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### PATONG SEAVIEW

3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. 8.5 million baht. 500sqm land, option for extra land. Tel: 01-4775306. Email: patriklambert@hotmail.com

### 65 RAI BEACHFRONT

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### BANG TAO BEACH

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### PATONG SEAVIEW

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### BEAUTIFUL LAND

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### KOH YAO NOI

10 rai, 1 ngan, 55 talang wah (16.620sqm). Nor Sor 3 Gor land title. Road access, water, electricity. Located on island's preferred east side, facing Krabi. Typical market prices vary between 2.5 to 2.8 million baht per rai. Will sell for best reasonable offer. Tel: 09-9708145. Email: kupag@phuket.ksc.co.th

### HOUSE FOR SALE

Phuket Pride house, located on hillside, fully furnished, aircon. Tel: 09-4736886.

### THALANG LAND PLOTS

Chanote title. Secure, quiet & private location. Road & electricity. Price: from 1,000 baht/sqm. Call Jonny at Tel: 09-2911112, 06-2707228.

### NEW SINGLE HOUSE

New single house in Kathu for sale. 2 stories, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fully furnished, hill view, 560sqm. Price: 6.9 million baht. Please call for more information or to view. Tel: 07-279-9500.

### SEAVIEW LAND

1-6 rai elevated land on island off the coast of Phuket. Stunning sea view, 15 mins to Phuket City: 2.5 million/rai. No agents. Tel: 076-292874, 06-9520772. Email: kamala@phuket.ksc.co.th

### HOUSE FOR SALE

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# Property Gazette

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### PATONG PAD

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### CONDO ROOM

for rent. 5 min walk to Patong Beach, cheap price, fully furnished, sea view, aircon, hot water, cable TV. Tel: 09-6455134. Email: js\_0704@hotmail.com

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### PATONG LUXURY

apartment. Central Patong, 1- & 2-bedroom apartments. Please email for info & photos. Email: suites247@yahoo.com

## Accommodation Wanted

### PLEASE HELP

Can anyone help me to find an apartment or house for 2 weeks in November 2005. I need 2 bedrooms, 3 beds. It must be in Patong. Thank you. Email: info@sandelin.biz

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### 1 OR 2 BEDROOMS

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- Very strong command of English language a must
- Previous experience in international hotel chain, preferably a resort, would be an advantage
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- Must have strong interpersonal and communication skills, be hands-on person, motivator, enthusiastic, and able to promote harmonious employee relations
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- Computer literacy (Word, Excel), good command of written and spoken English

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**Trw@tillekeandgibbins.com**

Applications should be received by 25 April; they will be kept strictly confidential



## Dive Supply Co., Ltd.

is looking to recruit for the following positions at our new head office in Chalong:

- 2 x Sales representative for diving equipment sales
- 1 x Secretary/Receptionist
- 1 x Accounting Assistant

- All positions for Thai nationals 25 years and up
- Salary range from 12,000 to 20,000 baht a month depending on experience, knowledge and competency
- Good command of written and spoken English
- Excellent telephone skills

- 1 x Warehouse Assistant (male)
- 1 x Driver with truck license (male)

If you think this is you,  
please contact:

**Khun Pen at Tel: 076-383414 or  
Email: [info@divesupply.com](mailto:info@divesupply.com)**

## DUTY MANAGER

(Thai only). Kata Beach Resort is urgently looking for a Duty Manager (Note: Thai nationality only).

PROFILE: Mature, guest-oriented, flexible and good command of English.

SALARY: 10,000 + baht, based on experience.

Please send full resumé or apply in person. Tel: 076-330530, Fax: 076-330128. Email: [fokatabr@katagroup.com](mailto:fokatabr@katagroup.com)

## LANGUAGE

teachers. Phonics and pronunciation to be emphasized. Good pay. Please call Tel: 076-282232 or 01-9794140 for more information.

## SALES/MARKETING

newspaper. We are looking for a salesperson to sell ads and subscriptions in all of our international newspapers. Great salary for the right person. Pls contact for more info. Tel: 076-346218, 09-8093566. Fax: 076-346232. Email: [Info@newspaperdirect-phuket.com](mailto:Info@newspaperdirect-phuket.com)

## NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS!

Many excellent jobs available soon.

Must be TEFL trained.

**Apply now!**

[paul@langserv.com](mailto:paul@langserv.com)

Tel: 06-9520088

## THAI TEACHERS NEEDED!

To teach both English and Thai. Must be experienced. **Also assistant to the principal.** Beautiful school, above-average salaries. Email Ajam Saiyan at: [tnt@langserv.com](mailto:tnt@langserv.com)

Tel: 09-8140107

## CAREGIVER WANTED

Part time for elderly farang man. Must speak English. Flexible hours in beautiful location. Live-in private quarters. Tel: 06-9465799. Email: [odd\\_muse@yahoo.ca](mailto:odd_muse@yahoo.ca)

## SECRETARY WANTED

Position now open for Thai secretary in established canvas company at the Phuket Boat Lagoon. English speaking, computer friendly, with Word/Excel. Own transport. Pls contact K. Muzza for more info. Tel: 076-238946, 01-3701600. Fax: 076-238946. Email: [canvas@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:canvas@loxinfo.co.th)

## IT CONSULTANT

A Phuket media and marketing company is looking for a bright, energetic, young staff member to join the company as an IT Consultant. Requirements: bachelor's degree in computer science or related field; knowledge of computer languages (Perl, PHP and mySQL, Macromedia Dreamweaver, HTML, Javascript, Photoshop or Graphic Design etc); capable of maintaining Linux server, Microsoft Windows Client, Outlook; experience in network systems is an advantage; good interpersonal and communication skills; English literate. Contact Khun Mink for an interview. Tel: 09-4745726. Email: [piyapak\\_s@yahoo.com](mailto:piyapak_s@yahoo.com)

## SALES

Co-ordinator (2 positions). A local media company is looking for bright, energetic sales people to handle media sales for a number of Asian-based publications. Previous sales experience would be preferred. Must have a high level of English and be able to prepare and present sales proposals. Applicants with cars are also preferred. Drivers license is essential. Applications should be made to Khun Mink. Tel: 09-4745726. Email: [info@leadingedge-media.com](mailto:info@leadingedge-media.com) for an interview.

## ASIAN TRAVEL CLUB

recruit. Asian Travel Club, located in Kata Beach, is looking for Thai/English and Cantonese/English-speaking sales representatives. You should be easy going and have a positive attitude and professional appearance. Good salary, commissions and benefits offered. Full training provided. Pls contact for more info. Tel: 076-333461. Fax: 076-333460. Email: [paulivarlarsson@hotmail.com](mailto:paulivarlarsson@hotmail.com)

## HOTEL STAFF

wanted in Kata.

- Waiters/Waitresses

- Cleaners

- Reception/Front desk

Must be able to speak a little English. No experience required. Good salary. Pls contact us for details. Tel: 07-2783270. Email: [labanspost@hotmail.com](mailto:labanspost@hotmail.com)

## EXPERIENCED STAFF

wanted for property development company in Phuket. For more details check: [www.immobilienplus.com/jobs](http://www.immobilienplus.com/jobs)

## PROPERTY

secretary. The core tasks are to coordinate the office paperwork & to support the sales team. The key need is organization. Come work for a smart, reputable company. Tel: 076-236616, 01-895 2206. Fax: 076-236617. Email: [siamuk@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:siamuk@loxinfo.co.th)

## CRUISE

coordinator, Thai/English speaking, is needed. Tel: 076-239111. Fax: 076-238974. Email: [suporn@thaimarine.com](mailto:suporn@thaimarine.com)

## ACCOUNTANT

needed for real estate company. Very good command of written, spoken English; computer knowledge. Tel: 076-273427.

## NANNY NEEDED

to take care of a two-month-old baby in Surin. Must speak English and have adequate experience. Tel: 01-7875 723.

## THAI ADMIN

and teacher. required with good English skills. Must be a hardworking person. Email: [info@kajonkiet.com](mailto:info@kajonkiet.com)

## URGENTLY NEEDED

Maid, Pa Khlok area. Good salary. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-273427, 01-8295388.

## LAW FIRM

seeks accountant. Full time or part time. Tel: 076-261377. Fax: 076-261378. Email: [scphuket@yahoo.com](mailto:scphuket@yahoo.com)

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# Island Job Mart

## HOLIDAY OWNERSHIP CONSULTANTS REQUIRED

Asia's largest holiday ownership developer, with operations in Indonesia, India and Thailand urgently requires English-speaking holiday ownership consultants for its Phuket operation.

All nationalities, including Thais, are welcome to apply. Previous experience not required. Full training will be provided. Earning potential up to 150,000 THB per month.

Limited positions available. Selected candidates must be able to start immediately.

Interested applicants may send their resumé, with photo, by e-mail to [hr-phuket@royalperspective.com](mailto:hr-phuket@royalperspective.com)

## MARKETING ASSISTANT

Property development company looking for:

- Male or female, age 28-35 years old.

- Good English communication skills and computer literate.

- Pleasant personality & attitude.

- At least 2-3 years' experience in marketing.

For more information, please contact Promotion Manager Mr Stephan. Tel: 076-290-404. Fax: 076-341612. Email: [promo@lorchidee-residences.com](mailto:promo@lorchidee-residences.com)

## ENGLISH NATIVE

speakers. English teachers required. Full time: 30,000 baht per month. Part time: 350 baht per hour. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-377095, 09-2929946. Email: [britishschoolphuket@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:britishschoolphuket@yahoo.co.uk)

## SECRETARY

and administrator. The core tasks are to coordinate the office paperwork and to support the sales team. The key attribute is organization. Come work for a smart, reputable company. Tel: 076-236616, 01-8952206. Email: [siamuk@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:siamuk@loxinfo.co.th)

## MASSAGE

therapists wanted. Phuket Home Massage in Cherng Talay is now looking for therapists. We provide massages at 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](mailto:dellapietra@mysunrise.ch)

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# Tout, Trader & Trumpet

## Articles for Sale

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### NIKON F601 CAMERA

Auto/manual SLR, Tamron 28-200mm zoom lens, Polarizing filter. Price: 6,000 baht. Tel: 04-7566075.

### DISPLAY FRIDGE

Large fridge as used in shops, etc. Excellent condition. A bargain at 15,000 baht. Tel: 07-2821951. Email: [kseacy@hotmail.com](mailto:kseacy@hotmail.com)

### PIONEER

Pioneer DVD player with 170+ DVDs. 22,000 baht value. Serious offers please. Tel: 07-8831190. Email: [mazunguid@yahoo.com](mailto:mazunguid@yahoo.com)

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Specialized Demo Nine. Brand new! Never seen a mountain yet. 8 inches of front and 9 inches of rear suspension. XTR and Manitou to include many extras. Downhill racer and excellent free-ride machine. I paid \$5,000. Make a reasonable offer. Must see. Tel: 01-0795570. Email: [aribenroni@yahoo.com](mailto:aribenroni@yahoo.com)

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TV and VCD. 6 months old with warranty. Like new. 6,000 baht. Tel: 07-279 8520. Email: [waikikidivecafe@hotmail.com](mailto:waikikidivecafe@hotmail.com)

### ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER

HP PSC 1110. All in one: scan, print, and copy. For sale at 2,500 baht. (New price: 5,900 baht.) Please contact for more info. Tel: 07-2798 520. Email: [waikikidivecafe@hotmail.com](mailto:waikikidivecafe@hotmail.com)

## POOL TABLE 3'x6'



New, complete with all accessories. Home use. Price: 60,000 baht. Tel: 04-154-1781. Email: [pearl\\_phuket@hotmail.com](mailto:pearl_phuket@hotmail.com)

## SANDSTONE

& bronze art. Sandstone creations: We export high-end, museum-quality sandstone murals & fountains. Brass and bronze creations: We export high-end, museum-quality brass sculptures, fountains, and a full range of miscellaneous items such as Buddhist temple bells. Commissioned works upon request. Visit us at [www.bkithailand.com](http://www.bkithailand.com). Tel: 02-8180 245, 07-1106952. Fax: 02-8180244. Email: [jklein@bkithailand.com](mailto:jklein@bkithailand.com)

## CATERING EQUIPMENT

Used first-class kitchen and restaurant equipment for sale. In mint condition and at very reasonable prices. For more info please contact Pam at Tel: 01-8105559 or Jay at Tel: 09-8745286.

## DIVING MATERIALS

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## ELECTRIC AIR COOLER

Evaporative air cooler for sale at 2,000 baht. Good condition. Please contact for more info. Tel: 05-0388178. Email: [golfucky@hotmail.com](mailto:golfucky@hotmail.com)

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**Dealership Office**  
The Boat Lagoon  
Contact: Malin Holmes  
tel: 076 238 803  
fax: 076 273 319  
Email: [info@leemarine.com](mailto:info@leemarine.com)

**Brokerage Office**  
The Boat Lagoon  
Contact: Andrew de Bruin  
Mobile: 01 894 1530  
tel/fax: 076 239 729  
Email: [brokerage@leemarine.com](mailto:brokerage@leemarine.com)

**Yacht Haven Marina Office**  
The Yacht Haven Marina Phuket  
Contact: Jim Paulson  
Mobile: 01 891 3237  
tel/fax: 076 208 260  
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## 27FT SPEED BOAT

Sunbridge Bayliner 2755, full-deck cabin cruiser. New Mercruiser V8 (250hp). Very well maintained. Can take up to 12 people, sleeps 5. Perfect to explore the region. Can be seen at Yacht Haven (Dock A). Price: 1.5 million baht. Pls contact for more information. Tel: 01-9799307. Email: [michelburon@hotmail.com](mailto:michelburon@hotmail.com)

**Jeanneau Sun Fast 31 Cruiser/Racer**  
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# Tout, Trader & Trumpet




**The Ambassador 55 (Majesty 55)**



The Ambassador 55, the oldest of the Majesty series. This vessel offers a fantastically soft ride at speeds of up to 33 knots. The huge flybridge or salon offers plenty of space for entertaining and relaxing. This vessel really is luxury at a very affordable price. The Majesty series from 42-118ft

**The Dolphin Super Deluxe 31**



The Dolphin Super Deluxe 31 offers the very best of both worlds, a stable fishing platform with plenty of cockpit space for reeling in your latest big catch, or for the sunbathers there's plenty of sunbathing space up front. A great versatile day boat. Stock boat arriving mid-July 2005.

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www.gulfcraftboats.com www.gulfcraftinc.com

## TRAVEL AGENCY

Kata Beach travel agency with good revenues & profits. Full kitchen, 10 computers for internet, beautifully decorated. Price: 4.9 million baht. Please call Alan at TSBA Phuket for more information. Tel: 07-0747511.

## BAR FOR SALE

Large, successful, established bar in soi off Soi Bangla for sale. Pool table, sound system plus all fittings. Please call Tel: 06-2832285 for more information.

## LTD PARTNERSHIP

for sale. 2 million-baht ltd partnership, now "sleeping", but has been trading since October 2003, complete with work permit. Please Email: nik@matoskacafebar.com

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investment. "Fully managed" property rental business. High income with low-cost Penthouse living. Pre-build prices available at 12.5 million and 20 million baht. Please contact for more information. Email: nik@indigosiam.com

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Retired businessman looking for backgammon players on Phuket Island. Please call if interested. Tel: 076-386113, 01-5778443.

## EUROPEAN MAN

I am a European man who wants to get in touch with a Thai woman. I am moving to Thailand, to live in Phuket. I'm kind, honest, humorous and have a pleasant appearance. The woman I am looking for should be around 55, nice looking, kind, respectable and pleasant. If you are interested, please send a photo to Jan Torell, Mailbox 10086, 72119 Vasteras Sweden.

## AMERICAN EXPAT

seeks. Retired American expat seeks lady for romance, adventure and possible marriage. Non-smoker, fit and active, many interests. Tel: 07-0779816. Email: williet98248@hotmail.com

## WANT LONG-TERM

companion. American retired senior living permanently in Patong looking for an attractive lady to be his companion and share his accommodations and lifestyle. Pls contact for more info. Email: donaleman@hotmail.com

## FEMALE COMPANION

I am coming to Thailand and will be travelling, looking at property. Seeking a nice looking lady who speaks some English. For more details send email with photo. Email: hajipanos@hotmail.com

## GOOD FAMILY LADY

Attractive guy, university degree, healthy lifestyle & finances, would like to meet a sweet Phuket beauty who is a warm and interesting lady. I prefer to start as friends but hope to find a nice girl to share good life with. Please email: daniel29200@yahoo.com

## Bulletins

**Alcoholics Anonymous**

is holding meetings in English at the following places:

**Phuket City Mission Hospital**  
on Wed and Sun at 7 pm

**Bangkok Phuket Hospital**  
on Fri at 7 pm

**Patong Patong Hospital**  
on Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun at 7 pm and on Fri at 8 pm

For more info, please call 01 895 4763 and 01 891 2895.

## Business Opportunities

**PATONG BEACH PUB**  
Beautiful pub & restaurant near Soi Bangla. Outstanding revenues and profits. Full kitchen. Large customer base. Price 6.5 million baht. Call Alan at TSBA Phuket. Tel: 07-0747511.

**COFFEE SHOP/restaurant.** Starbucks style. No investment needed, up and running. 3.5-year contract plus optional 5 years. Large revenue/profit. Tel: 01-8923058. Fax: 076-284436. Email: cyril@porseland.se For pictures, please see our website at www.thailand.tc?id=110

## SALE OR LEASE

Guesthouse/minimart in Patong, central location. Fully refurbished to Western standards. Pls contact for more information. Tel: 07-8887676. Email: homeawaypatong@hotmail.com

## PATONG BEACH BAR

Soi Bangla area. Outstanding revenues and profits. Pool table & kitchen. Long lease. Price 6.5 million baht. Call Alan at TSBA Phuket. Tel: 07-0747511.

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of its kind in Phuket. Visa and real estate firm, with annual turnover of 2.1 million baht, is for sale. Price: only 3 million baht ono. Please email: admin@phuketdeafeagle.com or for more information, see our website at: www.phuketdeafeagle.com

## PATONG BEACH BAR

For sale. Very busy bar located Soi Bangla area. Many expats & tourists. Great revenues & profits. Price 6.5 million baht. Call Alan at TSBA Phuket. Tel: 07-0747511.

## KATA CENTER

Siam Silk & Work of Art. For sale; urgent. 3 rooms and stock: 740,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-9798540.

## BEER BAR FOR SALE

This Soi Bangla area bar is a great buy. Beautiful decor & priced to sell. Price: 8 million baht. Call Alan at TSBA Phuket. Tel: 07-0747511.

## HOTEL, LONG-TERM

lease. Hotel with 19 rooms, 150 meters from Patong Beach. Furnished, running perfectly. Lease contract 6/9 years. No key money. Great deal! Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-381772, 06-0043008. Fax: 076-383756. Email: info@ayudhya.net For further details, please see our website at: www.ayudhya.net/english/show.php?property\_ID=289

## Business Products & Services

### TITANIUM CUES FOR SALE



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5,000 baht, valid up to 10 years, 6,000 baht valid up to 20 years. Sole agent in Thailand. Free pick up & delivery, open 365 days a year. Please contact for more information. Tel: 04-0068736.

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New double-decker tour bus (not minibus), non smoking and smoking areas, toilet, films/music, snacks and drinks, on-board buffet lunch. No extra to pay, fully inclusive. Only 1,300 baht. Every Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat, Sunday. Tel: 04-7457024.

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## Personal Services

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## Personals

### FEMALE GUIDE/


companion. I will be coming to Thailand at the end of April to travel and view property. I am a good-looking gentleman with a mature mind and a young heart. Looking for a presentable Thai or farang woman who can speak some English. Email: hajipanos@hotmail.com

**Coming Soon!**

Full page of "Boats & Marine" classified ads.

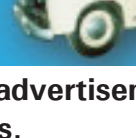
Starting in the April 23, 2005, issue of the Phuket Gazette.





# Wheels & Motors

## Advertisements



Please use this form to write your classified advertisement.  
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(heading)

Classified ads are charged per line. Each line is 80 baht,  
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**Deadline for Wheels & Motors page: Saturday 12 noon.**

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[assetauction@hotmail.com](mailto:assetauction@hotmail.com)

Project Owner with 110 units: Divine Property and development Co., Ltd. Registered capital: 1,000,000 baht (fully paid). Address: 2 The Royal Place 1, G floor, room No. 2, Soi Mahadhekluang 1 Rajdamri Rd, Lumpinee, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330. Managing Director: Miss Sinkul Sawatsit. Project size: One 32-storey tower containing 165 units. Land title deeds 2090, 2379, 2380, 2381 Project area: 1-1-32 rai. Part of the land is under obligation with Kiatrak Finance Plc. Site location: Taweewong Rd, Patong subdistrict, Katu district, Phuket. Condominium registration No. 3/2540. Ready to transfer ownership within 30 days from the day of sale, providing full payment has been made.



For those who  
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BANGKOK

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