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Security boost ahead of polls

By Atchaa Khamlo and Chutharat Plerin

POLICE have stepped up security across the island in the run-up to the July 3 national election.

"We are dedicating our entire police force, 1,200 officers, to boosting security before the election," Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pekad Tantipong told the *Gazette*.

"We will focus on providing security for candidates and setting up checkpoints. We will also have task-forces target illegal firearms, hired gunmen and gambling dens," he added.

The move follows two election canvassers being gunned down, one in Lampang and another in Chiang Rai, and a fake bomb being planted near a Pheu Thai candidate's office in Ayudhya.

However, police in those areas attributed the attacks to "personal conflicts".

"Superintendents [at Phuket police stations] will decide where



More checkpoints on their way.

and when to set up checkpoints and to form their teams.

"Also, officers from different police stations will combine to form joint task forces to tackle specific types of crimes," he said.

Phuket City Police will work with Chalong Police; Kathu Police with Thung Thong and Kamala Police; and Thalang Police will join forces with Cherng Talay and Tha Chat Chai Police, he added.

"However, all teams must report the results of their operations

directly to me," Maj Gen Pekad said.

During the current crackdown on firearms that began May 2 and runs through June 13, police have so far seized more than 30 illegal guns.

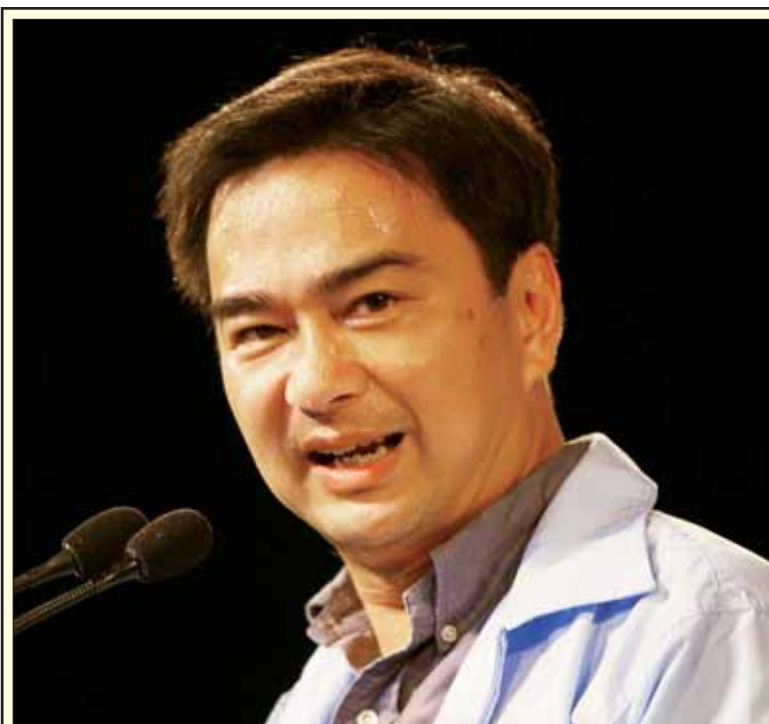
A meeting of all Phuket police superintendents will be held on June 12 to decide whether to continue the crackdown until election day.

Patong Police Superintendent Arayapan Pukbuakao has already started his pre-election security campaign.

"We have yet to receive any reports of conflicts between election canvassers, but we are taking preventative measures," he told the *Gazette*.

"We will set up random checkpoints in every community in Patong until election day and rotate officers on eight-hour shifts," he added.

"I have issued a direct order that no general leave will be allowed during this period. Officers



Abhisit in Phuket

CARETAKER Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva launched the Democrat campaign for the July 3 election with a rally in Phuket Town last Saturday. Among those joining him on stage were deputy party leader Suthep Thaugsuban and Phuket MP candidate Anchalee Vanich Thepabutr. Registrations for candidates closed that same day. See page 18 for the *Gazette's* full run-down of how the new electoral system works.

Photo: Christian Mouchet

are to report for every duty assignment unless they can prove they are genuinely ill," he added.

Crime in Patong is expected to rise in the coming months, as Phuket enters the rainy season and the number of tourists on the island falls, he said.

This adds to the need for a

boost in police patrols, said the colonel.

"The economic situation this low season seems worse than in previous years. There are fewer tourists, which means people in Patong are not making much money.

Continued on page 2

Murder 'survivor' recounts ordeal

SANIT Choocheun, a 54-year-old construction contractor from Krabi, says he was beaten, thrown over a cliff and left for dead in an attack on Monday night that saw his wife and another man killed.

He survived by playing dead, he said.

The bodies of Mr Sanit's wife, Urai Limsakul, 50, and the other man, named only as "Lek", were found Tuesday morning at the bottom of an eight-meter seaside cliff south of Nai Thon Beach.

The victims' truck was found near Baan Pa Khlok Cheep. There were blood stains in the bed and inside the truck, police said.

Ms Urai's hands were tied behind her back. She had a gunshot wound and ap-

peared to have been hit in the head with a "heavy" object.

Mr Lek had been shot once in the head and once in the chest, and his throat was slashed, police said.

"I came from Krabi to pick up my wife and Mr Lek. When I was returning to Krabi, someone called my wife and asked to meet at Baan Pa Khlok Cheep Road," Mr Sanit said in his statement to police.

"However, when we arrived there many men were waiting for us," Mr Sanit said.

"They tied all three of us up - our hands and our feet - and blindfolded us before pushing us into a car and taking us some-

"They stopped and then I heard someone hitting Lek and Urai. Then I heard gunfire," he said.

"Then the men started beating me, so I pretended to be dead. I was hoisted into the air and I could feel myself falling. Then I heard a car start and drive off.

"I managed to undo the rope binding my hands and feet and removed the blindfold, and climbed back up to the road," he said.

Police said they are not convinced Mr Sanit's statement is entirely accurate and are investigating the attack in line with three potential motives: a construction business deal gone wrong, drugs, and adultery.

- Chutharat Plerin



Rescue workers recover the bodies of Mr Sanit's wife, Urai Limsakul, and Mr 'Lek' from the eight-meter cliff south of Nai Thon Beach. Photo: Wichai Wittawat

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This Week

Bad boys of Bangla



Itinerant ladyboys are gaining a bad rap on Soi Bangla. **Pages 4-5**

Live Wire



Woody goes surfing at high speeds on the internet. **Page 12**

NEW! Day in the life



Spend a typical day with a life guard on Nai Harn Beach. **Page 15**

History



Soi Romanee's sordid secrets and lurid past revealed. **Page 20**

Property



Thailand Youth Games stadium at Saphan Hin taking shape. **Page 25**

Sport

FC Phuket gets new coach; cricket gets new pitch; rugby gets new champions. **Pages 41-43**

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Monday



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Road-safety campaign to mark a Phuket 'first'

By Steven Layne

LOCAL authorities are hoping that a road-safety campaign to be launched this month will reduce the number of accidents and fatalities on Phuket's roads by engaging the local community.

Under the nationwide "White Road Project", the 5.5-kilometer stretch of Wiset Road from Chalong Circle to Rawai will be Phuket's focus of road-safety awareness for the next seven months.

In order to prevent further suffering caused by the seemingly endless tragedies that occur on Thailand's asphalt network, the Ministry of Transport aims to reduce road fatalities to less than 10 per 100,000 persons by 2020.

Wiset Road was designated as the first target area by officials at a meeting on May 24.

The meeting, presided by Vice Governor Weerawat Janpen, was attended by representatives from the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office, Phuket Provincial Public Health Office, Department of Rural Roads, Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Phuket office and the local police.



Phuket Land Transport Office chief Terayout Prasertphol

The decision, confirmed and approved by the Phuket Highways Office, comes five months into the 12 months allotted by the Ministry of Transport to run the project.

"We chose this road because it is the best qualified. We feel it is an ideal route for such a project because accidents on this road are frequent – there were three or four deaths there last month," said Terayout Prasertphol, chief of Phuket Provincial Land Transportation Office.

"Also, the road surface is good and we expect the locals there will

be willing to participate," he added.

If the Wiset Road project shows positive results, similar campaigns may be launched across Phuket, said the chief.

Mr Terayout explained the campaign involves raising road-safety awareness among local students and residents.

"To start, we have picked one school, Muang Phuket School near Chalong Circle. We plan to teach 300 high school students about driving and traffic regulations. We should be ready to begin this task sometime this month," Mr Terayout explained.

The second task involves coordinating with the local community. "It is important for locals to participate in thinking and deciding how they as a community will be able to reduce the number of accidents and deaths, and not just officials telling them how to do so," he said.

"We plan to involve several groups comprising local volunteers and officials.

"Specific dates and locations and what functions these groups will carry out have yet to be confirmed," he said.

Contest to decide name for city shortcut

PHUKET City Municipality will hold a contest to see who can think up the best name for the new road that connects Saphan Hin with Chao Fa East Road, with 10,000 baht going to the winner.

The 50-million-baht road was officially opened in late December. It has thus far kept its uninspiring name Phang Muang Sai Khor Road, which roughly translates as "Urban Planning Road B".

The road connects Chao Fa East Road and Sakdidet Road Soi 1, providing a much faster route between Suan Luang Park and Saphan Hin than was previously available.

Applicants have from June 16 to July 15 to enter their preferred names for the road, which must be five syllables or fewer.

The name should also be related, somehow, to some aspect of Phuket Town, such as its history



Stalls line the road on opening day, December 24. Photo: Gazette file

or local culture. The judges will grade each suggested name using the following formula: Principle 40 points, Meaning 40 points, Geographical relevance 20 points.

In the event of multiple submissions of the winning name, the

prize money will be divided proportionally and each person will receive a certificate of merit.

For details visit Phuket City Hall on weekdays from 8:30am to 4:30pm, or call 076-212314.

See Editorial on page 8

Security boost afore polls

From page 1

"That's one reason why crimes, especially robberies, happen," Col Arayapan said.

Known trouble spots will bear the brunt of heightened police scrutiny. "Especially communities known for drugs. We always keep a close eye on such areas and we know them well," he said.

Areas members of rival gangs are known to frequent will be singled out for attention.

"Officers will be targeting illegal guns and drugs, too.

"In addition to the checkpoints, officers will request warrants to search any houses suspected of storing contraband, such as unregistered firearms and drugs," he said.



Col Arayapan Pukbuakao

Maj Gen Pekad called on all Phuket citizens to uphold their civic duty and not accept bribes in exchange for votes.

Regarding recent reports of campaign posters being vandalized, Maj Gen Pekad said, "Destroying campaign signs only makes Phuket's worse."



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HOLIDAY INN PHUKET MAI KHAO BEACH RESORT

Testing police for drugs pointless: Poll

MOST *Phuket Gazette* readers feel that drug testing officers is not an effective way to ensure police are free of drugs, a recent readers' poll revealed.

Readers were asked: "The Phuket Provincial Police have announced that all officers under their command will be tested for ya bah (methamphetamine) by the end of [April]. The move is intended to assure the public that police themselves are not above the law, with officers who test positive to be 'severely punished'. Do you think this is an effective measure?"

Overall, 59% of respondents answered "no", while 27.7% said "yes". The remainder (13.3%) answered "I don't know".

Thais taking part in the survey were by far the most pessimistic, with 80% answering "no" compared to just 9% who said "yes".

In contrast, 43% of tourists thought testing would be effective compared to 20% who said it would not.

Most Phuket expats (64%) said testing would not be effective, but 25% said it would.

Beaches 'safe to swim'

Official report claims Kata-Karon wastewater 'within limits'

By Pimwara Choksakulpan

WASTEWATER discharged into the sea at Karon and Kata beaches is safe, a review committee headed by Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha was told this week.

Environmental engineer Siripong Pasari of Southern Thai Consulting Co Ltd was called in on Tuesday to explain to Gov Tri what exactly caused the discharge filmed by a German TV crew in Phuket earlier this month.

Mr Siripong said the problem was three-fold. First, the current wastewater collection system in the area pools together rain water and wastewater.

"When it rains heavily the inflow increases greatly. The problem is compounded in the rainy season, when seawater makes its way to the pumphouses and mixes with the wastewater.

"When the tanks start overflowing, officials have no choice but to pump wastewater out," he said.

"But the volume of rain and seawater involved when this happens dilutes the wastewater to make it clean enough to release to



The wastewater treatment plant near Karon Park (pictured) floods, forcing staff to drain the tanks to avert an overflow. Photo: Pimwara Choksakulpan

the sea," Mr Siripong said.

"This happens about four to five times a year," he added.

The second problem was power cuts. "Blackouts always happen. Often when there is a blackout, the computer at the wastewater treatment facility near the Nong Harn [in Karon] is rendered inop-

erable and we have to order new parts to get it working again.

"The PLC computer controls the pumps at all six pumphouses. We did not know that the blackout [on the day the German filmmakers were shooting] had damaged the PLC," Mr Siripong explained.

The PLC has since been repaired and is working again, he said.

Another factor was that officers stationed at the control center did not constantly monitor the PLC control screen, Mr Siripong added.

"We will install alarms to sound off whenever something goes wrong," he said.

As for the discharge filmed at Kata Beach, Mr Siripong explained, "The dirty water filmed by the German documentary team was not purely wastewater. The water was dirty because it also included silty runoff that got caught at the pumphouses.

"They had to discharge the silt before it damaged the pumps and other equipment," he said.

Blackouts were also a problem in Kata, often rendering pumps in the area useless.

"We will install power cables directly from the Kata-Karon Municipality Offices about 500 meters away. The municipality has its own generators, so the pumps will always have power," Mr Siripong said.

Smoking kills two a day

TWO people die from smoking-related illnesses every day in Phuket and about 60 million cigarettes are sold on the island each month, a conference held to mark World Anti-Smoking Day was told last week.

The conference, held in Phuket on May 27, came ahead of the World Health Organization's World No Tobacco Day, observed each year on May 31.

This year the WHO bestowed Thai Public Health Minister Jurin Laksanawisit with a World No Tobacco Day Award 2011 for his anti-tobacco campaigning.

According to Somsri Paosawat, president of the Health Professional Network for Tobacco-free Thai Society, more than 11 million Thais are smokers.

About 50,000 of them suffer from tobacco-related illnesses each year, costing the country 51.5 billion baht annually, she said.

Smoking carried the third highest behavioral risk of mortality in Thailand, behind unsafe sex and drinking, he said.

Yet in Phuket, the number of

smokers has fallen since last year, said Dr Wiwat Seetama-notch, Deputy Director of the Phuket Public Health Office,

Dr Nara Kingkaew, Deputy Director of Primary Care at Vachira Phuket Hospital, explained, "About 10 per cent of Phuket's population smokes, of which 90 per cent are male.

"You will be able to see that 10 per cent of our inpatient care is for males with conditions related to smoking," he added.

Thanongsak Booncluab, interim Director of the Phuket Excise Department, revealed that on average 60 million cigarettes are sold on Phuket each month.

The many tourists who visit Phuket contribute to the high sales volume of cigarettes, Mr Thanongsak added.

- Chutharat Plerin



Dr Nara Kingkaew

More candidates as protest rolls on

A SMALL band of activists rolled through the streets of Phuket last week in *salaeng* (motorbikes with sidecar), urging the public to ignore a campaign to cast "no" votes in the upcoming general election.

The 30-strong group travelled with Thai flags hoisted high and carrying signs that read: "If we vote for nobody, who will run the country?"

Protest leader Krittiapat Wachirakullapat said he fears that if people follow the advice of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) and vote "none of the above" in the July 3 polling, that "bad candidates" will be able to buy up enough votes to win the election.



The protestors take a roadside rest. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

"We should choose the ones who are the least bad if we want the country to move forward," he reasoned.

"The PAD doesn't say what

their next move will be if enough people cast 'no' votes to invalidate the results, and they might 'sleep on the road' [in Bangkok] again if Pheu Thai wins the election," Mr Krittiapat said.

As the protest continued, two more candidates last Saturday signed up to contest the Phuket 1 constituency in the July 3 election.

Weerasak "Ko Sak" Woranetiwong registered as a candidate representing the Thaen Khun Phaendin Party, number "17" on the party list ballot.

Jatupong Lertsiljirada of the Chart Pattana Puea Pandin Party, which is number "2" on party list ballot.

- *Phuket Gazette*



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Baby 'Cream' haunts dreams, refuses to sour

QUEER news

VILLAGERS in Nakhon Ratchasima are queueing up to place toys in front of the corpse of a nine-month-old baby on display in a local temple.

They say the body of Suphansa Lilaphamonkit, known as "Nong Cream", has miraculously failed to rot, despite the baby dying four years ago.

Nong Cream was born on July 11, 2006, but died on April 19 the following year.

Her body is being kept in a glass cabinet at Wat Nong Khwang in Village 5 of Wankatha subdistrict in Nakhon Ratchasima province.

The province is located in Northeast Thailand (*Isarn*).

The small structure housing Nong Cream's cabinet is full of colorful baby clothes, food, dolls



The dead baby is said to have given winning lottery numbers.

and other items suitable for a baby girl.

Villagers told a *Khao Sod* reporter that it was said Nong Cream often entered the dreams of those who paid their respects to her, bringing them good luck.

Nong Cream reportedly told one villager in a dream that her body would last five years, leaving locals rushing to visit her body before it disappears.

One person reportedly won

the lottery three times in a row after such a visit.

After Nong Cream died, some of her relatives, who were of Chinese descent, wanted to bury her in a Chinese cemetery, while others wanted to cremate her at a temple.

As a compromise, they agreed to ask the abbot of Wat Nong Khwang if the baby's body could be buried behind the temple's crematorium.

Soon afterwards, Nong Cream appeared to her grandfather in a dream, saying she was drowning in a flood and could not breathe.

The family rushed to the temple and consulted with the abbot.

They dug Nong Cream's body up and found that amazingly the corpse had not rotted at all.

Her cheeks were still rosy and her body still looked healthy.

After the miracle, they built a little pink house in which to keep Nong Cream's body for the temple ceremony. She remains there today.

Vagabond

Ladyboys have become an entertainment mainstay in Patong, but unwitting tourists are seeing a shadier side to the festive scenes with robberies and assaults by ladyboys wandering the streets and beachfront.

Kathu Police are working to curb these crimes before it affects tourism and have found that the issue stems from ladyboys moving to Phuket from other provinces.

The *Phuket Gazette's* Atchaa Khamlo reports.

LADYBOYS (*katoey*) are almost synonymous with Patong and responsible for much of Soi Bangla's spectacle.

On the darker side of the "show" are the thefts and beatings that are perpetrated at the hands of the transgender *katoey*. Kathu police have put measures in place to fight these crimes and say that the bad behavior of some should not cast all Patong *katoey* in a bad light.

"They [*katoey*] can be divided into two groups. First, the ones that have a place of work such as the bars in Soi Paradise. They do not cause trouble. The second type are those who spend their time on the beach and look for people to steal from. They are often involved in drugs and need money to fuel their habits," Kathu Police Superintendent Arayapan Pukbuakao told the *Phuket Gazette*.

Police have begun compiling information on *katoey* in Patong to help with identification. It is a continuous process, they say, as many travel from other provinces.

"Most of them come from places outside Phuket, especially Pattaya. We have already taken records of local *katoey*, some now help us as informants," Col Arayapan explained.

To help deter them, police have begun fining unemployed ladyboys 300 to 500 baht for loitering and warning them of the consequences of crime.

"[These crimes] will destroy our image among tourists and we are trying to stop them by taking records. It seems to be working very well," Col Arayapan added.

Details of about 50 *katoey* from

Pattaya were recorded in December, but Col Arayapan said the numbers were sometimes as high as 100 per month.

In a typical scenario, tourists are approached by groups of ladyboys and wallets are stolen while the victims are distracted.

Another case that is common is when an unsuspecting tourist wakes up after sleeping with a ladyboy to discover he's been robbed – or he wakes up and realizes he has no money to pay for the "services" of the ladyboy and a fight breaks out, Col Arayapan said.

Frank Tomensen, a public relations officer with the Tourist

Police volunteers of Patong Beach, said that he's seen many cases involving tourists and *katoey*.

"I've had complaints about guys having cameras and phones stolen. You get one or two, or maybe even three ladyboys come up and start touching and grabbing," he said.

"In one case it happened as the guy's wife was looking in a shop window and the ladyboys were touching him up,"

– Frank Tomeson, Patong Tourist Police PR officer

happened as the guy's wife was looking in a shop window and the ladyboys were touching him up," he said.

"There is an increase [in the number of cases], as there is an increase in the amount of aggression. I am not sure if there are more of them than there were, but they're getting a bit cheekier than they were, they are applying themselves a bit more because they are getting away with it," he added.

Most cases do not see the light of day due to lack of evidence.

"Many tourists get their wallets stolen on the beach. There was one case of a drunk foreigner walking on the beach and some ladyboys tried to touch and kiss him. His wallet was taken while he was defending himself. He realized this the following morning and came to report the theft to police," a local police officer, who wished to remain anonymous, told the *Gazette*.

"Ladyboys are denied access to some bars in Patong," he added.

Some establishments take a more intuitive approach to the issue.

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Program	Price
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ladyboys steal the nights



CLOSE QUARTERS: A katoey and a tourist grapple on Soi Bangla.



SINGLE FILE: Katoey on Soi Crocodile line up for mandatory drug testing.

ladyboys who come to our club looking for customers themselves," Jari Leinonen, General Manager of Seduction Beach Club & Disco and Factory Bar, told the *Gazette*.

"This may cause problems, as tourists may think they are ladies but only find out later that they are ladyboys. We don't risk this," he said.

"The policies seem to work. In the two years that I have worked here we haven't had any problems with ladyboys," he added.

Katoey employed by Patong establishments distinguish themselves from those who are stealing from tourists.

"Most people think all ladyboys

cause trouble, but actually its the ones who stand at the roadsides who are to blame," said Sha-sha, a 24-year-old katoey working at Tootsie Ladyboy-Massage, told the *Gazette*.

"We are not involved with them ["roadside" ladyboys], but at first the police were making records of every ladyboy in Patong. But, once we showed documentation proving our employment, we were left alone," Sha-sha said.

Aussie David Crockford, 59, had his wallet stolen while visiting Phuket with two friends in mid-May.

Three katoey approached him while he was walking down a street in Patong. One attempted to

hug him while another began touching him.

"That was probably when my wallet was taken," he said.

Mr Crockford said he didn't want to report the crime to police as it was a waste of time.

Aussie investment advisor and Patong condominium owner Matthew Bohlsen agrees that vagabond ladyboys are threatening Patong's image as a safe place to party.

"I think [ladyboys] are okay for looking. I think they look nice and sexy," he said.

"It's bad because tourists are a big source of income and should be protected. I'll be careful about ladyboys stealing," he said.

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Volcano chaos averted

THE eruption of the Grimsvötn volcano in Iceland did not affect flights at Phuket International Airport, and caused far less turmoil than the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull last year.

In the report "Volcano blast no effect on Phuket – yet" in last week's *Phuket Gazette*, we mistakenly reported that the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland had recently erupted. The volcano in Iceland that erupted on May 21 this year was the Grimsvötn volcano.

Airlines were back in the skies over Europe on May 26 after several days of flight disruptions caused by a cloud of volcanic ash drifting over parts of the continent.

The latest volcanic activity did not have the same broad effect as last year's, partly because Icelandic and European air safety agencies had prepared for such a scenario, *The Economist* reported.

In April this year, about 70 airlines and other operators, a dozen air-traffic control systems and a variety of "other bodies" participated in an exercise simulating an eruption of Grimsvötn, the report said. In a similar exercise in 2008 only two airlines participated, it added.

On May 24 and 25, about 950 flights were canceled in Scotland, England and Germany, reports said.

Last year the Eyjafjallajökull volcano erupted in Iceland, closing European airspace for six days, halting about 100,000 flights and costing airlines about US\$1.7 billion, according to the International Air Transport Association.

Phone saves '3G' family

By Rungaroon Intawong

THREE men, comprising three generations of a fishing family, were rescued from their capsized boat 17 nautical miles off Phuket's east coast last Sunday thanks to a mobile phone kept in a waterproof bag.

The men – Somboon Sae-Oui, 56, his son Pichet, 28, and eight-year-old grandson Bhummin – survived two hours clinging to their upturned boat while it was lashed by waves up to three meters high.

The trio were fishing near the popular dive site Shark Point when their five-meter boat turned turtle about 3:45pm.

"The engine flooded and

stopped working," said Mr Pichet.

"When I pulled myself together, I got my phone from the waterproof bag and called my wife," he added.

Pichet's wife, Wiyada, then called the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command at Cape Panwa.

Vice Admiral Choomnoom Ard Wong received the report at 4pm and immediately dispatched a rescue boat, which recovered the men about 90 minutes later.

"The three fishermen were returned safely to port at the Phuket Marine Biological Center at 6:50pm," said Lt Nattawut Tulapan, captain of the rescue vessel.

"It was so lucky that we



MAYDAY: The call 'from the wild' saved the men's lives. Photo: Thai Navy

brought the waterproof bag. It saved our lives," Mr Pichet said.

He also expressed his gratitude to V/Adm Choomnoom, who strongly suggested the fishermen

check weather forecasts before heading out to sea again.

To report emergencies at sea, call the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command at 076-391578.

Pink hospital ready for patients

THE Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) Hospital opened on Tuesday with more than 200 people registering as patients.

"The purpose of the hospital is to reduce the workload of other government hospitals. The *OrBorJor* bought the land and the Phyathai Hospital building and renovated it under a budget of 845 million baht," explained *OrBorJor* Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Manop Leelasuthanon.

"The hospital provides secondary care and has 190 beds. There are 13 doctors, 40 nurses, 80 nursing assistants, five pharmacists and 148 other staff," he said.

"Health checkups began today [May 31]. Outpatient services will begin on June 1 and Inpatient services will begin on July 1," he added.



The *OrBorJor* hospital is already open for outpatient treatment.

The hospital is expected to serve 100,000 patients per year, Mr Manop said.

"Equipment and staff are 100 per cent ready to serve outpatients and should be able to tend to 300 patients a day," said Hospital Director Dr Yee Yitathasiri.

"We are coordinating with Vachira Phuket Hospital in case our capacity is exceeded," Dr Yee added.

Chokchai Sittichok was one of the first patients.

"I am a Phuket resident and know that this hospital was left unoccupied for a very long time. I am happy that the *OrBorJor* has turned it into a facility with advanced medical equipment.

"When people are sick, they need to be confident in the care they will receive," he said.

Israeli expat claims burnt out yacht

AN ISRAELI man has claimed ownership of the 40-foot yacht that went up in flames and sank in Chalong Bay on May 14, police said.

Yariv Keniger, a former Tourist Police volunteer and business owner in Patong, went to Chalong Police Station last weekend and told police that the burnt-out sailboat was his, Chalong Police Duty Officer Boonlert Onklang told the *Phuket Gazette*.

When asked by the *Gazette* the week before if he was the owner of the sunken vessel, Mr Yariv replied only "maybe". He also denied being a volunteer policeman and declined to give any further information.

Tourist Police Volunteers public relations officer Frank Tomensen told the *Gazette* last week that Mr Keniger had been a member, but was officially dismissed on May 25.

However the dismissal had nothing to do with the sunken vessel, he emphasized.

"I can confirm that he has been dismissed from the team because he didn't show up for duty or attend meetings for months and months, despite numerous requests. It's a standard internal disciplinary thing. We didn't sack him over this boat thing...He was dismissed over his attendance record. It's been on the cards for a long time," he said.

As this paper went to print, Mr Keniger was scheduled to visit Chalong Police Station and further discuss the removal of the yacht from the shallows of Chalong Bay, Lt Col Boonlert said.

It is the yacht owner's responsibility to remove the wreck from the bay, he said.

He would coordinate with the Marine Office to determine whether the wreck is blocking navigation in the area, he said.

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DSI insists American lese majeste suspect is Thai

THE Department of Special Investigation (DSI) says a United States citizen recently arrested in Thailand on lese majeste charges has Thai nationality, it has been reported.

The DSI said Lerpong Wichaikhammat, also known as Joe Gordon, 55, operated the website Nor Por Chor USA from a house in Nakhon Ratchasima in the Northeast.

Nor Por Chor are the Thai initials of the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), known as the "red shirts".

DSI deputy chief Col Yanpol Yangyuen said Mr Lerpong posted articles containing lese majeste content on the website using

the name of Sin Sae Jiew. Mr Lerpong was arrested May 25 at his house in Nakhon Ratchasima.

The case made headlines worldwide because Mr Lerpong also has US citizenship.

Mr Lerpong is accused of posting a link on his blog to a controversial biography of HM The King Bhumibol Adulyadej written by an American journalist. The book is banned in Thailand.

HM The King is revered by many Thais and often regarded as "above politics".

Mr Lerpong faces up to 15 years in jail if convicted of lese majeste, regarded as a

very serious offence in Thailand.

The number of lese majeste charges has soared in recent years, with critics claiming the law is being abused by Thailand's military and political elite in an effort to silence opposition.

Other recent high-profile lese majeste cases have been brought against Somsak Jeamteerasakul, a well-known history professor at Thammasat University, and Chiranuch Premchaiporn, web manager for Prachatai news website. Ms Chiranuch was charged last year for comments someone else wrote on her website.



Chiranuch Premchaiporn. Photo: AFP

Police look into Samui 'suicide'

POLICE in Koh Samui have launched a murder probe into the death of a British man whose demise was initially believed to be a suicide.

Investigators thought video producer Kevin Attew, 57, had killed himself after his Thai girlfriend told them that he planned to end his life, according to England's *Daily Mail*.

Mr Attew's body was found on May 23 in a man-made lake just 30 centimeters deep.

An initial post-mortem examination ruled that he had drowned.

But Mr Attew's best friend Crispin Paton-Smith, a local publisher, took photographs of the body that showed he had been beaten severely before his death.

"I was appalled to hear the verdict of drowning," Paton-Smith told the *Mail*.

"It was a no-brainer. Kevin was beaten to death and his body was left on dry land for quite a while before being put in the lake.

"I have spoken to his girlfriend and she continues to insist he committed suicide.

"He did not – unless he beat himself to death. He would have had to dig a hole to drown himself," Mr Paton-Smith said.

Mr Attew produced rock and advertising videos in the UK and owned the Honey Barb in Chawaeng, a meeting place for bikers, the *Mail* reported.

Thaksin: No plans to lead

FORMER Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has denied he plans to take control of Thailand if his younger sister Yingluck becomes prime minister following elections on July 3.

In a series of interviews with Western media, Mr Thaksin predicted his Pheu Thai Party would win the elections comfortably.

"I think it looks very good. The popularity of the party and Yingluck is getting more and more," he told British newspaper *The Independent*.

While saying he hoped to return to Thailand, he denied he was seeking power.

"My youngest sister is already there, so [there is] no need for me to go back as a prime minister," he told ABC News.

However, he refused to rule out ever leading the country again, saying he would do so if it were "extremely necessary".

Mr Thaksin recently gave interviews to several foreign correspondents at his plush villa in Dubai, where he has lived for two years.

Following his ouster in a coup in September 2006, Mr Thaksin was convicted of corruption and given a sentence of two years, leading him to flee abroad to escape jail.

Mr Thaksin, who said he was now busy running mining businesses in Africa, expressed regret for some of the excesses of his premiership.

He was widely accused of human rights abuses and mishandling the conflict in the Deep South, using heavy-handed tactics that inflamed the situation.

AROUND THE nation

tics that inflamed the situation.

Violence linked to a separatist movement has intensified in Thailand's predominantly Malay-Muslim southern provinces over the past decade.

"I admit, being a policeman you are taught to use both iron fist and velvet glove," he told *The Straits Times*.

"I used more iron fist and now I regret it. I should use more velvet glove. This is what I will change," he said.

Mr Thaksin said the Pheu Thai Party would grant the Deep South provinces more autonomy if it won the election.

The exiled billionaire admitted he still had influence over the Pheu Thai Party, for whom his youngest sister Yingluck is the number-one party list candidate.

He denied Yingluck was his puppet, saying she was his "clone".

This did not mean he controlled her, he said, but rather that he mentored her and she had the same way of thinking as him.

A blanket amnesty proposed by the party was not aimed primarily at him, he claimed.

"Reconciliation is the priority, not the amnesty.

"Reconciliation: amnesty may be part of it, but not all," he told ABC.



FAMILY TIES: Supporters of Mr Thaksin's sister, Yingluck, shout at an election campaign rally in Bangkok on May 28. Photo: AFP

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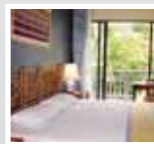
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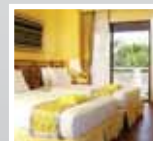
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The strong legs of the law

Re: Gazette online, Royal Thai Police secure Phuket Rugby 10s title, May 30

With such robust personnel in their ranks, clearly the Thai Police are well equipped to run down and tackle criminals.

Congratulations. Very encouraging!

Logic
Gazette forum

Abandon ship!

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Opinion: Consuls could help break the choke hold on tourism, May 29

This must be the first time the Gazette has dared to confront the myriad of problems in Phuket head-on. Well done!

From my vantage point, the consuls keep their heads down, not wanting to rock the sinking ship.

They are aware of a large number of property-related corruption scandals in the courts that threaten the future of Phuket, not just as a place to visit, but to live.

And they make no mention of it?

Nip
Gazette forum

Navy deserves praise

Re: Gazette online, Phuket '3G fishermen' saved by call from the wild, May 30

Good work by the Navy. These guys are lucky to have been found, even if their location was known, finding a swamped boat in heavy seas is not easy. Good job.

Geoff
Gazette forum

Taking bravery to the streets

PHUKET City Municipality has launched a contest to name the new road that opened in late December connecting Saphan Hin with Chao Fa East Road (see news pages).

Under the contest's rules, the winner of the 10,000 baht will be the person who comes up with the best name for the road based on three factors: principle, meaning and geographical relevance.

In terms of principle and meaning, the *Phuket Gazette* feels there could be no more fitting than to name the handy new thoroughfare after Winai Buathongkham. Mr Winai was the 54-year-old security guard at a government workers' housing complex on the road who was gunned down by a gang of young thugs just a few weeks before it was officially opened.

Murder and other violent crimes have become so common in Phuket that thoughts of the most recent incidents tend to bury those that preceded them, but by all accounts Mr Winai's standing up to the gang of thugs who eyewitnesses saw hurling insults at him the night before exemplifies the kind of bravery and professionalism that is sadly lacking on the island today.

Phuket City Municipality is to be given credit for opening up the naming process to the public, and we hope other local administrative bodies on the island will follow. These are public roads, paid for with taxpayers' money.

Many of the main roads in Phuket Town date back to the era when Phuket was the seat of

Phuket Gazette

power of a former administrative area, much larger than a province, known as a "monthon". Thus many of the street names bear the names of locales that fell under its authority in the old system: Krabi Road, Phang Nga Road, Thalung Road and so on.

It was during this era that certain families were able to acquire huge landholdings on the island. Many of the streets that followed bear the names of these prominent clans, who in many cases donated the land needed to complete the roads.

This is all well and good, but perhaps it is time to recognize "the little guy" as well. Few would seem better qualified than Mr Winai, especially given the time and location of his murder.

On the topic of naming roads, years have passed since the shoddily-surfaced road connecting Chao Fa East and Chao Fa West (from Phuket Software Park to Dowroong School) was completed.

The *Gazette* understands the tremendous bureaucratic obstacles that can result from a project as complex as assigning a set of letters to a strip of tarmac, but we hope that some day in the future it will happen.

It would certainly make giving directions a lot easier.

Safety first, kids!

In the past few months there has been a helmet safety campaign for motorcycle drivers and passengers in Phuket.

I see children commuting to school on my way to work

every morning and those that don't take the bus are on motorbikes.

The number of people per motorcycle ranges from one to four, aged 10 and up, and 90 per cent of them do not wear helmets.

Why don't school principals

adopt the helmet safety campaign as well, enforce the law as students arrive and teach them proper road safety?

This would benefit both the police and Phuket communities.

Chris Coxsedge
Nai Yang

A waste of breath

Re: Gazette online, Phuket discharge: Officials confirm wastewater release 'safe', May 31

They must think the public is rather gullible. Now computer problems are the reasons that we swim in sewage, not human shortcomings or incompetence.

A computer is only as smart as whoever programs and manages it. Why does rainwater mix with sewage? Could be a planning or engineering fault, or is it that stupid computer again?

Wolf
Gazette forum

Apocalypse now?

It's the end of the world and I don't care.

I've read the *Gazette* forum and seen the grim predictions for Phuket's near future.

I mean, they're right, at the current pace of development this island could turn into a concrete jungle instead of the "green" one these oldies remember from years back.

Gone will be the days of cheap "happy endings" and bodies in the jungle. No more cheap nights out on Bangla with cheap breakfasts at noon.

In the "ruined" Phuket, there will be no cheap labor, no places for migrants to camp.

What will the oldies do without their maids, nannies and drivers?

What'll they do when they can't have someone tend their garden for the price of a candy bar?

Watch out guys because this nightmare could be Singapore, or Hong Kong, or New York, or...wait, that sounds fantastic!

Simon Wargel
Phuket Town

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Issues & Answers...

Can my wife shoot an unarmed person?

My wife owns a handgun. She also has a license for it.

She says that it's okay to shoot someone if they are breaking into your house, even if they are unarmed.

What does Thai law say about this?

What are the "rules of engagement" for a private citizen?

Graham
Chalong

Kraithong Chanthongba, Superintendent of Chalong Police, replies:

You cannot shoot a person just for being in your house – they have to have malicious intent towards you and/or the other residents in the household.

If that is the case, you are then justified in using your gun in self-defense.

However, using a gun for protection does not mean that you can shoot six bullets into the

Send us your queries and we'll ask the right people to respond to them.

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IssuesAnswers

body of an intruder. You may consider firing a warning shot to scare the person(s) away and then shoot at the intruder(s) directly if they persist.

You should shoot to injure in an effort to stop the person(s) from advancing on you or attacking you. Then wait for the police to arrive.

It is illegal for a foreigner to own a gun in Thailand.

However, if a foreigner shoots another person in self-defense, the circumstances will be investigated just as they would if a Thai person were involved.

A special consideration would have to be made regarding the charge of illegal possession of a firearm.

Phuket power

I am moving to Phuket in August. I have some fairly expensive kitchen appliances that require a great amount of wattage. Should I bring them or should I buy new ones when I get there?

Karen
USA

Natthakorn Lertsakdadet, Product Manager at Kitchen Cultures on Chao Fa East Rd, Chalong, replies:

I need more information about the appliances you want to bring over before I can give you a comprehensive answer.

In general, appliances from the USA can be used in Thailand without trouble provided that you convert the voltage down from Thailand's 220 volts to 110 as used in the USA.

Some brands have an inbuilt adapter that allows you to select which voltage is in use.

If you specify the brand, we may be able to provide you with more information.

Don't put a price on political reform

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR

THERE are seven candidates contesting to represent Phuket in Parliament in the July 3 elections.

Until 6pm on July 2, these candidates will be campaigning and I would like Phuket people to thoroughly consider the qualifications and attributes of each person before crossing off a number on the ballot.

Don't choose someone to be your representative because they're good looking, have a big smile or promise you money or reward.

You can't judge people from their appearance. You need to consider their intentions. If they give you money now, when they win the elections they will take double the amount back.

What Phuket people need to keep in mind is that this election is about political reform in our nation. Phuket officials and police are now intensifying efforts to check people's ID cards.

We have heard that there is a lot of vote buying in Phuket – especially at Laem Tukkae.

There are also rumors that people are selling their ID cards to "look-alikes" who will use them to place votes in favor of a particular candidate.

Please keep your ID card with you at all times. Don't let other people hold it for you. If you have lost it or your card has ex-



Phuket Governor **Tri Augkaradacha** took office on October 4 last year. Fluent in English, Gov Tri has a master's degree in public administration from Kentucky State University in the United States and has served as a Phuket vice governor for nearly four years. Here, he talks about coming general election.

pired, make a new one as soon as possible.

When police at a checkpoint ask to see your ID card and you don't have it with you, you may be charged with selling your vote.

I urge everyone to not get involved in buying and selling votes. Most of these activities revolve around giving or promising to give gifts, donating money, property and so on.

Candidates are not allowed to give money or other goods to wedding ceremonies, monk ordination ceremonies, birthday celebrations, funerals or any merit-making ceremonies.

They are also not allowed to make donations to communities, clubs, temples, public benefit organizations, educational institutes or any other foundations or associations.

They cannot give you money and tell you to vote for them or organize entertainment on stage, after which they promote their policies.

They cannot promise to share rewards with you if they win or

pay other candidates to stop running against them. These kinds of activities are all illegal.

For those who are not Thai citizens, you cannot be involved at all in campaigning. If you help campaign for any candidates such as organizing meetings among neighbors, in your company and try to persuade attendees to vote for the candidate you like, both you and that candidate will be in trouble. This is because the general election is a matter for Thai citizens only.

If anyone sees or hears of these kinds of activities, please report them to us as soon as possible. You can make a verbal report by calling the Phuket Election Commission Office at 076-354692, or post your report to PS 888.

You can also notify us by email at phuket@ect.go.th or contact the Damrongtham Center [provincial ombudsman's office] hotline at 1567, 076-213203 or by email at damrongtum_phuket@hotmail.com. Any useful information is very welcome.

One storm too many in Phuket

Island View

By Michael DesPortes

Do you have an opinion to voice?
Email Editor@PhuketGazette.net



Some areas flooded more than once this year. Photo: The Nation

THE longer something is around, the easier it is to ignore.

We can all see exactly what the climate change debate has become – a fad.

The arguments have been in our faces for so long that we have begun to ignore them. I am guilty of this myself, but have recently taken a closer look.

Last year, I witnessed the strangest weather patterns on Phuket since my arrival in 1999.

Rains continued well into December and the dry season seemed far shorter than usual.

I don't presume to be an expert on all things Phuket, much less its weather, but recently my observations were validated by the father of my friend.

This man has lived on Phuket for the entirety of his 60-odd years and is a boat enthusiast. He had never seen the prevailing wind take so long to change direction as it did at the end of 2010.

Normally the southwesterly wind will shift to come from the northeast by late November or early December at the latest. But, it was not until the end of the year that this happened, bringing a bit of clear weather with it.

The clear skies were short-lived as rains, which usually arrive in March, moved in a few days later.

Abnormal weather is nothing to get excited about, but if life-long residents as well as casual onlookers notice, I think there could be more to the issue.

The climate change debate rolls along, with good reason. We need to come to a conclusion, and if

we are the cause of climate change, our inaction is only letting the situation get worse.

Other strange occurrences include relentless rain that stays for days on end and cold winds that leave as suddenly as they appear.

Sometimes I wonder whether I'm noticing these strange patterns because I'm looking for them. Has the climate change "bandwagon" finally caught me? After all, Phuket does have a fickle tropical climate.

However, I feel that suspicions have to be acknowledged, especially ones that are supported by the unassuming observations of an experienced resident.

We too often fail to recognize what happens around us and are also prone to inaction, resting on the claim that we are but one individual among billions.

We should remember that change begins with an individual.

...asking the questions that affect you...

Most electronics and department stores sell adapters or transformers that are easy to use.

The electrical supply in Phuket is unstable and can damage electronic equipment.

We advise you to protect your appliances against surges, lightning strikes and other sources of over-voltage by using extension cords with built in fuses or circuit breakers.

Signs of obstruction

Is there no way to stop advertisers erecting a series of signs along the roadsides?

What is the purpose of three to 10 identical signs in the same location and again every 100 meters up the road?

I understand the law stipulates nothing can be posted within 20 meters of the center line.

Why don't the police or highways department remove them and fine the advertisers?

Phuket is fast becoming an eyesore with all the advertising



plastered every two meters along roadsides. It is hard to enjoy the natural beauty with all the signs blocking the view.

Bombarded Phuket

Suttipan Tuntisattayanon, a municipal officer at Phuket City Hall, replies:

Thank your very much for your comments, we understand your concerns. This is an ongoing is-

sue and measures have recently been put in place to improve the situation. We cannot stop advertising on roadsides completely.

Phuket's commercial growth is very fast and advertising is needed

to support this. Each advertisement design is permitted a maximum of five signs in one location.

This was reduced from the previous limit of 10 and was in effect from April 2011 along with new zoning restrictions.

The extent of permitted advertising depends on the area.

The distance between each signboard is up to local officials in each tambon administration organization [OrBorTor].

Surrounding terrain and the signboards' effect on traffic and views are also considered.

If regulations are not followed, a letter of notice will be sent asking the advertisers to visit our offices.

If they have not complied with the request within 15 days, the signboards will be removed and a fine no greater than 5,000 baht per sign will be levied.

If you would like to report improper use of roadside signs, please visit Phuket City Hall from 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

You can also call our 24-hour public relations hotline at 1132 or 076-212196.



READY FOR A NEW LOOK: Robinson Department Store in Phuket Town. Photo: Gian Cayetano

Robinson ready for B250mn makeover

ROBINSON in Phuket Town is among four of the company's department stores set for a facelift this year.

Robinson Department Store plans to spend 250 million baht on the renovations, which come as the chain enjoys a period of rapid growth.

The chain recently boosted its sales growth target from 12 per cent to 15 per cent for this year due to strong sales in the first quarter and higher prices of agricultural products, according to *The Nation*.

The company also expects the coming general election on July 3 to stimulate consumer spending in the second and third quarters.

It posted 4.1 billion baht in sales in the first quarter, up 15.6 per cent over the same quarter last year.

It also achieved 24.3 per cent growth in net profits to 385mn baht.

It plans to invest 4bn baht this year and next year to open three or four new stores. That would bring the number of Robinson stores in Thailand to 26.

The company expects to add another 20 department stores in the future as urbanization grows in the provinces.

— *Phuket Gazette*

Island's fourth gov't pawnshop coming

KATHU Municipality will spend over 20 million baht to build a pawnshop, which when completed will become the fourth government-run pawnshop in Phuket.

Kathu Municipality council members recently agreed to take out a 20mn baht loan to finance the project, which will be located on a plot next to the new Kathu wet market on Phra Phuket Kaew Road.

The funding will include 7mn baht for the building, 1mn baht for equipment and furnishings, and 13mn baht to establish a revolving fund to get the service started.

If all goes according to plan, the shop could be operational by the end of next year, Kathu Mayor Chaianan Sutthikul said.

There are about 20,000 residents and about 60,000 people from other provinces living in Kathu. These people generate a total informal debt of about 39mn baht per year. The pawnshop will



PAWNING GOODS: A new municipal pawnshop is coming to Kathu.

help them decrease their dependency on informal debt mechanisms [loansharks], he said.

"There are also about 4,000 students at the Prince of Songkla University Phuket campus. The pawnshop will help students get by should their parents face financial difficulties, such as those caused by natural disasters, and

cannot transfer money to them, he added.

In addition to a number of legally-registered private pawnshops in Phuket, there are also government-run facilities in Phuket Town, Cherng Talay and Patong.

Customers enjoy better interest rates at the municipal shops.

— *Pimwara Choksakulpan*



SPICE LAUNCH: Spicejet is considering a new Thai service.

Two Indian budget carriers mull new services to Thailand

TWO INDIAN low-cost airlines are considering launching services to Thailand, the Department of Civil Aviation says.

Somchai Chanrot, the director-general of the department, told *Naew Na* newspaper that budget carriers IndiGo and SpiceJet were in talks to launch Thai-Indian flights soon.

Among possible destinations are Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai and Had Yai, he said.

IndiGo, a large domestic carrier, serves 25 destinations within India. It has been cleared by the Indian authorities to provide international services once it completes five years of service in August.

Mr Somchai said IndiGo was expanding rapidly. Last month it ordered 180 Airbus A320s to add to the 34 Airbus aircraft it already owns.

SpiceJet, another leading budget carrier, serves more than 20 destinations in India as well as Sri Lanka and Nepal.

The new services have been made possible following a deal between Thailand and India to develop flight links. Thai carriers are also expected to launch new flights between the two countries soon.

The Department of Civil Aviation has already inked such deals with around 90

countries, Mr Somchai said.

The new flights are expected to boost both countries' tourism industries. They will also boost sales of Thai goods, since Indian tourists are known for buying goods while in the country, particularly computer equipment and flatscreen TVs, Mr Somchai said.

Last month Anand Kumar, joint secretary of India's Tourism Ministry, told *The Nation* that Thailand and India were already connected by 45 flights per week.

In 2009 India received 67,309 Thai visitors. Mr Kumar said India sees Thailand as one of the key emerging markets for its tourism industry.

"Thailand is a big market for India. We will build the market by working with operators in Thailand," Mr Kumar said.

Mr Kumar said Thai tourists were drawn to India because of its cultural influence and diversity and because Buddhism had its origins there.

The Indian government is considering offering visas on arrival to Thai tourists along with four other nations in Southeast Asia. Only Singaporean tourists are given visas on arrival at the moment, *The Nation* reported.

— *Phuket Gazette*

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Arrivals up, spending down

By Anand Singh

TOURIST arrivals to Phuket in the first quarter (Q1) this year are up on last year, but the amount tourists are spending while here is down across the board.

Figures released by the Phuket Provincial Commercial Office (PPCO) show 827,828 tourists arriving in Phuket in Q1, a 39.9 per cent increase on the same period last year.

According to Phuket immigration data, 741,211 tourists arrived at Phuket International Airport (PIA) during the period, with 86,617 tourists, 10 per cent of the total, arriving by sea on cruise ships and yachts.

There was also an increase in international flights to PIA in Q1.

More flights are operating between Phuket and China, South Korea, Australia, the Middle East and Russia. In Q1, 3,804 flights landed at PIA, a jump of 19.1 per cent on last year.

Most of the tourists who visited during this period were from Russia, China, Sweden, Australia and South Korea, according to reports from the PPCO.

Russia was the main source of growth for Phuket in Q1, with a 110 per cent increase in tourist arrivals from the country.

The hotel industry in Phuket also achieved significant growth due to the sharp increase in tourists. The average occupancy rate of

Phuket's hotels during Q1 of this year was 78.3 per cent, an increase of 10.2 per cent on last year.

Despite a rise in tourists, spending per head decreased by 25 per cent compared to last year.

This may be due to stiff competition between hotels in Phuket, resulting in price-slashing that may have raised occupancy rates.

According to the PPCO, food and beverage departments in hotels across Phuket have been reporting a general decline in sales revenue.

Guests are spending less in expensive hotel restaurants compared to previous years, however, small restaurants and cheap eateries, including food halls and food centers across the island, have seen their revenues increase considerably from previous years.

New hotels continue to spring up around the island, which in the future should continue to increase the total supply of rooms in Phuket.

During Q1 this year, there were seven newly registered hotels in Phuket, an increase of 75 per cent compared to the same period last year. The new hotels each have 50 to 120 rooms, with a price range of 600 to 4,300 baht per room, per night.

Most of the new hotels are located on the west coast of the island, according to the PPCO.



INCOMING: Tourist arrivals for the first quarter of this year are up on last year.

Erawan plans to sell 5 hotels, add 7 by 2015

THE Erawan Group has outlined a five-year investment plan to take on seven new hotels and to sell five of their existing properties.

The group expects to spend 7 to 10 billion baht on new investment in its hotel business between now and 2015.

The number of hotels will rise from 13 this year to 15 within the next five years. It plans to sell one existing property per year during the course of the five-year plan, while adding seven more, said Kamonwan Wipulakorn, the group's executive vice president and chief financial officer.

She added that the group would open three hotels next year in Bangkok and Hua Hin, worth 1.1bn baht.

It is also considering adding more hotels in Pattaya, Sri Racha and Phuket to cash in on the bright future of tourism.

In Hua Hin, it will open an Ibis hotel in the first quarter of next year with 200 rooms. The hotel is under construction at a cost of 300 million baht, and will target budget tourists mainly from overseas.

In the capital, it will open a Mercure and an Ibis, also in Siam Square. The two properties are scheduled to open in the fourth quarter of next year.

— The Nation

Andaman provinces join forces to manage sustainable growth

PROVINCES in the Andaman region are being urged to work together to improve sustainable tourism practices and to formulate a common plan to manage their natural resources and preserve the unique cultures of the region.

Vice governors of Trang, Ranong, Phuket and Phang Nga joined the governor of Krabi in a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall last week to discuss policies relating to natural resources management for the coming year.

The meeting was chaired by Pranai Suwannrat, the Interior Ministry's deputy permanent secretary.

Mr Pranai said the five Andaman provinces have been allocated a total budget of 328 million baht for the coming fiscal year. The state budget will be used to upgrade, as well as integrate, basic infrastructure throughout the region, which should benefit tourism growth in the Andaman provinces in the coming years.

Mr Pranai explained that the five Andaman provinces possess huge tourism potential. Government policies therefore must be aimed at making tourism in the region sustainable.

The assistant permanent secretary also noted that currently, management of natural resources in the region still lacks co-operation at a provincial level.

According to Mr Pranai, the total Gross Provincial Product (GPP) of the five Andaman prov-

inces in 2009 was 216,827mn baht, constituting around two per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. Out of the five provinces, Phuket had the highest GPP, followed by Krabi, Phang Nga and Ranong.

— Anand Singh

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Surfing waves at high speed

Understanding the changing tide of internet speeds on Phuket is easier said than done...

EVERYBODY wants to know how fast their internet connection is running, and what they can do to speed it up. Fortunately, internet speeds in Phuket have been improving – dramatically in some cases.

The general SOP level (“Screams Of Pain”) this year, compared to two or three years ago has subsided. In short, internet Service Providers in Phuket (3BB, True, CAT, TOT, Island Technology, iPStar, and various Cable TV companies) are doing a reasonably good job of

providing internet service. If you’re not happy with your service, vote with your pocketbook: there’s never been more, or better, options for internet than you have right now.

Of course, that begs the question: Which internet service in Phuket is best – fastest, most reliable, cheapest? Predictably, there’s no simple answer.

People in Phuket have been measuring their international download speeds using a simple, consistent test since January 2008. We now have almost 20,000 observations at phuketinternetspeed.com and you can see any or all of the data there, any time. It’s an invaluable reference for people who are looking at internet options, for people who want to complain about their internet service, and for the ISPs themselves to see “real world” checks of their service levels.

Times are changing, and we’re about to change the speed test to make it better re-

flect reality. To understand what’s happening, I need to explain a technique called “cache” (pronounced “cash”).

The computer industry is full of examples of different components operating at vastly different speeds. Your CPU chip, for example, runs very quickly. The memory chips that hold the data for the CPU chip are considerably slower. And hard drives are yet another order of magnitude slower than main memory.

A cache is a location set aside in a faster area

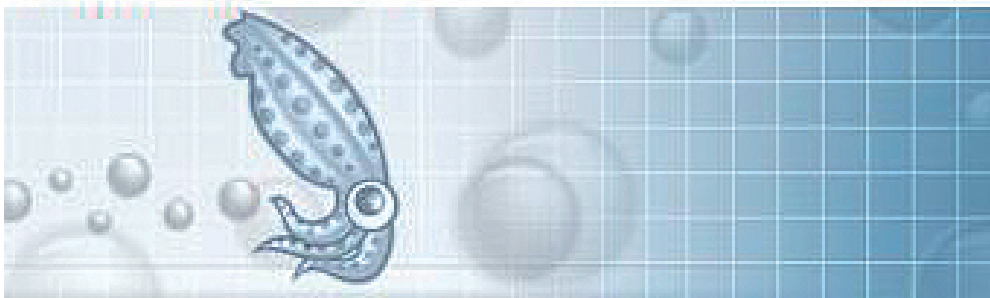
that’s used to manipulate data from a slower area. So, for example, a CPU cache is a very fast location next to the CPU that sucks data from memory chips, serves the data to the CPU, then returns any changed data back to the slower memory chips, as needed. A big CPU cache can speed up the overall operation of a PC by an order of magnitude or more. Caches work.

In Phuket (indeed, in all of Thailand), some Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are starting to use caches to minimize the number of times the ISP has to run overseas to retrieve a web page. In theory, here’s how it works: the very first person who surfs to a specific web site – say, bbc.com – forces the ISP to run to the bbc.com website to retrieve the page. It takes time to pull the whole bbc.com page from the UK and put it on your PC.

Some ISPs are smart enough to store that copy of bbc.com in a web cache, located in Bangkok, before sending it on to

squid-cache.org

Optimising Web Delivery



SQUID SOLUTION: Internet Service Providers can use free, open-source programs like squid-cache to reduce the money they have to pay for international data pipes.

the user. That way, when the next person asks to see bbc.com, the ISP doesn’t have to run all the way to UK to get it. There’s a quick check to make sure the page hasn’t changed (it’s complicated; details can be found at is.gd/CH7AFT), but most of the time, the ISP doesn’t have to spend the time – or the money – to pull the data from the UK; it just uses the copy sitting in the cache in Bangkok.

In Live Wire next week, I’ll explain how caching has changed both the way we’re getting data from international locations, and the validity of our speed tests. I’ll also introduce you to a new speed test that we’ll roll out shortly, to level the playing and reporting field a bit.

Live Wire is Phuket Gazette columnist Woody Leonhard's weekly snapshot of all things internet in Phuket. Follow him on Twitter: @PhuketPC or visit his free computer clinics at Woody's Sandwich Shoppes.

June 19. Geekfest 4

We’ll be celebrating the fourth anniversary of the Computer Clinics at Geekfest 4 on Sunday morning, June 19, 10am to mid-day at Sandwich Shoppe Chalong. Help us devour a geekcake. Explore your inner geekiness. Meet people who can bully a recalcitrant PC into submission by their mere presence and uttered incantations. You know “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”? Meet the people whose mantra runs, “Reboot, Reformat, Reinstall.”

If you own a computer, if you use a computer, if you swear at a computer, if you bend circuit boards with your powers of concentration, drop by Geekfest 4. Phuket is home to an amazing array of tech savvy folks, some of whom rarely venture out in public. Here’s your chance to meet them.

Diligence is an investor’s best friend

Getting to know a few basics can help you avoid costly investment mishaps

THE words “due diligence” are enough to make most people’s eyes glaze over. I have to admit that the books I have read on the subject, while necessary for my profession, were about as boring as it gets and a struggle to get through.

Understanding the very basics however, can help you avoid making a huge mistake when it comes to investments.

There are a few basic checks

you can do if you are introduced to a financial advisor. Remember that even if the advisor is referred to you, your acquaintance may have been duped by a con man and not realize he is passing his mistake onto you.

Checking with the regulatory authority of the advisor’s home country is a good place to start, as usually a con man will have some sort of a record back home. Google is your best friend in this

Retirement Years

By David Mayes

regard. You can also check out their academic background if they claim to have higher education with the institution at which they studied, or claimed to.

Ask to see their passport, to verify they truly are who their business card says they are.

Check out the website of the company they work for as a starter and then google both the advisor and company name in combination with keywords such as “complaints”, “scam”, “mis-selling” and “legal action”.

You can learn a lot about the practices of some of the larger international financial advisories and their practices simply by doing this,

and avoid some of the ones who are not in the business of doing what is best for the client.

When it comes to making investments, follow a similar procedure for any fund manager, asset management company, or even fund strategy before allocating any of your hard earned money to a fund. Don’t think that just because a firm is operating in a regulated environment that a company or fund is on the up and up.

Most frauds have historically occurred in the best regulated markets. I am sure you all remember Madoff, who operated his Ponzi scheme in the heavily-regulated US. Of course there were numerous red flags that should have warned any professional investor to stay away from Madoff,

but his reputation on Wall Street unfortunately seemed to convince many to throw their due diligence requirements out the window.

Make sure any fund you invest in has an independent administrator, this way you can be assured that they are in fact doing what they say they are doing. Madoff did this “in house”, actually he didn’t do it at all, as he was just collecting money and writing nice fiction to his investors.

This would have been caught if not for a second blaring red flag violation. Make sure a fund is audited by a well-known accounting firm. If a fund can’t pass these simple tests, it is not worth the risk of it being a fraud, as there are thousands upon thousands of good funds who meet the above criteria.

There is no 100 per cent fool-proof formula to avoid getting caught in a fraud, but in general the more scrutiny you put each party through, the better you will sleep at night and the lower the odds of getting ripped off.

David Mayes MBA is a resident of Phuket, Thailand, and provides wealth management services to expatriates throughout the region of South East Asia. He can be reached via email at david.m@faramond.com



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Daily News

Phuket Promise: The beach guards 'will be back'

PHUKET: Lifeguards will soon be back on the beaches in greater numbers and with more new lifesaving equipment, Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (Orbodor) President Pansoon Uppasitang has confirmed to the Phuket Gazette. The news follows the February 26 expiration of the contract for the Phuket Lifeguard....

Full Story

Greater Phuket: Shock TAT report on stinking beach

PHUKET: Despite regulations of the local village government stipulating that garbage not be placed out for collection before 8pm, trash continues to be dumped on Krabi's Ao Nang Beach in broad daylight. Tourists say they don't like it. The stink and the unsightly mess are a source of harsh complaints not only from tourists....

Full Story

Phuket lucky license plate auction raises more than 800,000

PHUKET: The sixth annual "Lucky License Plate Auction" held in Phuket Town over the weekend raised 23,504,500 baht. Kanok Siriparichokorn, chief of the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO), has told the Phuket Gazette. "I am very happy with the revenue raised – it's five million baht more than last year," he said....

Full Story

Phuket Mining Museum now open

PHUKET: Governor Tri Augkaradacha stepped up to buy the first entrance ticket to the Phuket Mining Museum yesterday to mark the official opening of the 160-million-baht attraction. The museum showcases Phuket's in mining history and the lives of the Chinese miners of the area through indoor and outdoor exhibits in both....

Full Story

Peti: Do Burmese in Phuket enjoy basic human rights?

PHUKET: A senate committee meeting in Phuket last year was told the number of migrant workers from Burma living in

Events Calendar

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Date	Hours	Title
Mar 7 - 13	08:00 - 23:30	1994 Facebook: Guests the Beach Game
Mar 7 - 11	21:00 - 01:00	Mango House Festival
Mar 8 - 10	07:00 - 16:00	Transforming Policy and Adversity at Med Centre
Mar 12	20:30 - 12:30	Salsa Night @ Las Vegas
Mar 13	09:00 - 12:00	Phuket Yacht Club Kid's sailing
Mar 13	10:00 - 12:00	FREE Computer Clinic - Laguna
Mar 16	10:00 - 22:30	Celebrating The Burgundy Grand Cru by Omnia
Mar 17	10:00 - 14:00	Phuket International Women's Club AGM and lunch
Mar 17	10:00 - 23:30	Curry Fridays
Mar 18	10:00 - 12:30	Secret Belly Dance Party
Mar 19	20:30 - 12:00	FREE Computer Clinic - Chalong
Mar 20	10:00 - 12:00	SIX of the Best in Phuket
Mar 25	18:30 - 23:30	Phuket Youth Sailing Squadron Island Regatta
Mar 26 - 27	08:00 - 17:00	Bacon and Stone Visual Arts Exhibition
Mar 26 - 31	11:30 - 23:30	
Mar 26	18:30 - 05:00	St. Patrick's Ball 2011 at Movenpick Karon Beach
Mar 27	10:00 - 12:00	FREE Computer Clinic - Chalong
Apr 1	19:00 - 23:30	Curry Fridays
Apr 3	10:00 - 12:00	FREE Computer Clinic - Patong
Apr 6	18:30 - 20:00	Chakra Memorial Day - Public Holiday
Apr 7	10:00 - 12:00	Book Market Investing for Beginners (FREE)
Apr 10	10:00 - 12:00	FREE Computer Clinic - Laguna
Apr 13 - 15	10:00 - 12:00	Songkran Festival - Public Holidays
Apr 15	19:00 - 23:30	Curry Fridays
Apr 15	10:00 - 12:00	FREE Computer Clinic - Chalong
Apr 17	07:00 - 12:00	PHASLC IronKids Phuket Triathlon
Apr 23	10:00 - 12:00	FREE Computer Clinic - Chalong
Apr 24	10:00 - 12:00	Curry Fridays
Apr 29	19:00 - 23:30	Labour Day - Public Holiday
May 1		Substitution Day for National Labor Day
May 2		

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Day in the life of Surf Savivors

MANY people might be led to believe the daily routine of a professional lifeguard in Phuket would be blissful: hanging out on the beach all day, soaking up the sun, checking out the beach babes – who could ask for more?

Phuket Gazette reporter Atchaa Khamlo recently spent a day with Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (PPAO) lifeguards at Nai Harn to see the what a day in the life of a Phuket lifeguard is like.



A lifeguard clears warning flags from the beach at the end of the day.

NAI HARN Beach head lifeguard Anupong “Nu” Suebtan is a 27-year-old Phuket Native who lives near Chalong Circle.

“I usually wake up around 8.30am, as everyone has to get to work before 9am to prepare everything,” he said.

They separate the various tasks with each carrying out different duties, such as setting up the warning flag poles and placing the safety equipment at three different points on the beach.

The most important aspect of the morning routine is reading the surf conditions and identifying danger spots.

“We observe the surf to check for rip-currents and set up red flags warning of the dangers,” he said.

They also prepare the daily log, which is used throughout the day to jot down hourly entries of how many people are in the water and how many are on the beach, he explained.

After that they have some coffee and snacks to keep their energy up and a five-minute

daily briefing at about 9:30am.

“We also have a longer weekly meeting to discuss management issues, rip-currents and rescue techniques,” he said.

All eight lifeguards assigned to the zone work in rotation, with six assigned to Nai Harn Beach and one more stationed at Yanui Beach

while the final member enjoys a day off.

“Yanui Beach doesn’t have the dangerous kind of currents we see at Nai Harn Beach. Mostly tourists get cut by crab shells or stung by sea urchins, so a

single lifeguard there is enough.

The six Nai Harn guards work in three different stations along the beach. Each pair is responsible for their zone, but all are in radio contact in case of an emergency.

Whether or not they are needed largely depends on prevailing currents, he explained.

On this particular day, they rescued a 30-year-old Thai woman at 2pm, and a Thai man, age 25, at 5:30pm. In both cases, and like many before them, they got pulled offshore by a



Head lifeguard Anupong Suebtan

rip-current and began to panic.

Nu and two other lifeguards demonstrated the procedure they use to pluck panicked swimmers to safety.

For group rescues they use a surfboard, but in the case of a single individual one guard swims out with a flotation rescue belt which he uses to pull the swimmer, while another remains on the beach giving hand signals indicating the way back to shore.

In the case of a rip-tide, trying to go back the way you came can prove to be a fatal mistake.

Nu advises anyone caught in a rip-tide to simply ride it out until it dissipates, or to swim laterally along the beach to escape the current.

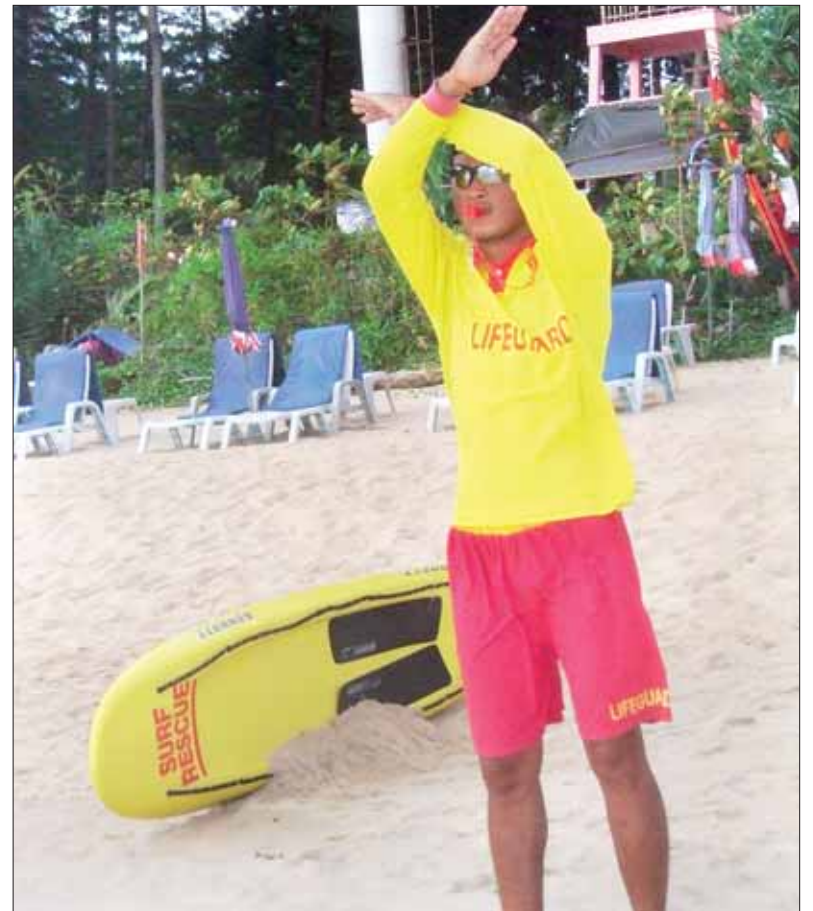
“People who try and fight a rip-current will tire and can drown easily in the waves,” he said.

Foreigners are generally more curious about the system of safety flags they put up on the beach, he said.

“Foreigners always ask us about the meaning of the flags. Thai people just run into the sea, taking no notice of them,” he said.

The long day draws to a close at about 6:15pm, when they collect their equipment for overnight storage at the beach guard center station on the beach.

Any yellow flags that may have been flying at the three stations are replaced with red ones, indicating



WHISTLE-BLOWER: A lifeguard alerts people to stop swimming.



BAYWATCH: A lifeguard dashes into the surf after spotting trouble.

that there are no lifeguards on duty. At 6:30pm they walk along the waterline blowing their whistles and ordering sundown swimmers back onto terra firma.

After a final check to make sure all is well, they finally

leave the beach at about 7pm.

“When I get home, I take a shower and watch a bit of television, but I usually fall asleep right away because I am so tired from such a long day’s work,” said Nu.

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Men of comedy

The Phuket Punchline Comedy Club is back this month

THIS is one night of comedy not to be missed. On June 23 (that's a Thursday) at the Holiday Inn Resort in Patong, see award-winning gagmeister Stephen Grant will return to warm up the audience with his own brand of clever humor before two of England's finest young comedians take to the stage.

Grant performed at Phuket Punchline's opening show back in 2007. He is one of the UK's funniest, hardest-working and most respected comedians on the circuit.

Grant is an award-winning MC (Chortle Best Compere Award 2008 & 2011) and is the resident compere at Krater Comedy Club in Brighton. He performs at clubs and corporate events all over the UK and on the international circuit. He has taken six critically acclaimed stand-up shows to the Edinburgh Fringe since 2003. His fourth DVD is due to be released this year.

Jimmy McGhie went from the "one to watch" to "see him now



Jimmy McGhie

while you can get a ticket".

A highly regarded young stand-up comic, McGhie performs on the UK and international comedy circuit to great acclaim. He is also a highly sought-after TV warm-up, working for Channel 4's *Deal or No Deal*, ITV's *Loose Women*, BBC Three's *Two Pints* and *Coming of Age* and Channel 5's *The Justin Lee Collins Show*.

Michael Fabbri quickly stamped his mark on the UK circuit by appearing in the 2003 final of Channel 4's *So You Think You're Funny?* He rapidly earned a reputation as one of the most promising up-and-coming comedians on the circuit – a reputation that he is living up to, regularly performing for the best clubs in the country.

With a dark and honest approach to some of life's more touchy subjects, Fabbri manages to effortlessly slip between some harsh, controversial topics to light-hearted silliness to make for a refreshingly eclectic and brilliantly funny act.

The *Phuket Gazette* sponsors this event. Doors open at 8pm with and the show starts at 8.30pm. Tickets are priced at 960 baht until Wednesday June 22 or 1,200 baht on the night.

Visit www.phuketcomedy.com/ticket or call T: 089-6469278



Michael Fabbri



Stephen Grant

Gearing up for Fun Fly 2011

THE paragliding competition that captivated tourists and local residents alike in May last year, will return to the skies above Nai Harn Beach and Phromthep Cape from June 23 to 26.

Complementing the success of last year's inaugural event – which saw 52 paragliders compete – event organizers said that the second Phuket Fun Fly already has 60 paragliders registered and expect the number of competitors to reach 80.

Crowds of up to 3,000 spectators are expected to come and watch novice and professional paragliders from all over the world show off their skills, with no less than 300 flights per day. The three competition categories include landing on a precise target point (spot point landing), flying through fixed points and hovering in mid air flight.

Sky-high joyriders wanting to be taken for a "tandem ride" (two-seat flying) can register at a booth set up on Nai Harn Beach. The cost is 800 baht per flight. The tandem rides take off near the wind turbines on Khao Daeng, just north of Phromthep Cape. Each tandem

flight will last five to 15 minutes and land on Nai Harn Beach, said Dr Prasert Theplaong, President of the Phuket Paragliding Club.

Among the activities on Nai Harn Beach to be held between 8am and 6pm throughout the four days include beach games, canoeing, contests with prizes, photography training, postcard printing services, Canon camera and lens product exhibitions, and various beachside booths selling food, beverages and products from more than 20 sponsors.

The paragliding photo contest, which resulted in some of the most stunning photos of Phuket to date being published, will also return, this year branded the Canon Photo Contest 2011.

"The event is being held to promote paragliding and as preparation for the Asian Beach Games in November 2014, as paragliding is one of the competitive sports in those games," said Narong Promjitta, managing director of event organizer BMS.

The event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*.

Correction

Phuket International Academy (PIA) contacted the *Phuket Gazette* earlier this week to clarify a misprint that its Day School program is based on the curriculum of the United Kingdom (*Phuket Gazette*, May 28-June 3, page 16, Education).

In fact, PIA is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World school which uses the IB curriculum model to prepare its students for an IB diploma program.

"The IBW curriculum implements elements from several models," clarified Joanna Moon, the head of PIA Arts Department. The mistake is regretted.

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Attack of the sand-pikeys

Kevin Barry's 2053 Ireland is a place where gangsters and sand-pikeys rule the roost

I PICKED up young Kevin Barry's first novel *City of Bohane* (Janathan Cape, London, 2011, 277pp) based on the strength of a gleeful back cover blurb by Roddy Doyle, the doyen of Irish novelists. I've been dragging my way through a number of clunkers recently but am pleased to report my sheer joy of reading this daring, exuberant, original, funny and harrowing futuristic novel.

The place is Dohane, a grim city on the west coast of Ireland. The time is 2053. Something terrible has happened. The city still makes beer and sausages and runs a cranky elevated train. But there are no more cars or firearms. Electricity is generated through precious diesel. There is a vague central government in Ireland, but the city is mostly left to itself. Mention is made of trade routes that are still open to Portugal and Tangiers. Whatever happened before is called the "Lost Time".

A map is appended on the back cover of the novel, showing the various neighborhoods of Bohane: the hillside Beau Vista for the rich, the middle class New Town, and poor, sprawling, criminal slums of Back Trace, Smoketown and Northside Risers. Beyond

the city is the Big Nothing, bogs inhabited by gypsies called sand-pikeys and dim potato farmers who make up the local police.

Reigning over Bohane's bars, brothels, opium dens and strip joints is the dapper crime boss Logan Hartnett. He is facing a revolt from Bad Eye Cusack and the clans of the Northside Risers. Worse, Gant Broderick has returned from 27 years abroad in England. "The Gant", as he is also known, was the former leader of Logan Hartnett's gang and the boyfriend of Macu Aliados for all three weeks before Hartnett claimed both Macu as his wife and the leadership of the Hartnett Fancy Gang.

The tale gallops along with grand descriptive prose and dialogue laced with profane futuristic argot. Here is the Gant coming back to Bohane's old train station:

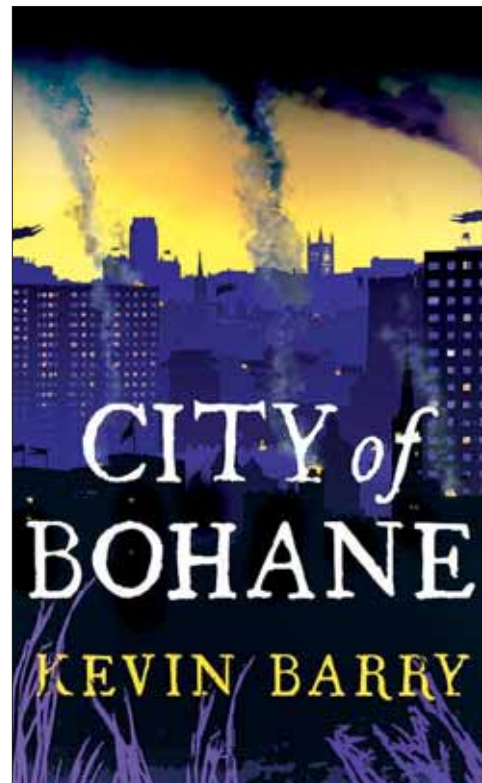
"The Gant sniffed at the evil, undying air of the place as he walked through. Even at a little after six in the morning,

the concourse was rudely alive and the throb of its noise was by the moment thickening. Amputee walnut sellers croaked their prices from tragic blankets on the scarred tile floors, their stumps so artfully displayed.

Books

By James Eckardt

'Beyond the city is the Big Nothing, bogs inhabited by gypsies called sand-pikeys and dim potato farmers... Reigning over Bohane's bars, brothels, opium dens and strip joints is the dapper crime boss...'



IRISH CHARM: Looking to the future.

The Bohane accent sounded everywhere: flat and harsh along the consonants, sing-song and soupy on the vowels, betimes vaguely Caribbean. An old man bothered a melodeon as he stood on an upturned orange crate and sang a lament for youth's distant love . . . The old dude had belters of lungs on him, was the Gant's opinion, though he was teetering clearly on Eternity's maw."

The clans of the Northside Risers invade Back Trace and Hartnett counterattacks over the bridge from Smoketown. For a one third share of the Bohane's vice industry, Hartnett has secretly forged an alliance with the fearsome sand-pikeys:

"Sand-pikeys wore armless jerkins year-round, their hair was braided thickly and dressed with magpie feathers, and their torsos were covered with ash markings – unreadable to all but their own kind... They drank elderflower gin and married at fourteen years of age and enjoyed the maudlin scrape of a fiddle. They didn't get mixed up in Feuds too often, but when they did... Was said there was no sight on the peninsula quite so fearsome as that of a sand-pikey at the business end of a scrap."

Cleverly, the climatic battle is described through the work of the hunchback newspaper photographer Balthazar Grimes as he sorts through his shots in the darkroom, leading up to a climatic hanging. And yet we're only slightly more than halfway through the novel.

Next comes the rise of Jenni Ching, the sexy young Chinese operator who simultaneously manipulates Hartnett, his chief henchman Wolfie Stanners and the Gant. Another war is brewing against the sand-pikeys and the fashion plate and role model Jenni Ching is organizing the slum girls for a rise to power. Again, the reader is helplessly drawn into another grand plot. This is literature of the highest order: self-contained and endlessly entertaining.

Peruvian author wins foreign fiction prize with 'Red April'

A PERUVIAN novelist beat Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk to win the Independent foreign fiction prize with his crime novel *Red April*.

Peruvian Santiago Roncagliolo scooped the UK 10,000 prize with his story about a prosecutor on the hunt for a violent serial killer in Peru.

The judges chose *Red April* ahead of Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* and previous winner at the awards, Per Petterson, and his novel *I Curse the River of Time*. Roncagliolo, 36, is the youngest novelist to win the coveted title. *The Guardian* newspaper reported the author, who lives in Barcelona,

said the award was "an amazing moment in an amazing year", which has also seen him take Spain's Alfaguara prize and be named one of Granta's best young Spanish-language novelists. Roncagliolo said last week that his work with the Human Rights Commission in Peru inspired the novel.



DRAMA: Thai soap opera Dok Som Si Thong is based on the novels.

Thai 'Dok Som' author quashes trilogy rumors

THAI writer Taitao Sucharitkul says she hasn't decided whether to pen a third part to her *Dok Som* novel series, which has become a popular TV series.

"I have to make this clear. I want people to stop spreading lies on the Internet," she says.

Her novel *Dok Som Si Thong* (The Golden Orange Flowers) is the sequel to *Mongkut Dok Som*, which is adapted from *Wives and Concubines* by Chinese writer Su Tong.

Part two was written entirely from Taitao's own imagination, and fans want her to make it a

trilogy. As soon as the Channel 3 series ended, rumors started on social-media websites that there's a third part. A synopsis was even posted on the net.

"I was furious, not only because of the lie, but the story is so bad it's an insult to me," the writer fumes.

Taitao acknowledges that the ending leaves things open but she hasn't thought that far ahead.

"What I can confirm is that at the moment, there's not a third part of the story coming from me at this moment."

— The Nation

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Party Time: election essentials



SHOW OF DEMOCRACY: Supporters of caretaker Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva turned out in large numbers last Friday to see the democrat leader at Sapan Hin. Photo: Christian Mouchet

MANY expat residents of Phuket will have noted a not-so-subtle change in roadside landscape in recent weeks. Following the government's announcement last month to dissolve parliament and hold a general election, campaigners wasted little time in pinning up their party's promises all along the already sign-cluttered road shoulders.

"15,000 baht for college!" reads one. "25 per cent higher minimum wage!" reads another. "We say it: we do it!" promises a third.

For many, the promises of Thai politicians are much like the proverbial

sour grapes: too far out of reach and not worth the effort. July 3 will be another meaningless day, cynics conclude.

The prevailing stereotype of thuggish and corrupt politicians foaming at the mouth for money and power dissuade them from informing themselves or taking the electoral process seriously. Indeed, the nuts-and-bolts of the Thai electoral process remains very much a mystery for many due to constant changing of the rules. Contrary to popular belief, it's not so complex when you break it down.

— Steven Layne

THE FUNDAMENTALS

OFFICIALLY called the National Assembly of Thailand, the Thai Parliament comprises two houses. The upper house refers to the Senate with its current crop of 150 senators. Half are elected and half are appointed, all serving six-year terms. Since the next Senate elections are not due until 2014, and the Senate cannot be dissolved through the political process, from here on the focus will be on the lower house: The House of Representatives. Although the Thai Parliament (Ratthasapha Thai) has two chambers, the term Member of Parliament (MP), in English, generally refers only to members of the lower house. In the upcoming election, voters will cast two

ballots: one vote for the preferred MP candidate in their constituency, and one vote for the political party of their choice.

MP TO PM

After the ballots are tallied, the new Parliament will comprise 500 MPs, each to serve a maximum four-year term, or until the house is dissolved. Of the total, 375 will be directly elected. These are known as constituency MPs. The remaining 125 seats will be filled from candidate lists (party lists) provided by each party for each region. The number of parliamentary seats are awarded on a proportional basis, starting at the top of each list. For example, if "Party X" gets 20 per cent of the party list vote, it will be given 25 of 125 seats.

Any party that achieves a house majority assumes the right to form the new government. A final house vote, among all 500 MPs, would be expected to lead to the appointment of that party's leader as Prime Minister (PM). If a majority vote among MPs is not reached, compromises involving considerable "horse trading" for decisive "swing votes" are made to form a coalition government and consensus of who will lead the house, and ultimately the country. As head of state, HM The King must approve the final PM appointment.

IN THE HOUSE

In addition to being a Thai citizen by birth and at least 25 years of age, all MP candidates must belong to their party for a minimum

of 90 days leading up to election day. An exception is made in the case of an early house dissolution, no fewer than 30 are required.

If a prospective candidate was not born in the province where he is seeking election, they must either have served there as a government official, had their name appear in a house registration, or studied in an academic institution for no less than five consecutive years.

A long list of restrictions filters out anyone in an official position who stand to receive personal gain, including government servants, agents and judges alike. Also barred are those scrutinized on cases of graft, unusual wealth and bankruptcy, those under incarceration or outstanding warrants, those who have been convicted of drug offenses, clergy and those declared "mentally unsound" by a certified psychiatrist. While most filters are straightforward, some require refereeing. Next time you hear of yellow and red cards being handed out — the suited recipients are clearly not athletes — chances are one of the candidates has been found in violation of the many campaign restrictions.

THE PRIVILEGED FEW

Listed as a "duty" in the constitution, voting in Thailand is more like a "conditional privilege" than an unconditional right. Compulsory? The answer is somewhat yes and no. Unless one is planning to run for senator someday, there are no formal penalties for not voting in upper house elections. However, in lower house elections, eligible voters who fail

to vote and do not provide a reasonable and timely excuse risk having their future voting privileges suspended — and could even be subject to tax penalties. To be eligible, one must have been a Thai citizen for no fewer than five years, reached the age of 18 by January 1 of the year the vote takes place, and had their name listed on a house registration form in their constituency for no fewer than 90 days prior to election day. Monks and other members of the clergy, those with criminal records or outstanding warrants, and the mentally impaired are not eligible.

CONSTITUENCIES

Throughout the country, there are 375 population-based voting districts, or constituencies, each to elect one MP to represent approximately 170,000 persons. Combined, Thailand's registered population of 63.8 million will be proportionally represented. According to the official government census as of December, 2010, Phuket province's registered population was 345,067. Dividing this figure by 170,000, shows that the province only gets two seats in parliament. Phuket Constituency 1 comprises all of Muang district, except for Koh Kaew and Rassada sub-districts. These two locales combine with the rest of the island to form its second constituency. Thailand's most populated province outside of Bangkok, Nakhon Ratchasima had a registered population of 2.58 million, giving it 15 seats in Parliament. The highest number of seats (33) represent the Bangkok area, with a population of 5.7 million.

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Frank Grassmann

FRANK Grassmann has served as one of Phuket's top hotel managers. He arrived here to assume management of food and beverage at the Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket in November of 1999.

"That was the most challenging transition of my career as I wasn't familiar with Thai culture and I didn't know the capabilities of my staff. We were heading into the top of the peak season and the Dusit had a very high return rate of older guests with expectations of high standards."

But Frank surpassed even his own expectations and became a valued member of the professional management at Laguna Phuket. He is now General Manager of the Evason Phuket & Bon Island, one of thirteen properties owned or managed by Six Senses Resorts, where he has been leading operations since 2008.

"I was delighted to return to Thailand to work with the Six Senses corporate philosophy of environmental sustainability. I love coming to work every morning as we have incredibly beautiful views of the surrounding islands from our 64 acres."

Frank was born in Koblenz, Germany, and attributes his early interest in hotel management to his stays in hotels with his father who traveled for business. After completing his national service, he applied to Lufthansa for their pilot training program and passed every interview but the last.

EXPAT gallery

By Bruce Stanley

"I was disappointed as from hundreds of applicants I had made it into the finals, but I did not get one of the only two training positions on offer. But I had always had an interest in food and beverage operations from my years of travel...I applied to the Steigenberger hotel chain for their management program and was accepted."

He spent over two years training in every hotel department and got a job at The Savoy in London to be close to his childhood sweetheart, and later his wife, Natalie.

"I think the heart and soul of a hotel is with the restaurant operations, and The Savoy attracted some of the world's outstanding personalities. The cuisine and service had to be world class."

Frank was with the Savoy for three years before returning to the Steigenberger Frankfurter Hof as deputy of F&B. His son and daughter were born during these years and Natalie worked translating German and English at an architectural firm.

"I felt like I wanted to work in Asia as it's possible to realize a lot

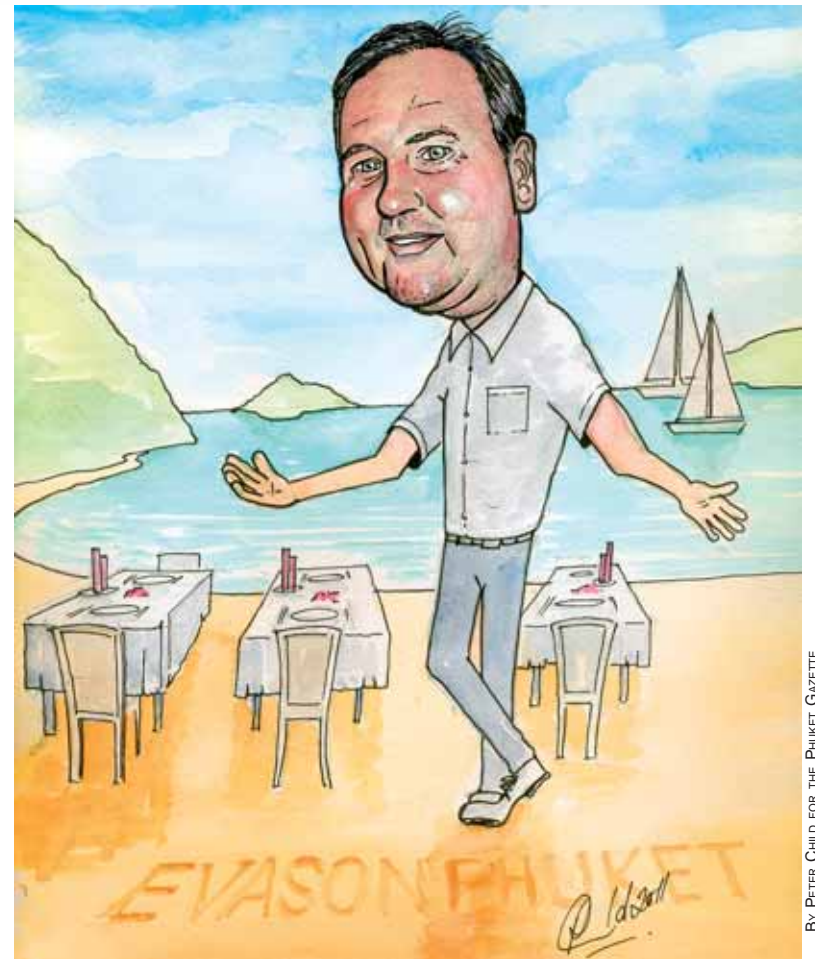
of ideas in the hospitality industry, unlike in Europe. My first posting was to the Intercontinental Hotel in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1997. We would have royal weddings with 2,500 guests and had to serve the men and women in separate banquet rooms. It took awhile to learn all of the customs and protocol."

After two years, he accepted the move to Phuket. In the years following his assignment at the Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket, Frank was promoted to Director of Food and Beverage for the Dusit's flagship property, the Dusit Thani in Bangkok. From a relaxed tropical resort property on Phuket, he had been thrown into delivering services for Bangkok's high society.

After three years at the Dusit Thani, Frank decided to widen his career and went to Mexico City where he was appointed Executive Assistant Manager at the Sheraton Maria Isabel Hotel and Towers.

He then returned to Asia as Hotel Manager at the Dusit Thani Manila, before returning to Phuket for the Evason's top job.

"My family is very happy to be living with Thai culture again. At the Evason, we cultivate our own organic produce and we recycle most of our water for the gardens. And we are always searching for menus that improve the health of our guests. I love managing this beautiful property."



BY PETER CHILD FOR THE PHUKET GAZETTE

About Expat Gallery

The individuals profiled in "Expat Gallery" are chosen on the basis of their contributions to Phuket, and for having made those contributions in successful partnerships with Thais. For many, the contributions have entailed significant investment, often in the mid-80s and 90s when the rules of business were, ahh, not always clear. Some are not in business at all, but all have one thing in common: if there were a *Who's Who in Phuket*, they'd be in it.

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Photo: Jiri Weich

Soi Romanee's red light secret

Uncovering the tawdry past of Old Phuket Town in the early 20th century

WHAT Soi Romanee lacks in size it makes up for in prestige.

This narrow little alley in Old Phuket Town has barely enough breathing room for two cars to pass one another unscathed. But this small stretch of tarmac and close-quartered buildings are rich in history that goes back more than 150 years.

There is a story in every nook and cranny, alcove and awning on Soi Romanee, and that's why we shall spend some time delving into its past.

Pastel-colored Sino-Portuguese buildings line the soi, and life potters along at a slower pace in this

part of town. It's a place of beauty and history, but it's also a place that has a dark secret few know about.

The soi's original Hokkien name was Huang-ar-Laai. It was later renamed Soi Romanee at the start of the 20th century when Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahissara Phakdi became high commissioner of Monthon Phuket. Phraya Ratsadanupradit, or Kor Sim Bee as he is sometimes called, was a shrewd businessman and a clever administrator. He worked hard to develop Phuket Town into a thriving and modern center of trade.

During this period, tin mining was the largest industry in Phuket,

Looking Back

By Anand Singh

employing a large number of male manual laborers, mostly Chinese immigrants. If there was one thing the visionary high commissioner understood, it was that the large population of sometimes unruly Chinese workers in Phuket Town needed to be controlled and pre-occupied, in order to keep them away from trouble.

In the past, Phuket had its fair share of bloody riots sparked by disgruntled Chinese mobs. Vices like gambling and prostitution

were allowed to thrive because it provided entertainment for the miners. And there is no denying that the taxes collected from the brothels and gambling dens were a lucrative source of income for the local powers.

One of Kor Sim Bee's more controversial policies, considered quite progressive during his time, was to turn Soi Romanee into a red light district where brothels could operate legally.

Located in the heart of Phuket Town and connecting two major roads, Soi Romanee was designated a brothel zone. Part of the reason for doing this was to allow the decision makers to be able to control the brothels more easily.

As more immigrant workers arrived in Phuket to work, more of them settled in Phuket Town. As a result, demand for brothels and adult entertainment grew and became big business. Women from Japan, Macau and Malaya flocked to Phuket to work in one of the oldest professions in human history. Huang-ar-Laai became a thriving red light district and was renamed Soi Romanee, meaning pleasure in Thai.

The women of Soi Romanee were sometimes called *Ying Lorkee*, meaning ladies of lust in Thai. Towards dusk, ladies of Romanee would sell food and drinks and entertain their guests by singing, dancing and satisfying the sexual needs of the men who visited them. At dusk the ladies would kneel outside their brothels and knock the porch with their wooden shoes, chanting loudly to invite guests into their brothels.

According to an article written by Dilok V. Panich, despite the trade and activities that went on inside the infamous Romanee al-

ley, it soon grew to become one of the most culturally diverse places in Phuket. The ladies themselves were foreign immigrants, coming from all over the region to find work in Phuket Town, bringing with them a multitude of languages and cultural practices.

The ladies were ranked and valued according to their looks and talent, which would define how much they got paid for their services. A star, being the highest grade possible, was given to the best ladies who would only take care of the richest customers.

Soi Romanee also had its share of tragedies and sad stories. According to Mr Panich, legend has it that there once lived a beautiful, but proud and boastful "stargrade" prostitute in Soi Romanee.

The other ladies, who were growing jealous and tired of her arrogance, decided to play a cruel prank on her.

They hired a street beggar, dressed him up in fine clothes and had him pretend to be a rich mine owner. That night, the beggar visited the brothel and courted the beautiful lady. When the time came and she performed her services for him, the other beggars standing in front of the brothel just below the "love room" starting yelling insults, singing and mocking and calling out the name of the fake mine owner.

When she realized that she had been tricked into giving her services to a beggar, she was revolted and disgraced. The beautiful Romanee lady killed herself the next day. Her body was found drowned in a well near the alley that was her workplace and home.

If you have a history story you would like featured, contact Anand Singh at as.pkt@hotmail.com

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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

June 2-4. Primary FOBISSEA Games at BIS

As a member of the Federation of British International Schools in Southeast Asia (FOBISSEA), BIS Phuket is proud to host this year's primary FOBISSEA games from June 2 to 4, from 7:30am to 5pm. About 288 primary school athletes from Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia are expected to attend the games to compete in four disciplines: swimming, track & field, t-ball and football. Contact Marketing & Communications at T: 076-238711 E:communications@bisphuket.ac.th or visit W:bisphuket.ac.thPri_Fobisseaindex.html.

June 4, 11, 18 and 25. Saturday brunch at Two Chefs Kata

Every Saturday Two Chefs proudly presents their brunch with a Scandinavian touch from noon to 3pm. Eat all you can for only 395baht. Add only another 300 baht and you can drink as much as you want from the wide choice of free-flowing beverages. During each brunch, MJ & Megan provide the entertainment with their lovely voices. Contact Two Chefs in Kata branch at T:076-330065 E:katacenter@twochefs.com or visit W:twochefs.com.

June 4-17 and 19-25. Kalim Kinetic Art Fair

The Kalim Kinetic Art Fair will be held from June 4 to 17 and 19 to 25, from 4pm to 1am, and will showcase the talent in Phuket to promote the creativity, imagination and inventive skills of children and adults alike. Brush Restaurant



June 12. Laguna Phuket International Marathon

Have some friendly fun in the sun. The marathon course is set along the beautiful coast of Phuket. It runs from 4:30am to 12pm and takes in a typical Thai village market, a rubber plantation and beach, before finishing at Laguna Phuket in the northwest of the island. Contact Roman Floesser at T:02-2362931 E:info1@phuketmarathon.com or see W:phuketmarathon.com.

along with the Underwood Factory has asked schools and companies to design their own kinetic art sculpture to be displayed at Brush from June 1-25. Anyone who cannot produce their own piece can submit their design by the end of May to have it produced by the Underwood Factory. Then, on June 25, a finale event will unfold at Brush to display all finished pieces along with a performance by Panatta Design. Contact Able Wanamakok at T:076-340348 E:info@awpr-phuket.com or visit W:facebook.com/brushphuket.

June 6-11. Sangsom Thailand Ranking Circuit Phuket Cup

This is the 2nd Thailand Ranking Circuit Snooker Championship

Phuket. Watch all the action live at Phuket's Royal Paradise Hotel & Spa, June 6-11 from 10am to 7pm in the Grand Ballroom on the 3rd floor. Get a chance to meet your favorite world-class snooker players, including Stuart Bingham, Alfie Burden and Ratchapol Pu-Ob-Orm. The *Phuket Gazette* and PGTV sponsor this event. Admission is free of charge. Contact reception at T: 076-340666 E: info@rayalparadise.com or visit W:royalparadise.com.

June 7. Phuket Cricket Group Annual General Meeting

The Phuket Cricket Group (PCG) will be holding its 2011/2012 AGM at the Karon Sea Sands Resort & Spa on Tuesday, June 7, starting at 7:30pm. A review of the past 12 months of cricketing activities as well as the plans for the next 12 months will be on the agenda, along with the election of key management committee positions. Anyone who is interested in cricket on Phuket is welcome to attend. Refreshments will be available. Contact Anthony Van Blerk, the PCG Honorary Secretary at T:080-0417227 E: avanblerk79@gmail.com.

June 8 and 22. Tex Mex at Two Chefs in Karon

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you can enjoy however much you want from our big Tex Mex buffet, which is probably the biggest in Phuket, from 6pm to 2am. We also have live music and good prices on drinks. Yes, that's right, only 495 baht. Contact Two Chefs in Karon branch at T: 076-286479 E:karon@twochefs.com or visit W:twochefs.com.

June 10. Indian Night @ Royal Phuket Marina

Come join the Indian nights at RPM. Due to the overwhelming success of our "Indian Feasts" at Les Anges, you will now be able to enjoy this unique event every Friday night, from June 3rd onwards. Enjoy Authentic Indian Cuisine every Friday from 7pm to 10pm. This authentic home-made Indian buffet will be prepared and served by our very own in-house Indian Chef,

Padum Kahtri. Reservations recommended. Price: baht 495+ per person. Contact Murat at T: 081-7973364 or 076-360803 E: muratc@royalphuketmarina.com or visit W:royalphuketmarina.com.

June 16. Phuket International Women's Club monthly lunch

This month's lunch will be held at the Kata Beach Resort from 11.30am to 2pm. All are welcome but prior registration is essential. Members 500 baht, guests 650 baht. Contact Carole Dux at T: 076-316711 E:info@phuketiwc.com or visit W:phuketiwc.com.

June 17. Phuket Property Dot Com Pro Am Invitational

Phuket's 1st charity Pro Am Golf event was launched last year and following the success of the inaugural event, it will take place again this year at the Laguna Phuket Golf Club from 8.30am to 11am. This is your chance to play with the pros. Up to 30 touring pros from the Asian Tour and OneAsia tours will be taking part. A great day of golf followed by a gala dinner at B-Lay Tong Resort. Contact Graham Haslam at T: 087-2791230 E:golf@phuket hasbeengoodtous.org or visit W: ProAm-Phuket.com.

June 17. Curry Fridays

Curry Friday is held every fortnight. Here is your chance to enjoy a lavish Indian curry buffet. Selections include all-time favorites chicken tikka masala, very hot mutton vindaloo, juicy kebabs, goan fish curry, chickpea curry and much more. Served with nan bread and basmati rice. All you can eat for only 449 baht nett. Draught by the glass just 50 baht nett. Special discount on beverages. Venue: Navrang Mahal India Restaurant at Karon Sea Sands Resort & Spa. Time: 7pm to 11:30pm. Reservations call: 076-286464 ext 4.

Free Computer Clinics

Is Windows driving you nuts? Want to know about the best internet connections in Phuket? Need help finding a repair shop or a dealer that knows what they're doing? Join *For Dummies...* author and local Windows guru Woody Leonhard in his free weekly seminars. Sponsored by Woody's Sandwich Shoppes and the *Phuket Gazette*.

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A CENTRAL CELEBRATION: As part of a remodeling project at Central Shopping Mall, the company held a fashion show last week. Pictured above from left are: Nattarat Moris; Om Akapan; General Manager of Central Festival Phuket, Wilaiporn Pitimanaaree; Phuket Senator, Tunyaratt Achariyachai; Finland's Honorary Consulate General in Phuket, Pramuke Achariyachai; Vice President of Marketing at Central Department Store, Piyawan Leelasompop and actresses Ploy Cherman and Susie Susira.



NEW TOWNHOMES ON THE BLOCK: Phuket-based tropical town home developers Baan Tak r Kard hosted a launch party at Phuket Brassage last week, marking financial backing from Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) for construction of the low-density, low-cost residential development in Thalang to begin in June. Pictured are Baan Tak r Kard directors Pakhin Aungulsant (left) and Sunchai Nuengsit (right) and SCB executive Suthipong Eungsakul (center).



EVASON APPEAL: Winemaker Laurent Brotte and his wife Christine hosted a special dinner this week at the Evason Phuket in Rawai. Somchai Chancharoensin (center) and Natalie and Frank Grassman, GM at the resort, are also pictured.



Photo of the week: Vuvuzela kids

THE bleating drone of the dreaded vuvuzela horn sounded en mass last weekend at the Heineken Phuket International Rugby 10s. Karon Stadium was alive with color and sound, heckling and horns, laughter and merriment throughout the three days of competition.

These two boys from the Asia Center Foundation were spotted mid-blow by *Phuket Gazette* lensman Dean Noble. The *Gazette* is constantly on the lookout for new, inspiring photographs from around Phuket. If you have a photo you would like to send in as a contender for a Photo of the Week, then email editor@phuketgazette.net. For more on the Rugby 10s, see our sports report on page 42.



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Kinetic effect



BRUSH Restaurant's Kinetic Art Exhibition is off and running in spectacular fashion – and more outlandish exhibitionism is on the way. Opening night for the month-long art fiesta awed gathered crowds with a mix of eccentric and fun shows – and even an appearance from Coco the Magic Clown to keep the children entertained. Brush Restaurant along with the Underwood Factory is currently accepting kinetic art sculpture submissions from Phuket schoolchildren and companies. The work will be displayed at Brush Restaurant from June 1 to 25. See our What's On page (21) for more details.

**YOUR
Phuket**

Photos: Christian Mouchet

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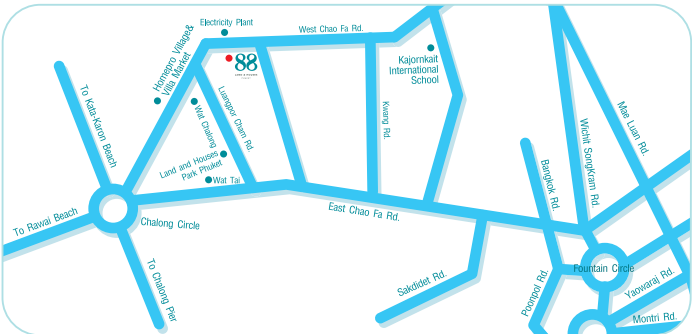
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Photo of actual house with simulated environment

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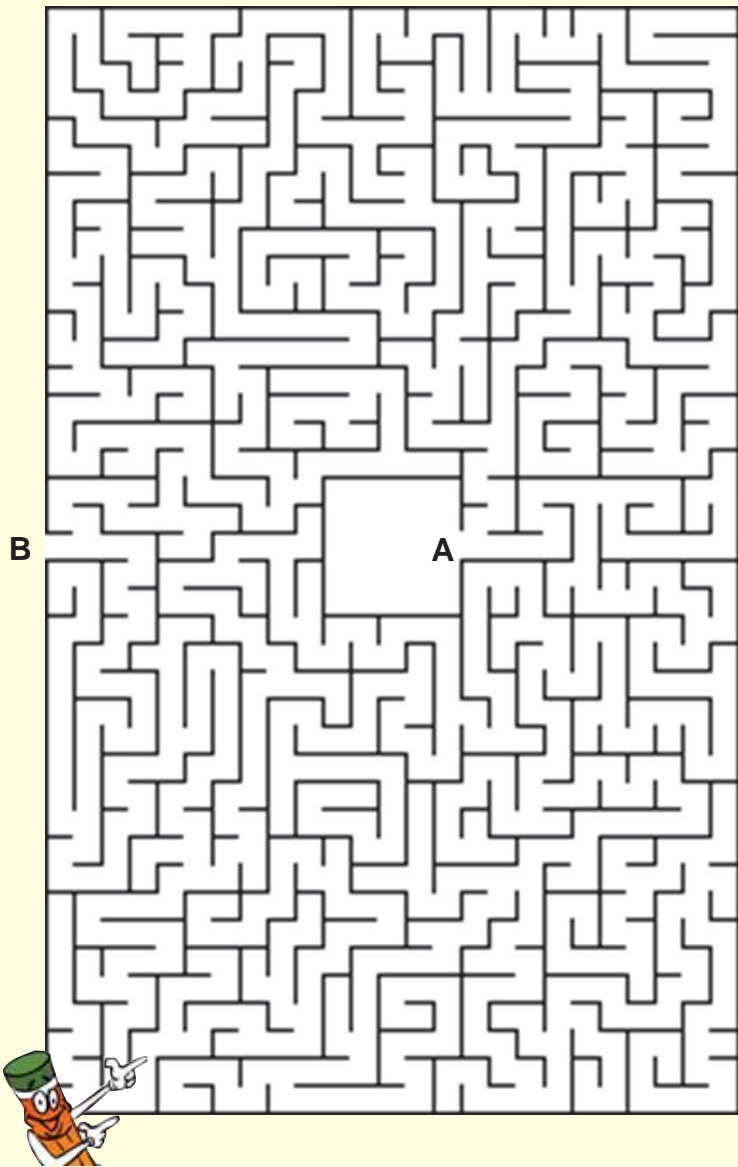
TROPICAL SERENITY



Project Owner : L.H.Muang Mai Co.,Ltd. Managing Director : Khun Pitaya Tantipiriyakij Registered Capital : 900 Million Baht (Fully Paid) 88 Land and Houses Phuket, Location : West Chao fa Rd, Chalong sub-district, Ampher Muang, Phuket, Title Deed No : 3901 Project Area 14 Rai, Financial Institution : Siam Commercial Bank Public Co., Ltd. Construction Start : January 2010 Expected Completion : 2013. Operation License No.19/2010 dated 2 December 2010. After full payment is completed transference is made within 7 days.



A *Gazette* staff member completed this maze in 30 seconds. Can you beat their time? Make your way out of the maze.

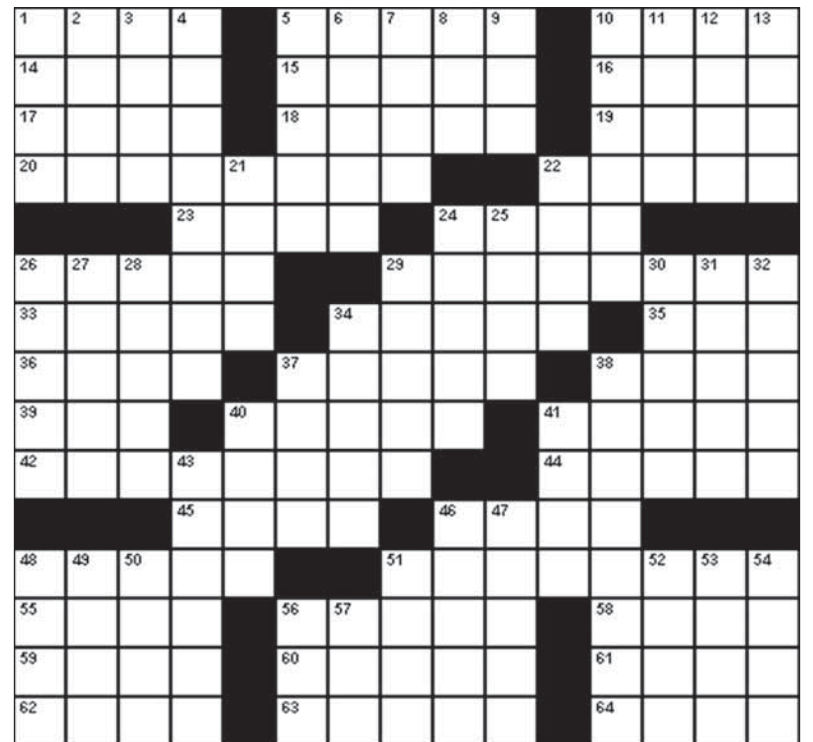


Across

1. Cornerstone abbr.
5. Adhere closely
10. Inner surface of the hand
14. Lecherous look
15. Chopper topper
16. Et_ _ _
17. "Give that_ _ _ cigar! "
18. Cave
19. Film spool
20. Inherited wealth
22. Point in question
23. Clairvoyant
24. Endoskeletal component
26. Japanese dish
29. Blood cell
33. Playwright Fugard
34. French film award
35. Swiss river
36. Bound
37. Pallid
38. _ _ _ breve
39. Sheet music abbr.
40. Attended
41. Old stringed instruments
42. Feeble
44. Demote
45. Shade trees
46. Mentor
48. Trivial objection
51. Heavenly
55. City near Provo
56. Song of joy
58. Farm structure
59. Actor O'Shea
60. Attentive, warning of danger
61. Norwegian king
62. Contributes
63. Fungal infection
64. Hawaiian goose

Down


1. Patron saint of sailors
2. Authenticating mark
3. Look after
4. Bar
5. Large wading bird
6. Hermit
7. _ _ _ -bitty
8. And not
9. College sr.'s test
10. 3.26 light years
11. Some are pale
12. In_ _ _ of
13. Track event
21. Trompe l' _ _ _
22. Are you_ _ _ out?
24. Attack on all sides
25. Arab League member
26. Cobb, eg.
27. In _ _ _ (unborn)
28. Fragment
29. Group of six
30. Seaport in the Crimea





31. Stories
32. Clear the board
34. Lawsuits
37. Of moderate temperature
38. Tapestry-like rug
40. Commendably
41. Metallica drummer Ulrich
43. Moon of Mars
46. Stare angrily
47. Utah's _ _ _ Mountains
48. Deep unconscious state
49. Desert-like
50. South African grassland
51. "It's _ _ _ real"
52. Abrading tool
53. _ _ _ Bator, Mongolia
54. Deep affection
56. Touch lightly
57. Boxer Muhammad

Provided by BestCrosswords.com.
Used with permission.

Puzzle solutions on page 39

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):
 Geminis' talents for thinking outside the box prove useful this week. Where others fail to find answers, you will have no trouble in coming up with innovative solutions. As the middle of June approaches, the stars suggest financial gain can be made by combining business with travel. Those celebrating a birthday this week are forecast to develop more interest in spiritual matters during the year ahead.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):
 June is an ideal month to test the waters for job opportunities. An air sign could help you to get a foot in a doorway, but a fire sign without the right connections could waste your time. The stars predict that love could be blind for some Cancerians this week; a recent flirtatious encounter with an air sign was probably not as memorable for them as it was for you.

LEO (July 24-August 22):
 Leos should find it easier to push away boundaries this week. Your outlook for June is refreshing – cobwebs clearing from your personal life will be a relief. In the

realm of romance, someone who you fell out with recently would like a second chance. You should not allow your pride to get in the way of this promising liaison. Those in a committed relationship are forecast to be dismayed by a partner's hare-brained scheme.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23):
 The stars advise caution when purchasing costly items this week as there are signs that you could be palmed off with inferior quality. The wind of change blows hot and cold for those Virgoans trying to move on from a work related situation. You should know more clearly what to do by the end of this month. Where romance is concerned, another earth sign could sweep you off your feet this weekend.


LIBRA (September 24-October 23):
 Librans' skills in paying attention to detail will help them gain where others lose this week. The stars suggest that an important agreement can be reached around the middle of June. However, this will probably mean that your summer holiday plans will have to be put on hold. A partner is likely to kick up a fuss about this, but a rosier financial outlook should help them see the bright side.


YOUR horoscope


By Isla Star

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22):
 Certain Scorpions who rejected the opportunity of a different career option earlier this year could have second thoughts this week. The stars indicate that a meeting with a fire sign will give you food for thought mid-week. Those content in their current situation should take rumors with a grain of salt. Love that was on the rocks has another chance, but your feelings may be sidetracked after an introduction to an air sign.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21):
 Rushing to get a job done could cause Sagittarians to make mistakes this week. Tuesday and Wednesday are highlighted to be days when you are especially vulnerable to taking action without thinking first. Those in a committed relationship may find that their partner's success at work has a negative effect on the relationship. Single Sagittarians are confused by a water sign's response.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20):
 Your outlook for June is mostly promising, but conflicts in the world of work could still be affecting Capricorns' peace of mind. The stars recommend that you avoid unnecessary contact with an impatient water sign this week. The unsettled astral atmosphere is forecast to clear during the second half of the month. In the realm of romance, there is relief when you learn that you have been making mountains out of molehills.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19):
 A bout of forgetfulness could affect Aquarians during the first half of June. The stars advise is to note important appointments and commitments carefully. Where personal affairs are concerned, it seems likely that a family member is not telling the whole truth. If this has financial implications for you, it would be best to get to the root of this matter before it's too late.

PISCES (February 20-March 20):
 Pisceans who are frustrated by lack of progress at work are advised to take the initiative this week. The stars are ready to back

your efforts to do this, particularly if it involves working with other water signs. Monday is an auspicious day to schedule meetings for. You can count on Cupid to help you find love with another air sign, but a fire sign's fickle attitude could drive you crazy.

ARIES (March 21-April 20):
 Getting information from a Scorpio colleague could be like squeezing water from a stone this week. It would be wise to direct your enquiries elsewhere – an earth sign should be able to give sensible answers. Where romance is concerned, those with a new partner could discover that their ideas of how to enjoy free time are like chalk and cheese.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21):
 Taureans seeking motivation could find this in an unlikely setting this week. The stars suggest that it would be fruitful to leave your comfort zone and explore different places. Affairs of the heart are well-starred during the second half of June; another earth sign wants to get to know you more intimately, but a water sign makes a strong romantic impression this weekend.

PROPERTY Gazette

News | Construction | Gardening | For sale | For rent | Classifieds

Stadium runs on course for Youth Games

By Chutharat Plerin

WORK on a new indoor stadium at Sapan Hin for Phuket to host the 28th Thailand Youth Games next year is 80 per cent complete, the event organizers confirm.

At a recent meeting chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Somkiet Sangkaosutthirak, Sports Authority of Thailand's (SAT) Marketing Development and Privileges Division Mani Wattanasen discussed funding for the event.

"Under the privilege system being established by the Thailand Youth Games organizers with SAT, Phuket province will receive 5 million baht in funding in February 2012 to prepare for the

games," said Mr Mani, who is a former vice governor of Phuket.

Thirteen corporate sponsors have already signed on to provide necessities like sporting equipment and drinking water and four other companies will provide a total of 30 million baht in funding, he said.

The Privileges Division will only provide funding for main event areas.

Phuket Province will be responsible for arranging sponsorship at other areas, such as football stadiums.

This should include signs that welcomes participants and spectators and does not conflict with the main sponsors named by the SAT, he added.



SAPAN STADIUM: Work on the stadium at Sapan Hin for next year's Thailand Youth Games is 80 per cent complete.

SAT Director Wirat Patee said his office will on May 31 begin collecting information from all relevant government agencies in order to finalize the budgetary requirements.

"Progress on the technical side is going very well and the stadium is now 80 per cent complete. The athlete's accommodation is being reviewed by Phuket Sport Association, which will determine whether hotels or schools would be more suitable," V/Gov Somkiet said.

The Thailand Youth Games will be held from March 18 to 28 next year, when some 10,000 of the finest young athletes from around Thailand will be coming to Phuket to compete in 35 different sports.

The SAT in February unveiled the official mascot for next year's games: a humanoid blue starfish. But shortly after, the mascot was replaced by a "cute" sea dragon. The new mascot is a "Hai Leng Ong" Sea Dragon – similar to the statue in Queen Sirikit Park in Phuket Town.

The provincial committee tasked with selecting the official mascot voted to use "Pearl of the Andaman" as the official motto and the sea dragon as official mascot.

The concept agreed by the committee has the dragon centered on a pearl white background with four "waves" of different colors joining together and forming a

spiral toward the center of the logo.

The logo overall is to represent young athletes from across the country gathering in Phuket. The pearl white background is to represent Phuket's reputation as the "Pearl of the Andaman", and the waves to signify power and unity.

The concept of using a Hai Leng Ong sea dragon as the mascot was the idea of Phanuwat Sa-ngaem, a teacher at the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts at Phuket Rajabhat University.

Mr Phanuwat came up with the idea from a Phuket legend that said Phuket Island was a golden sea dragon emerging from the Indian Ocean.

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PROPERTY

Knowing too much



Property Watch

By Bill Barnett

TRAVEL today all too often centers on a nasty case of "TMI", more commonly called "too much information".

While it doesn't rank up there with the data gathered by US Homeland Security, the information provided by online travel portals today in most cases crosses into overload.

Traveling should entail a bit of suspense, drama and mystique, much like that notable quote about it all being about the journey and not the destination.

Alfred Hitchcock's classic film *The Man Who Knew Too Much* sums up the dilemma well. Spying, intrigue, assassinations and international backdrops create delightful confusion.

Once the internet really kicked in, the long tail of selection and customization wrapped around our personae like an Amazon python coiling around its prey before slowly devouring it.

Sure, sites like TripAdvisor and SeatGuru and those nifty GPS functions in smartphones along with Google Places are fun, but the question is: Does knowing too much take the fun out of travel?

"Augmented reality" (aka "AR") is one of the buzz concepts of the moment that has finally reached

hotels through Room77.com.

On view through Room77's AR are the locations of rooms, views and even classifications of the good, the bad and the very, very bad.

One of the credos of the site is that all rooms are not created equal, and anyone who has spent a night next to an elevator or on the next floor down from a disco can vouch for that.

From a marketing standpoint, the next logical step for the hotels that are well-known as late adopters of marketing trends is to follow the budget airlines and to charge

premium prices for the better rooms.

Those airline guys always seem to be leading the way when it comes to dynamic pricing and the like, putting wizened hoteliers to shame – but not many airlines

make the profits hotels do. So there. It has always puzzled me why property pricing in Phuket has not been approached the same way. If the unit is a dog, price it accordingly. Viewing a developer's list of unsold units in Phuket is a bit like glossing over a clearance sale advertisement for obsolete consumer goods.

Hotels continue to be a backward industry in love with tags, be they names, star ratings, tiers (upper upscale, anyone?) or room categories.

Of course, this works both ways. If you are told at check-in that your room at a beach resort



TRAVEL PORTAL: Room77.com



IGNORANCE IS BLISS: Discover holiday hideaways on your own, without the help of travel websites, and you may surprise yourself. Photo: Jon Hadley

has a partial garden view, presume it will suck big time.

So how micro can pricing go? That's an interesting question, and the internet seems to have no limitations – except for getting a WiFi signal in Phuket, where people scream into their mobile phones, "Can you hear me?"

No I can't, and please never call again. You can send me an email, but of course a coconut tree just fell over the fiber-optic cable and I can't get online.

Anyway, back to the subject, all this presents the danger of everyone becoming soulless disciples of these customized doodles and dazzles made available through the internet. People can now book saying they want room 44 or else they won't be visiting your establishment.

Which is fine except if every-

one wants the same thing. In that case, you might as well knock down the wall and start selling beds in the Superdome. Of course, we all remember those harrowing pictures of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and how mob rule did just that.

As I look to wrap up this article I look at the movie poster for the Hitchcock flick mentioned earlier and can't help but be amused by the tagline, "A little knowledge can be a deadly thing".

For me, trains, planes and hotels remains the last bastion of the unknown and I happily enough put my head under the covers and take a spin on the Fortuna Wheel of Fate.

Bill Barnett is Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks and can be contacted through www.c9hotelworks.com.

In brief...

Millionaires Mile Ultra villa project ready

PHUKET'S luxury villa estate market will see a series of new impressive launches this year.

First up is the exclusive Chingari Estate on Millionaires Mile in Kamala, which is next to another high-end development, Waterfall Bay.

Chingari Estate houses three six-bedroom estate homes priced from US\$7.5 million. They are being released in an initial tranche by the developer with west coast ocean views. Leading Hong Kong design house MAP Architecture is at the head of the creative team.

With internal areas of 700 square-meters and total built up area of just over 1500sqm, the villas are placed on two rai lots.

Meanwhile it's understood that Allan Zeman is set to take his "Andara Effect" a step further with another new project which will be debuting soon at the top side of the marketplace.

Istana blooms

LUXURY Nai Thon development Istana Phuket have won three Asia Pacific accolades at the Bloomberg-sponsored International Property Awards in Shanghai.

The awards qualify the project for inclusion in the global "World's Best" event, to be held in London in December.

Istana has 10 villas for sale priced from US\$4.25 million to a seven-bedroom US\$8.45mn property.

Aleenta launches Grand Villa Santis

GREATER Phuket's upscale Aleenta Resort has launched Grand Villa Santis as part of their private collection offering.

Located along Phang Nga's Natai Beach, the four-bedroom, 1,000-square-meter property comes complete with its own pool.

Special rates start from 26,500 baht a night from now through September.

Aleenta, which is operated by Akaryn Hospitality Management Services, currently have two new resorts coming up in Koh Samui.

Do you have any breaking news about Phuket property? Email property@phuketgazette.net

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Calling in the lawyers

BUYING property typically requires investment of a considerable amount of money, so a wary buyer usually wishes to keep his interests protected. Whether you are a first-time buyer or have already bought a property in Thailand, it is always advisable to consult with professionals first before money changes hands or sales documentation is signed.

Doing your own research and sharing knowledge with other buyers is important, however, it cannot substitute the assistance by professionals such as real estate agents, law firms, tax advisors, construction specialists or surveyors.

Depending on the nature and complexity of a real estate transaction, the location and condition of the property and a buyer's personal requirement on a safe and smooth transaction, a buyer should carefully determine what assistance of specialized and experienced professionals, who are experts in their specific area of practice, he wishes to seek.

Relying on advice provided by a layman or a person who may even have an undisclosed interest

in a buyer, proceeding without diligently investigating in the property and its underlying legal structure, can have painful and costly consequences.

Surely, a real estate agent would be the right address to "start off" when considering investing in real estate in Thailand. Agents usually have access to a broad variety of listed properties which may fulfil your personal requirements with regards to budget, location, design, pricing, potential rental return or predicted appreciation regardless of whether you are looking for a second home, pure investment, or a combination of both.

This will save you time when undertaking your market analysis and avoid frustration which

Property Legal By International Law Office

buyers often reach when looking for property on their own.

A responsible agent will direct you to all the people and services a buyer may require to complete a transaction smoothly and safely. These include: recommending independent legal counsel as well as other professionals such as construction specialists, surveyors or a tax advisor. An agent may be able to assist further, particularly at an early stage of the negotiations between buyer and seller which could help to get, and keep, the ball rolling.

Your legal counsel should be a

local or international law firm possessing a solid background and experience in this specific field of real estate acquisition.

Your legal advisor will help you to understand the different ownership structures and should assist in, or perform, all the necessary acts required to make your property purchase sound, solid and legal. Your legal advisor can perform the necessary due diligence on the land and property and draft or review the required legal documents needed to facilitate the transaction. In addition, negotiate with your seller for favorable terms and procure the title transfer.

Consultation of a tax advisor shall provide you with an understanding of potential tax

liabilities which may occur in connection with the acquisition, use and resale of the property. In addition, annual and ongoing property taxes as well as taxes payable on rental income should be taken into account.

A construction specialist and surveyor should be engaged to perform a physical due diligence of the property, investigate in the state of the structure and verify compliance of the property with local building regulations, height restrictions, building permit and environmental regulations.

Whenever buying property in Thailand, the same basic commercial and legal principles that apply to every property investment anywhere in the world should be considered.

Appointment of professionals who have extensive experience and expertise is prudent and will make the difference in terms of protection of your interests as a property buyer.

This article has been written by International Law Office Patong Beach Co Ltd. Contact Michael Greth, Consultant E:michael@ilo-phuket.com or T:076-2221915 for more information.

Photo: David Levitz

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Plant life in the dry lane

Most Phuket gardeners probably don't give growing catci a second thought. Here's why they should...

ALTHOUGH *Euphorbias* are one of the largest genera of succulents, cacti (*cactacea*) are certainly the best known. There are plenty of them in Thailand, even though most of them come from the Americas.

Think of all those cowboy films with Mexican bandits and gun-toting outlaws, framed by a parched landscape of prickly pears. They are indeed abundant and much-loved in the Americas.

In common with our friend the crown of thorns, most *cactacea* are both succulent and spiny.

That is not to say they are normally edible, although both the dragon fruit and the prickly pear most certainly are. Succulents have stems, which store water. Most are also photosynthetic, which means they produce chlo-



Gardening

By Patrick Campbell

rophyll in the same way most leaved plants do.

Their waxy coating also means that they are very efficient at retaining water. If you cut a stem off it may well survive until the next rain-burst. The spines are another matter however. They are there mainly for protection against would-be predators in a harsh environment. They also provide a degree of shade and help increase the humidity around the plant.

Cacti are one of nature's oddities, but make no mistake, they are perfectly adapted to life in the dry lane. Because most of them have



THIRSTY: The 'giganteae carnegiea' can soak up 3,000 liters of rainwater in 10 days. Photo: Kevin Dooley

thickened, often cylindrical bodies, their capacity for water absorption and retention is amazing. It has been calculated that a super-large cactus such as *giganteae carnegiea*, can soak up 3,000 liters of rainwater during a 10 day period. After all, that may be the only rain it gets for six months.

This ability means that most cacti enjoy long periods of dormancy, when they more-or-less hibernate. This is excellent news for the drought-prone garden, or for the dozy gardener who can't be bothered watering.

Cacti vary enormously in size and shape. The largest can grow to 15 meters, though most are much smaller. Some are perfect for rockeries, or for small containers.

Many are cultivated and sold as house plants. There are two important considerations to be made when growing cacti. Firstly, make sure that they have plenty of sand in their soil mix, since Cacti require a growing medium rich in minerals and too much organic matter will not be appreciated. Secondly, never over-water. If you do, your plant will almost certainly rot.

One cactus worth mentioning here is the wax rose (*pereskia bleo*), also known as *kuu lab phu*



The 'pereskia bleo' cactus grows well in Phuket. Photo: Arrai Belli

kaam in Thai. It has the plant's characteristic spines – and particularly nasty ones at that – but in some ways it is not a typical cactus because it has leaves, and assumes the form of an open and woody shrub. Moreover, its flowers are attractive and by no means inconspicuous. Bright orange in color, they resemble a single rose.

Glossy, green and conical seed heads are another distinctive feature. The wax rose will drop most of its pale green leaves at this time of year, but it is pretty tough. A vigorous grower, it can reach four meters in height. It prefers a sunny location, and like all members of the cactus clan, it does best in dryish soil. It won't, however,

tolerate bone-dry conditions for too long; its leaves will turn yellow and drop off. And if it gets too much water, the new growth will be top-heavy and brittle.

The rose cactus or *pereskia grandiflora* is from the same branch of the cactus family. It produces large clusters of pink flowers, which rarely bloom at the same time, and has dark green leaves. Heavily armored, it is sometimes used in Thailand as a natural barrier. If you decide to employ it as a hedge, remember that it will withstand a certain amount of clipping and trimming. Both are good, reliable choices for your garden, and both can be easily propagated from cuttings.

Tip of the week

Galangal spice

EVERYONE has heard of ginger, last week's spice, but galangal (*alpinia galanga*) is not so well known outside Asia. But to Thais, *kha* (as it is known in Thai) is just as important, and the sour soup called *tom yam* would be unthinkable without it.

What's more, it comes from the same zingiber family.

The rhizomes are less knobbly, and a paler pink than those of ginger, but there is no mistaking their extreme and unique spiciness. It is

too pungent to be eaten raw.

Galangal is very easy to grow. The quickest way is to put a couple of roots directly into moist soil, with the reddish stems protruding above ground.

These rhizomes are always available in your local fresh market.

It grows fast and looks attractive; my plant has stems almost two meters high. You can split the roots up in order to use a portion for cooking, or to start a new plant.

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LAND IN PATONG

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NEW VILLA FOR SALE

3 bedrooms, office/laundry room, 3 bathrooms, 2 of which are en-suite. Open-plan living area with western kitchen, garden, car parking, pool, sala. Price: 12 million baht. Tel: 087-265 0118. Email: ant_p_clark@yahoo.co.uk

4 RAI 2 NGAN
64SQ WAH

For sale. In Rawai, near Shell Museum, with 80m front. Price: 7.5 million baht per rai. Tel: 089-731 0283. Email: namjai.land@csloxinfo.com

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GOLF VIEW LAND
IN KATHU

For sale: 17 rai with a view of Loch Palm golf course, connects to main road, Nor Sor 3 Gor. Price: 75 million baht. Tel: 089-724 7211 (English). Email: info@botanvillage.com

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3-bedroom house (53 sq wah) near the Heroines' Monument. 2 bathrooms, 3 aircons, telephone & internet, curtains, kitchen and full landscaping. Price: 2.95 million baht (negotiable). Contact owner. Tel: 080-520 2989. Email: pakapoms@yahoo.com

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2 bedrooms on top floor. Freehold. North Patong. Price: 9.7 million baht. Also available for rent. Tel: 086-276 5117. For photos please email to jihshand@gmail.com

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In Land & Houses Park Phuket. 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, fully furnished. Price: 6.9 million baht. Tel: 081-606 2284.

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**LAND AT
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- Manage and coordinate ongoing projects, estimate construction costs and prepare budget, quality control management

Required Qualifications:

- Male, not over 45 years old. Southerner is preferred
- 7 years experience in construction management, or project management
- Strong planning and leadership skills, systematic thinking, and interpersonal skills

Senior Property Consultant / Property Consultant (Phuket)

Responsibilities:

- Responsible for property resale and leasing and other work assigned from the supervisor.

Required Qualifications:

- 1-5 years experience in property resale or leasing.

All position required:

- Thai Nationality
- Fluent in English
- Own car and driving license will be an advantage.
- Able to work 6 days a week.



Plus Property Company Limited.
Please send resume to nattha@sansiri.com, chuthamas@sansiri.com

For more information please contact 0 2201 3173, 0 2201 3072

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HOTEL - ACCOUNTING - SALES - IT - WEB DESIGN - F&B
www.KARON-PHUKET-HOTELS.com/JOB.htm

British International School, Phuket

British International School, Phuket is looking for candidates to fill positions in the following areas:

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- **System Maintenance**
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 - Bachelor's Degree in Education or a related field
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 - New graduates are welcomed
 - Good communication and interpersonal skills
 - Good command of written and spoken English
 - Proficiency with Microsoft Office (computer knowledge)
 - Good team player and service minded
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 - Thai National
 - Bachelor's Degree in a related field
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 - Good command of spoken and written English
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 - Loves to take care of children

Benefits : uniform, group insurance, provident fund and etc.



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Our Phuket office is looking for a Sales Executive to boost the sales team. Selling both new and used, power and sailing boats, you will work within a small sales team. We require someone who is highly motivated, customer oriented and results driven. You will have either previous marine sales experience, or strong sales results from another industry – perhaps even selling luxury products.

You will be based in Phuket and will be paid a base salary, uncapped commission, as well as paid annual leave and medical insurance.

Candidate Requirements

- An interest in, or current strong knowledge, of the marine industry.
- More than 3 years of direct sales experience, with the ability to close sales.
- Good negotiator.
- Computer literate.
- Very well organized, able to work in a fast pace environment and multi task.
- Ability to work without supervision or guidance.

Interested candidates should email their resume (English) in MS Word format/PDF to hr@simpsonmarine.com.

Only short-listed candidates will be notified. Applicants not invited for an interview within 2 weeks, should consider their applications unsuccessful.

All information received will be kept in strictly confidential and only for employment-related purposes.



Mövenpick Hotel & Resort

Mövenpick Resort & Spa Karon Beach Phuket Mövenpick Residences Laguna Beach Phuket

Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts, an international hotel chain of Swiss origin, is expanding its portfolio in Asia. With the constant growth, we created a demand for professional, creative and proactive employees and are looking for you to grow with our dedicated and progressive team.

Mövenpick Resort & Spa Karon Beach Phuket, centrally located on Karon Beach, features 359 rooms and villas.

Mövenpick Residences Laguna Beach Phuket, located on Bangtao beach, with 39 exclusive suites and penthouses, is the perfect place for families and friends to enjoy a holiday.

Spa Manager (Karon based)

- Holding a spa management certificate.
- At least 3 years experience in similar position in a 5 star hotel.
- Excellent English communication skills.
- Thai national, aged between 30 – 45.

Executive Chef (Bangtao based)

- At least 3 years experience in a 5 star hotel in same capacity.
- Creative, innovative and can deliver high quality product.
- Good command of English.

Executive Housekeeper (Bangtao based)

- At least 3 years experience in 5 star hotel properties in same capacity.
- Good command of English communication skills.
- Thai national, aged 35-45.

Restaurant Manager / Assistant F&B Manager (Bangtao based)

- At least 3 years experience in a 5 star hotel in same capacity
- Excellent command of English.

Effectively manage the restaurants by ensuring the following:

- Proactive and self-starter.
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Mövenpick Resort & Spa Karon Beach Phuket

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E-mail: kasama.nindaeng@moevenpick.com
Website: www.moevenpick-phuket.com

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We are seeking an energetic and proactive full-time office secretary/administrative assistant. Candidates must have good English and computer skills. Tel: 086-004 3008. Email: angius@villasuksan.com

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Cook wanted for a private house in Surin. Must have good spoken English and a driving license. Good salary and benefits. Please contact Chitchamon. Tel: 086-282 9449 (English & Thai). Send email: ct.trakarn@gmail.com

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Real estate agency requires an office secretary. Experience is a plus. Tel: 076-384664, 087-898 8647 (English). Email: mundo@ayudhya.net

50,000 BAHT PER MONTH

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INDIGO PEARL Phuket

Indigo Pearl. An award winning, stylish, 5-star, distinctive-design resort touching Nai Yang Beach, Phuket, set amidst lush tropical gardens, 3 pools and postmodern art pieces of Tin Mining Past.

The resort is currently seeking professionals who share enthusiasm for creating a one-of-a-kind experience for our guests. Highly talented individuals are invited to apply for the following positions:

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Training Manager

- Experienced in developing and delivering training programs in any service or hospitality environment
- Thai National with 3 to 5 years experience in a similar position at 5-star hotels
- Energetic, dynamic, and open minded
- Outgoing personality and passionate in developing people
- Possesses leadership and organization skills

English Teacher

- Thai National with 3 to 5 years experience in a similar position at 5-star hotels
- Energetic, dynamic, and open minded
- Outgoing personality and passionate in developing people with organization skills

Interested candidates are invited to write in with full resume, stating present and expected salaries, and enclosing a recent photograph to the address below

Indigo Pearl: Nai Yang Beach & National Park, Phuket 83110, Thailand
Tel: +66 (0)76 327 006, (0)76 327 015 Fax: +66 (0)76 327 338-9
E-mail: recruitment@indigo-pearl.com
www.indigo-pearl.com

LOOKING FOR NANNY

Thai family is seeking a nanny who can speak Chinese to our kids. Full or part time. Live out. Good salary. Tel: 089-159 3239.

NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHER

Female Caucasian to teach class of 10,12 and 3-5 years old children in Chalong. Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm. Tel: 080-624 7060. Email: buds.span@yahoo.com

VIDEO PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Travel video production assistants wanted by Internet Travel TV station based on Phuket. Open training opportunities for beginners with knowledge of Photoshop or basic video cutting software. Flexible working hours and a good learning attitude is important for the internet multimedia work. Tel: 082-323 9315 (English), 082-784 7271 (Thai). Email: andre@web62.com For further details, please see our website at www.web62.com

TEACHER AT PSU IN HAAD YAI

Prince of Songkhla University, International College, Hat Yai Campus is looking to filled English-speaking lecturer position in social science. Please email cover letter and resume to mark.v@psu.ac.th

STAFF NEEDED

One maid for cleaning and one motorbike mechanic/repairman. Experience needed. Tel: 083-634 5772 (English & Thai). Email: info@husiphuket.se

MAID AND GARDENER (THAI)

Wanted, with hotel experience for farang-owned house in Rawai. Tel: 081-797 7898.

TEACHER WANTED

Charlemprakiatsomdet-prasinakarin School Phuket is looking for a native English speaker to teach computer and English classes. Please email a cover letter and CV to swpk_mlp@yahoo.com Contact Clarke for more details at tel: 084-446 3049.

WEB DESIGNER

Experienced web designer required in Ao Nang, Krabi. Thai national only. Tel: 081-077 5698. Please send email to: rbysouth@hotmail.com

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Paralegal services. Qualifications:
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- Good attitude and works well under pressure
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Required for live in-job near Boat Lagoon. Great salary. Please contact for more info. Tel: 080-208 7454.

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Looking to recruit English speaking Thais for our marketing company in Chiang Mai. For more info. Tel: 053-282079 or 085-473 4207 (English). Email: sastravelmarketing@gmail.com

SWEDISH STAFF

Part-time work for Swedish-speaking female 20-30 years old. Send your CV in English to rainforestjob@gmail.com

TEACHER WANTED

QSI Phuket has a vacancy for the position of teacher. For children 5-6 years old. Requirements: native English speaker with BA in education, proper certification and experience. This is not an ESL position. Write to alan-siporin@qsi.org and lbhaber@aol.com

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3-person sit-on-top Kayak. Includes 3 padded nylon seats and 2 paddles. Red, white and blue. Good condition. Price: 20,000 baht. Tel: 076-326867, 087-275 3614 (English). Fax: 076-326867. Email: tradexpat@hotmail.com

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For sale baby chair. Tel: 085-069 0938. Email: nnorthwo@hotmail.com

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FOR SALE**

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**ROOFTOP RESTAURANT
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Soi Tiger. 1.6 million baht. Tel: 082-810 9670.

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A fully established Phuket-based business for sale. Very profitable, easy to manage, non-tourism related. High expansion potential. Interested? Email: db1@europe.com

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English Speaking Meetings
Mission Hospital - Phuket City
Wed and Sun 7 PM

Bangkok Hospital - Phuket City
Fri 7 PM

Patong Hospital - Patong
Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat, Sun 17 PM

Green Man Restaurant - Chalong
Tue 1 PM

Stereo Lab Restaurant - Surin Beachfront
Mon and Thur 9:30 AM

Scandinavian Meeting - Karon
Tue and Sat 7 PM (Nov-April)
Tel: 088-9440460 SWE, 085-4647450 SWE

For info on other Thailand AA
meetings inquire @ 02-23118300
(for Thai language press 3)
www.aathailand.org or
email: info@aathailand.org

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- **Julapan Stationery** (Chao Fa East Rd) Tel: 076-282254
- **KL Mart** (Patak Rd, Chalong Circle) Tel: 076-280400
- **Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe** (Fisherman's Way Business Center, Chaofa East Rd) Tel: 076-282403

PATONG

- **Taurus Travel** (Aroonsom Plaza) Tel: 076-344521-2
- **Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe** (Aroonsom Plaza) Tel: 076-290468
- **Deli Supermarket** (Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd) Tel: 076-342275

PHUKET CITY

- **Earth Language Training Centre School** (Phang Nga Rd) Tel: 076-232398
- **Sin & Lee** (Thalang Rd) Tel: 076-258369

CHERNG TALAY

- **Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe** (main entrance road to Laguna Phuket) Tel: 076-324313
- **Chaba Supermarket** (at the Laguna gateway) Tel: 076-325586

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- **The Network property office** (Saiyuan Rd) Tel: 076-613173

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- **EuroStyle Tailors** (Luang Por Chuan Rd) Tel: 076-396911

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14	L	E	E	R	15	R	O	T	O	R	16	A	L	I	I
17	M	A	N	A	18	A	N	T	R	E	19	R	E	E	L
20	O	L	D	M	21	O	N	E	Y	22	I	S	S	U	E
23	S	E	E	R	24	B	O	N	E	25					
26	S	U	S	H	27					28	H	E	M	O	C
29	A	T	H	O	L	30	C	E	S	A	R	31	A	A	R
32	L	E	A	P	33	W	A	X	E	N	34	A	L	L	A
35	A	R	R	36	W	A	S	A	T	37	L	U	T	E	S
38	D	O	D	39	D	E	R	E	D	40	A	B	A	S	E
41	E	L	M	S	42	G	U	R	U	43					
44	C	A	V	I	L	45	B	L	I	S	S	F	U	L	
46	O	R	E	M	47	P	A	E	A	N	48	S	I	L	O
49	M	I	L	O	50	A	L	E	R	T	51	O	L	A	V
52	A	D	D	S	53	T	I	N	E	A	54	N	E	N	E



ORANGES AND APPLES: Surakul Stadium was awash with green and orange as patriotic supporters from both sides turned out in droves.



Volcano rising. Photos: Apinun Saithong

FC Phuket buried by Buriram

By Neil Quail

FC PHUKET'S Thai Premier League Division One campaign faced a trio of blows last Sunday at Surakul Stadium.

A 3-0 drubbing by second place Buriram FC was the first of their woes, which was met with vocal outrage from fans who had stayed to the end of a highly disappointing game.

Any realistic prospect of promotion to the Sponsor Thai Premier League was also lost on Sunday evening. FC Phuket with just 19 points have slumped to ninth position after 13 games.

In actual fact, 14 games have been played, the outstanding game being that against Bangkok FC which was rained off when the score stood at 5-2 (to Bangkok FC). The remaining seven minutes of the game will be played in coming months and will most likely lead to another loss

for FC Phuket's point tally.

The defeat on Sunday also saw the last stitch of respect and attachment between angry "Hulks" and Coach Surachai Jirasirichote unravel.

FC Phuket started the game in a lively fashion and were unfortunate not to have goals from Nirun Punthong, Sarach Yooyen and Poramut Krongbarisut.

Former FC Phuket striker Chakrit Rawanprakhone also had several chances for his new club, but his shooting radar was definitely out of sync.

It took 36 minutes of play before the deadlock was broken when Chakrit superbly controlled a long pass from the left side of midfield, receiving it five meters outside FC Phuket's penalty area.

Pushing the ball onto his left foot, Chakrit curled his shot towards the left post, but its initial line seemed to be taking the ball wide.

FC Phuket's goalkeeper

Team	P	Pts
BBCU	15	39
Buriram	15	36
Chainat	15	29
BUFC	15	28
Songkhla	14	26
Saraburi	15	22
PTT Rayong	14	21
Rajapracha	15	21
Phuket	13	19
J.W. Rangsit	14	18

Theerawat Pinradub was rooted to the spot as the ball glanced off a retreating defender and then the upright and into the net for Buriram's opening goal.

The visitors doubled their advantage in the 67th minute when another searching cross, this time from the right, was awkwardly cleared skyward by Nene Bi Tre Sylvestre.

Deft control of the descending ball allowed Chakrit, guarded by two defenders inside the penalty area, to showboat his close control with four touches and an overhead kick.

His shot was bravely charged-down, but the loose ball was volleyed home by Somjed Sathaboot following in from the right edge of the penalty box.

In the fourth minute of added time, spectators were offered some last-minute controversy when Theerawat was deemed to have obstructed Buriram's Olivier Ndjoua and a penalty was awarded.

Theerawat argued that Ndjoua's studs were showing going for the ball and refused to take his place in the goal. FC Phuket's goalkeeper was eventually coaxed into facing

Rattapol Piyawutsakul's spot kick, but the disgruntled goalkeeper went the wrong way, diving to his left as the ball flew past his right hand.

Three goals and three points to the visiting "Volcanoes" which sees them safely in second place.

Big Bang Chulalongkorn University FC and Buriram FC top the league with 39 and 36 points respectively after 15 games, leaving Phuket's new coach, Sompong Wattana the task of escaping from mid-table mediocrity.

Surachai Jirasirichote faced FC Phuket supporters at the end of the match and announced his resignation, saying pressure had built since the 2-2 draw with Customs FC and this latest result confirmed it was time to end his tenure at FC Phuket.

FC Phuket will next play Air Force United, currently in 12th place, at their home ground (Thupateme Stadium) in Rangsit. The game will kick off at 6pm on June 5.

New coach: 'Three wins or I won't stay on'



DETERMINED: Coach Sompong (left) with Vice President Pradit Sarngjan.

NEW FC Phuket Coach Sompong Wattana vowed he would quit after three matches if results didn't go his way.

At a press conference at Surakul Stadium on Tuesday, he was introduced to FC Phuket staff and players by the football club's Vice President Pradit Sarngjan.

Sompong, 53, is a graduate of Physical Education from Srinakharinwirot University in Songkhla Province. He comes with a decade of international experience with the Thai national

team from 1979 to 1989, a time that includes victories at two South East Asian Games.

Coaching began for Sompong at Thai Port FC in 2006. Three years later he moved to Customs FC for one season. Last year he took charge of Ayutthaya FC. And before his move to FC Phuket, Sompong was at the helm of Rajvithee FC in division two of the Thai league. Having been in charge for 11 games Sompong's record with the Bangkok-based club stood at seven

wins, three draws and one loss.

He also worked on the staff at C-License training for Ajarn Charnwit Polcheewin.

Phuket FC Vice President Pradit Sarngjan said, "I expect that Coach Sompong will help us achieve our goal of promotion to the Sponsor Thai Premier League."

FC Phuket Manager Narubas Aryupong said, "Our goal is to get to the Thai Premier League, but our team is in ninth place, so the task will be a difficult one. We needed to change the coach and maybe add some new players."

"We don't count our previous appointment as a mistake. It's just that things need to change," Narubas added.

Coach Sompong said, "I am now a southern resident and as such I want to take FC Phuket to the top flight. For me, I hold discipline as key to success. Discipline will lead to smooth relationships between coach, players, staff and team executives. Players need to practice at 100 per cent. They need to know that they

are not allowed late nights, to drink or smoke. The team has physical weakness. Some players cannot manage a full 90 minutes. This is an area we will focus on and improve," he added.

"It is very difficult take over this position after 13 matches have already passed.... If the team performs badly over the next

three matches in a row, I will accept that I am not the right man for the job and resign. It is a normal situation for a professional coach," Sompong said.

At 5pm, after the press conference, Coach Sompong lead a squad practice session at Surakul Stadium.

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Sport

Royal Thai Police mug the Roosters for Rugby 10s Cup

By Neil Quail

THREE days of scintillating rugby ended last Sunday with an explosive Heineken Phuket International 10s final which starred last year's winners, the Kriel Roosters from South Africa, and the Royal Thai Police Club (RTPC).

Spectators crammed into Karon Stadium in anticipation of attacking rugby with both teams having pillaged a combined 353 points over 12 games during the tournament.

Evidently the Police team had carried out a thorough investigation of their opponents, and from the start of the game Roosters' attempts to break out of their own half was met with brutal resistance. In the fourth minute a two-man pursuit following a chip into space ended with a try under the posts for RTPC.

Cooled up within their 50 meter line, the Roosters began to make mistakes, and in the closing minutes of the first half, the long legs of the law found an avenue to dash 40 meters along the left touch line which put RTPC 12-0 ahead.

South African tensions were beginning to show, and Roosters' Willouw Goosen saw red before being shown yellow by referee Ricco Yeung for an assault on a Police player.

Second-half scoring began in the third minute and with the Roosters briefly napping, RTPC were quickest to get their hands on the ball after a scrappy chase to the try line.

Joe Naal offered a sliver of hope for a Roosters' comeback in the sixth minute by delivering a bone crunching hand-off which caught the Police defense flat-footed as he sped down the right wing to put the first points up for the South Africans.



HEARTS ON THEIR SLEEVES: Asia Center Foundation Director Roelien Muller (center) with charitable team representatives. Photos: Dean Noble

Any hopes of a Roosters' rally were shot down immediately after the restart. RTPC used their weapon of choice, and again kicked over the fatigued Roosters' line.

Johan Van der Walt, covering at full back, charged for the descending ball, but the indecision whether to catch or tackle left the young South African stranded, and he could only watch as RTPC ran in try number four.

The coup de grace was provided by RTPC's scrum half, Somsak Mitluk who led a raid into the Roosters 22m area and capped his player of the tournament performance with the final try.

A score of 31-5 gave a deserved victory to the RTPC and the title of 13th Heineken Phuket

International 10s Champions.

The Phuket 10s not only gave spectators and players a fantastic three days of entertainment, but also raised vital funds for the Asia Center Foundation (ACF), a charity organization working for disadvantaged children in Phuket since 2002.

Many of the rugby teams sponsor children cared for by the foundation while others donated cash during the event. Members of Old Bangkok Bangers RFC cycled 957 kilometers from Bangkok to Phuket in aid of the foundation.

They raised 410,000 baht, and the three day 10s tournament increased that amount by 511,000 baht.

To show their appreciation, children from the foundation performed a dance routine in front of the capacity crowd at Karon Stadium.

Players and spectators applauded the youngsters for the colorful display which was followed by official presentations of the funds raised to Roelien Muller, Director of ACF.

"The tournament has been another incredible success for the children of ACF and rugby. Over 100 children will have the opportunity of an education and a future as a result of the 2011 Phuket Rugby 10s. On behalf of ACF, I extend our deepest gratitude to Pat Cotter, organizer of the 10s and all the companies, teams and individuals who donated to



LONG ARM OF THE LAW: A Royal Thai Police player clashes with a Rooster.

Phuket International Rugby 10s final placings

Senior Bowl

Winners: Singapore Barbarians
Runners-up: Emirates Flying Muppets

Senior Plate

Winners: Thai Legends
Runners-up: Morrabins Rams

Vets Cup

Winners: Morrabins Rams
Runners-up: Phuket Viagrabonds

Vets Bowl

Winners: Arabian Gulf Legends
Runners-up: Selangor Old Dogs

Vets Plate

Winners: Bucks Stags
Runners-up: Wanderers Wrinklies

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our foundation," said Roelien.

Organizer of the 10s, Pat Cotter said he was pleased with the support the ACF and the tournament received.

"A lot of children are very happy to have their education secured for another year and it also allows us to bring 25 more children into the scheme. The tournament was played in great spirits, once again, with teams from all over the world coming together under the banner of rugby and a worthy cause that is the ACF," he said.

Referee's manager for the tournament, Matthew Oakley MBE, said he has high hopes

for the future of Phuket rugby.

"The Phuket 10s is a great opportunity to 'blood' upcoming referees, and this year saw Hong Kong, Dubai, UK, Japan, Singapore and Thailand represented. It was an excellent final between RTP and the Roosters – the organizers should be proud of their efforts this weekend.

"Youth rugby is going from strength to strength in Phuket and the Vagabonds have a very well organized player pathway scheme in place," he said.

For more information visit W: phuket10s.com or check out phuketgazette.net/sports..

Cooke stumps up for cricket

By Neil Quail

THE Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) will begin construction on June 27 to establish Phuket's first dedicated cricket facility.

Alan Cooke MBE has sponsored the Phuket cricket leagues through his company Island Furniture, and financing this venture will certainly drive the success of his beloved sport.

"The ACG will in a small way do for cricket what the reduction in boat tax did for marine tourism," said Mr Cooke.

Mr Cooke has lived in Phuket since 1986 and served as the island's British Honorary Consul from 2001 to 2008.

Cricket is undeniably the focus of future events, but plans to host other sports such as rugby and field hockey are also being proposed. Within the 10-rai plot the ACG will include a 250 square-meter, two-storey, pavilion-style clubhouse and a synthetic grass wicket, all of which is hoped to be in place for the 2011/2012 Phuket cricket season beginning this November.

The ACG will host its first major event in March 2012 when the Thai Youth Games cricket tournament will help showcase Phuket's new cricket center.

The ground and clubhouse will be maintained by the Phuket Cricket Group (PCG), which is the official umbrella organization for cricket on the island.

Chairman of PCG, Pat Cotter is extremely proud to be involved with cricket at this juncture.

"The ACG will raise cricket in Phuket to another level. We will very soon have a facility that can accommodate international matches and hope to stage Junior World Cup qualifiers. The Asian Cricket Council are very open to



THE ACG CLUBHOUSE: A CGI rendition of structural facilities.

this proposal for the future.

"More players and teams will be attracted to cricket in Phuket now that we have our own pitch and do not have to rely on Municipal grounds.

"The ACG will eventually host festivals and tournaments which will boost the profile of the island as a sports tourism destination and therefore benefit its economy," Pat said.

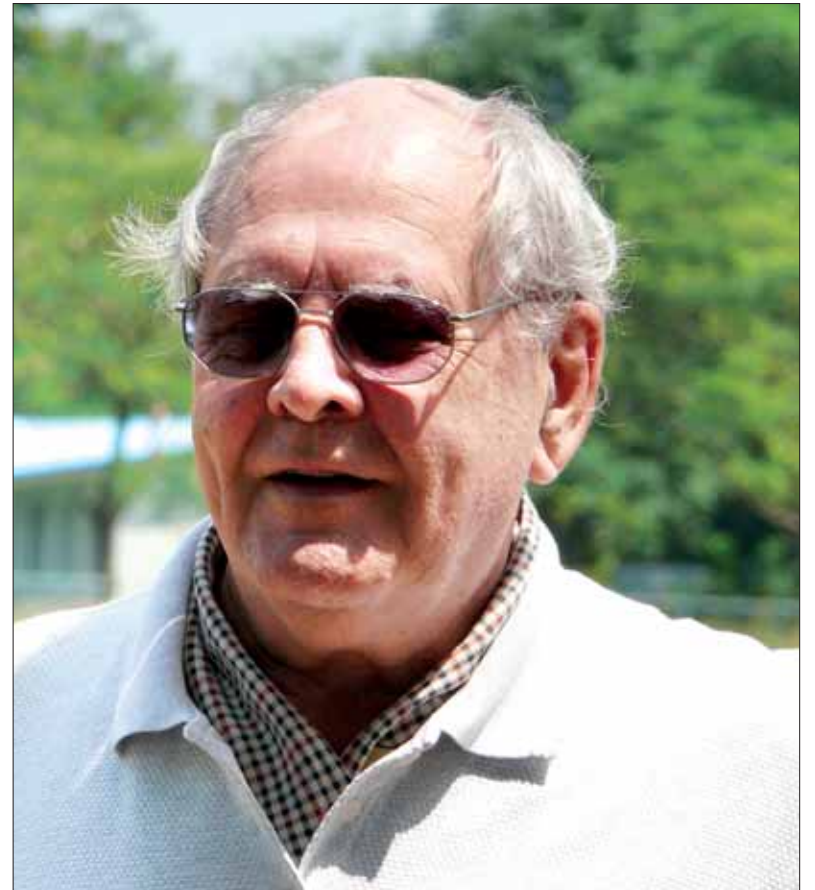
"This is Alan's [Cooke] dream. Cricket is his passion and this his legacy for Phuket," Pat added.

With the PCG Annual General Meeting (AGM) due to be held this week, activities and plans for the new ACG will be high on the agenda.

The PCG will hold its 2011/2012 AGM at The Karon Sea Sands Resort on June 7, starting at 7:30pm. Committee members, players and others interested in the development of cricket in Phuket will meet to review activities over the past 12 months and discuss plans for the upcoming season. The evening's agenda will include elections for key management committee positions, youth

development, coaching, umpiring and fundraising objectives. Anyone interested in cricket on the island is welcome to attend. Refreshments will be available. For information, contact PCG Honorary Secretary Anthony VanBlerk at avanblerk79@gmail.com.

For information on the ACG visit: acgphuket.com



PHUKET CRICKET'S GODFATHER: Mr Alan Cooke MBE. Photo: Neil Quail



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...International Marathon...



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