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INSIDE TODAY

January 5 - 11, 2013

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■ BAAN MON VILLAGERS FIGHT TO PRESERVE ANCESTRAL HOMELAND

Villagers battle Patong tunnel

■ Phuket's first tunnel project threatens to devastate the homes and lives of over 500 Baan Mon residents.

By **Atchaa Khamlo**

WITH a history going back over 200 years, Baan Mon is the "original" Patong community. However the community members, numbering more than 1,000, are now in the front line as they scramble to protect their homes from the construction of the Patong tunnel – Phuket's first road tunnel project.

Baan Mon villagers claim that 90 per cent of residents are strongly against the tunnel project, as they say it will mean the eviction of nearly 500 people.

"We have tried everything to prevent Patong Municipality's tunnel project, including suggesting alternatives such as using 50 Pi Road; being routed past Wat Luang Pu Supha in Chalong; or even creating an extension to the Patong Hill road," Wichan Sawatdirak, a respected former *Kamnan* of Patong, explained to the *Gazette*.

"We are begging them not to build the Patong tunnel because it will devastate the whole Baan Mon community. Besides that, the King's Plaque Monument will be concealed if the elevated tunnel approach road is constructed..."

Continued on Page 4



Not only will hundreds be displaced, the King's Plaque Monument will be concealed if the elevated tunnel approach road is constructed as proposed. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo



**Rohingya
refugees
repatriated**

Full story on Page 3

**More roads will
not fix Phuket's
traffic problems**

GOVERNOR Maitri Inthusut told officials that building new roads or upgrading existing thoroughfares was not the solution to reducing Phuket's traffic congestion.

"The only way to fix this problem permanently is to promote the use of mass transportation," he said.

Full story on Page 2

**Metered taxis go
toe-to-toe with
'regular taxis'**

AN ALTERCATION between "regular" taxi drivers and a metered taxi driver on December 26 highlighted the unsolved issue of the taxi turf wars that continue to adversely affect guests to the island, as well as hoteliers.

Full story on Page 5



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This Week



Business

A sweet corn farm produces foodstuff and drinks. **Page 11**



Finance

Giddyup to our guide to investing in 'new frontier' countries. **Page 12**



Tech

Dirty interface? How to keep your computer free of infections. **Page 35**



Explore

Brunching out? Where to go for that bite after brekkie. **Page 41**



Travel

A year cruising the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific region. **Pages 36-37**



Sport

One man's 35,000-mile round-the-world journey. **Page 41**

Saturday



Sunday



Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Bigger roads will not resolve traffic snarls

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

PHUKET Governor Maitri Inthusut has called for officials to ramp up efforts to develop Phuket's pitiful public transport options as the top way of beating the island's ever-increasing traffic congestion.

Speaking at a public seminar at in Phuket Town held by the Phuket Real Estate Association specifically to discuss Phuket's growing traffic jams, Governor Maitri pointed out that the number of cars on Phuket's roads was spiralling critically upwards.

"Phuket has traffic jams simply because we have too many cars and not enough roads. According to figures from the Phuket Land Transportation office, from January 1 to September 30 this year more than 7,000 sedan cars were registered in Phuket. This number does not include other kinds of vehicles," Gov Maitri said.

The national government's first-time car buyer's initiative – offering tax rebates to young people as an incentive to buy their first car – was not helping, Gov Maitri explained.

"Following the first-car purchase policy launched by Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, Phuket might have



Traffic piles up in Thalang. Bigger, better roads are not the solution to traffic congestion, said Phuket Governor Maitri Inthusut. Photo: Gazette file

more than 10,000 new cars on our roads next year," he added.

Building new roads or upgrading existing thoroughfares was not the solution, he said.

"Even if we did build more roads, it is not a permanent solution to reducing traffic congestion. The only way to fix this problem permanently is to promote the use of mass transportation," he said.

Regardless, Lert Padchawee, the deputy director of the High-

ways Department regional office in Krabi, which oversees the Phuket Highways Office operations, said his department had a raft of plans drawn up to alleviate Phuket's traffic woes.

But those plans would cost 30 billion baht to carry out, he said.

"These plans will help fix the traffic problem in Phuket and the Department of Highways is now trying to propose all these projects to the government as 'urgent'," Mr Lert explained.

'Demon drink' rape case proceeds to trial

POLICE confirmed that the Phuket Provincial Public Prosecutor's Office is now in possession of the case notes needed to bring to trial 29-year-old Peerayut Moottamara, who raped an 18-year-old Burmese woman in Phuket in October.

After his arrest, Peerayut, blamed his drunken state for the rape of a work colleague's 18-year-old girlfriend in Chalong.

"The woman was cooking in a makeshift kitchen behind the row of terraced worker flats [that both of them lived in]... I was drinking alcohol earlier in the morning, I was out of control. I saw the woman, who is the girlfriend of a work colleague, at home alone. I



Peerayut said he was 'out of control' from alcohol when he decided to rape the 18-year-old woman. Photo: Gazette file

felt sexually tempted by her and decided to rape her," Peerayut told the *Gazette* the day after the incident.

However, even if the attacker confesses to having raped a person, police will still conduct a rape test so that the scientific results can be added to the report and be used by the prosecutor and judge, Capt Chienchai Duangsuwan of the Chalong Police explained.

The rape test results came back as positive for sexual assault of the 18-year-old woman, Capt Chienchai said.

The police report and all relevant documentation about the case involving confessed rapist Peerayut were handed over to the Public Prosecutor's Office on December 20, he added.

— *Irfarn Jamdukor*



Mr Newwolm smiles as he receives first aid at the scene on Soi Bangla.

'Bottled' within 24 hours

POLICE are searching for the culprit who split open an Irishman's head with a bottle within 24 hours of the tourist landing in Phuket. Trevor Newwolm, 31, was struck by an unknown man on Soi Bangla at about 1:30am on Christmas Eve. After having his head wrapped with bandages, Mr Newwolm was taken to Patong Hospital. "We could not question him since he was really drunk when he was hit," Lt Col Jongserm Preecha of the Patong Police said.

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Rohingya refugees sent home

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

THE 71 Rohingya refugees rescued from an open boat adrift off Phuket on January 1 were deported back to Myanmar within one day of touching Thai soil.

The move to repatriate the refugees, which included women and children fleeing violent persecution in their home state of Arakan in Myanmar, came at the request of the refugees themselves, Phuket Governor Maitri Inthusut announced at a press conference on Wednesday.

However, after the announcement no direct access to the refugees was made available to confirm the assertion.

Phuket Immigration arranged to transport the 71 Rohingya to Ranong, where they were to re-enter Myanmar.

Governor Maitri gave no indication of any dialog taking place between Thai and Myanmar officials over the possible consequences of the refugees' repatriation.

However, Gov Maitri explained to the press that the Thai government considers the Rohingya people as a people in need.

"They are like patients who need treatment. They said they were on their way to Malaysia, but ran out of fuel. They asked us for food and fuel. We gave them 200 liters of fuel for the long journey to Malaysia."

"However, they had already spent almost two weeks at sea... They were exhausted; so instead of risking heading back out to sea to continue their journey, they decided to go back home," Gov Maitri said.

'We were running out of fuel. We needed food and fuel to keep going...'

— **'Rojihun', one of the Rohingya refugees**



Rojihun (in gray shirt, smiling) along with the women and children among the 70 other Rohingya taken into custody were repatriated to Myanmar.

Third Naval Area Commander Vice Admiral Tharathorn Khajitsuwan told the *Gazette* on Wednesday that the boat the refugees were attempting to reach Malaysia in was unsafe to continue their journey.

"We helped them as humanly possible. We served them food and water. Only then did we hand over the case to the relevant departments," V/Adm Tharathorn said.

"If we let them go on the boat, they would likely have been in danger considering the current strong wind and wave conditions in the Andaman. They would not be safe at sea. Also, the boat was not seaworthy," he added.

Soon after being taken into custody on January 1 – and before

his return to Myanmar was announced on Wednesday – 21-year-old Rohingya refugee Rojihun told the *Gazette* that the boat was at sea for 13 days before the Thai authorities took the refugees into custody.

"We cooked on the boat. We sometimes asked for food from fishing boats passing by," he said in English.

"We were going to another country, but the weather forced us to find shelter near Phuket. It was strong wind and waves. Also, we were running out of fuel. We needed food and fuel to keep going," he added.

The United Nations estimates that more than 115,000 people in the Rohingya's homeland in Arakan state are in need of shelter following the outbreaks of sectarian violence in recent months.

Human traffickers jailed for deaths of 54 Burmese

By Isaac Stone Simonelli

FOUR men found guilty of human trafficking were sentenced to between three and 10 years' imprisonment for their involvement in the 2008 "death truck" that left 54 Burmese dead from suffocation inside a sealed seafood container bound for Phuket.

Of the 121 Burmese found in the container heading from Ranong, 17 men, 36 women and one 8-year-old girl were dead.

"They said they banged on the walls of the container, screaming for the driver to stop. When he did and opened the door to the container, he ran away," Pol Col Kraithong Chanthongbai told the *Gazette* on the day of the horrific event: April 10, 2008.

The four men were convicted of gross negligence resulting in death and of breaking immigration laws, an official at Ranong Provincial Court told AFP.

The truck owner, Damrong "Run" Phussadee of Rungruengsup Ltd, was sentenced to 10 years for his involvement.

Jirawat "Ko-Chun" Sopapanwaraku, who owned Choke Jaroen Pier where the migrants arrived by boat, was jailed for six years.

Chalermchai "Joe" Waritjanpleng was sentenced to nine years in prison.

Ms Panchalee "Pueng" Chusung's six-year sentence was halved after she confessed, said an official.

"Three of them were granted



Death truck. Photo: Gazette file

bail between US\$13,000 [about 400,000 baht] and US\$6,500 [about 200,000 baht] while they file appeals," the official said, adding that one defendant had been held in custody after failing to meet bail terms.

The truck driver, Suchon Bunplong, fled the scene, but was later captured and then confessed to his involvement.

He was sentenced to 12 years in prison in 2008, but his confession to trafficking illegal immigrants saw that jail term being halved to six years, Maj Gen Apirak Hongthong, Phuket Police Commander at the time, told the *Gazette* in June 2008.

Those who survived being crammed into the 6m x 2.2m box were detained by police as illegal immigrants and later repatriated to Myanmar.

Relatives of the those killed were to receive 35,000 baht compensation for each relative who died, Suwanna Suwanjutha, director-general of the Rights and Liberties Protection Department, announced in July 2008.

Aldhouse pleads not guilty

BRITISH national Lee Aldhouse has entered a plea of not guilty to murdering former US Marine Dashawn Longfellow in Phuket in 2010.

Aldhouse was presented to the Phuket Provincial Court on December 26 and formally charged with murder. The maximum penalty under the charge is death.


However, public prosecutor Tawan Suknirundorn explained that his understanding was that the death penalty would not be considered as an option in the

sentencing if Aldhouse were found guilty, as he had already confessed to stabbing Mr Longfellow.


"However, on February 18, at 1:30 pm, both parties will be in court to set the trial date," Mr Tawan said. "On that day, the judge will ask Mr Aldhouse again if he chooses to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty."




Lee Aldhouse






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Villagers fight to protect ancestral land

From page 1

"But they didn't listen to us and just continued with the project," he said.

Standing alongside Mr Wichan at the time of the interview was Ban Mon resident Boonlert Winyantikul. Mr Boonlert owns 10 houses in the area and stands to lose not only his family home, but also rent paid by tenants who live in the other houses.

"We even suggested that the tunnel mouth be relocated to the area around Patong Go-Kart Speedway," Mr Boonlert added.

Another local, Thachapol Kamintong, has a four-rai rubber plantation on the hill through which the tunnel will run.

"There are about 80 houses that will be affected by the project. That's about 500 people who will have to move out. And, as yet, they haven't told us how much they will give us for our houses and land," he said.

"You can bet it won't be the same price as the price for land in Patong. The lowest land price there is about 10 million baht per rai.

"Even if they give us the Patong price, we still wouldn't leave because this is our ancestors' land," said Mr Thachapol.

Mid-November, the *Gazette* spoke with Ban Mon villagers about the Transport Minister's meeting, held at the Metropole Hotel on October 5, which, among other topics, touched on the subject of the Patong tunnel project.

"We weren't officially informed that the



Mr Boonlert, standing in front of his home, explained that he would bet against the villagers being paid the going rate of property in the area – 10 million baht per rai. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

meeting was taking place at all," Mr Boonlert said. "We only found out because a member of the hotel's staff who knew me called and told us they were talking about the tunnel project. A few of us then rushed to the hotel to see the minister and explain."

"The public hearings arranged last year failed because all the Ban Mon residents disagreed with the project, so Patong Municipality stopped holding public hearings. We actually stopped our campaign when they told us that the project had been cancelled.

Then we heard about the meeting at the Metropole Hotel," Mr Boonlert explained.

Prateep Aoopatanont, another villager who stands to lose his land if the project goes ahead, said, "It reminds us of a previous meeting at the Metropole Hotel last year. Many of those who attended that meeting had no involvement with the project whatsoever. They were from somewhere else and were just invited to show support for the tunnel project."

Mr Boonlert noted that during the past

couple of years villagers had drafted official letters protesting the project and delivered them to people at various levels of authority.

Mr Thachapol explained that until the meeting in early October he and the other villagers had thought the project had been cancelled.

"It seems that the project is back on, but is now being organized by the Expressway Authority of Thailand (EXAT)," Mr Thachapol said.

"What this means is that the whole process starts at the design stage again. The 40 million baht spent by Patong Municipality on plans, surveys and consultants is wasted. Now more public money will be spent – our money.

"But it doesn't really matter, because when EXAT decides on their 'new project', we will be united in our opposition to the tunnel project.

"We are just waiting to see their next move, so we can plan our response accordingly," Mr Thachapol added.

Mr Wichan agreed, adding that the project would fail in the face of a united village opposition.

Mr Boonlert pointed out that not only would the project destroy the green area environment, but also the community's way of life.

"We need to stay in our ancestral home. If our land is expropriated, what will we do next, and where will we go?" he asked.

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Get tough on illegal taxis: Gazette Poll

IN OUR most recent *Gazette* poll, readers have overwhelmingly voted for local authorities to take a tough approach in tackling illegal taxi drivers on the island.

The poll, launched a month ago, highlighted the recent efforts by the Phuket authorities to bring order to the long-running problem of illegal taxis, and all the violent repercussions they have had on local residents and tourists over the past several years.

In response, the poll asked readers: Should Phuket authorities be lenient in allowing illegal taxi drivers to become legal?

More than 60% of respondents called for illegal taxi drivers to face at least some form of punishment, and nearly 50% demanded that the violators be punished "to the full extent of the law".

A breakdown of the results by respondent groups shows where the difference in philosophies lies. Local Foreign Residents voted heavily for some form of punishment, at 70%, compared with 49% of Thais and 58% of Tourists/Visitors.

The largest group to support leniency was Thai nationals, at 34%, compared with 28% of those who voted as Local Foreign Residents or Tourists/Visitors.

Metered taxis under the gun

By Atchaa Khamlo

A SPAT between "regular" taxi drivers and a metered taxi driver broke out in Patong on December 26, highlighting the ongoing tensions between the two groups. The Patong taxi drivers accused the metered taxi driver of trying to pick up a fare from the street while on "their turf", when all he allegedly did was provide directions to a lost tourist.

Fortunately for the driver of the metered taxi, the Patong drivers capitulated to filing a police complaint. Historically, the repercussions have been much worse.

Life for Phuket's metered taxi drivers continues to be difficult despite the recent agreement allowing them to add 30 more cars to their airport fleet.

An employee of Phuket Taxi Meter (PTM) – who asked not to be identified for safety reasons – said that problems with the local taxi "mafia" continue unabated.

While PTM drivers are free to transport guests from the airport to hotels, specific taxi drivers prevent them from picking up passengers in some resort areas and along the popular Patong Beach road.

Resort areas under such control cited by the PTM employee are "near the Laguna resort complex in Cherng Talay, in front of the Novotel Phuket Resort in



Contrary to tourists' expectations, the island's metered taxis still cannot pick up passengers from the curb. Photos: Gazette file

Patong, at Nai Thon Beach and near Club Med Phuket in Karon."

The problem affects not only metered taxi drivers, but also hotel staff who must explain to guests why the taxi they called never arrived.

Certain taxi drivers have enforced their monopoly in the past by literally pulling passengers out of metered taxi cabs and pressing nails into metered cab tyres.

Past efforts to level the taxi playing field have met with failure: "Previous Phuket governors and commanders tried to solve this problem, which has been ongoing for a long time, but they were not successful. Some hotels also cannot solve this problem for us,"



Phuket Vice Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada has been a driving force behind bringing illegal taxis under regulation.

the PTM staffer said.

The metered taxis are the only taxis in Phuket that use meters to determine fares; other taxis charge flat fees. The PTM staff explained the fare from the airport. "We

charge 100 baht for pick up at Phuket Airport, then 50 baht for the first two kilometers and after that, 7 baht per kilometer."

Taxis that serve the Don Muang and Suvarnabhumi international airports in Bangkok also charge an airport pickup fee, though at 50 baht it is half the price charged in Phuket.

Despite the transparency of the meter-based charges, the PTM staffer said, "Most passengers ask us to charge them a flat fee and not use the meter. However, the fare ends up being nearly the same; usually within about 20 baht of what they would have if they did use the meter."

Regardless of the method ultimately chosen, metered taxis must run their meters to comply with the regulations of the Phuket Land Transportation Office (PLTO).

Passengers at the airport always look for metered taxis because of the cheaper fares. For example: metered taxis from the airport charge 400-450 baht to Phuket City and 500-550 baht to Patong, depending on the hotel. Limousine taxis charge 600 baht to Phuket City and 700 baht to Patong from the airport.

Even at the airport, metered taxis can't seem to catch a break. The PTM booth is located at the end of the terminal, far from the other taxi counters and far from passengers exiting the baggage claim area.

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Prisoners undergoing a surprise search at top-security Khao Bin Prison in February. Photo: The Nation

Guard killed in escape attempt

A PRISON officer's throat was slit by inmates attempting to escape from the top-security Khao Bin Prison in Ratchaburi Province.

Two prisoners were also killed in the incident.

Before his death on December 30, Suthep Joisriket, married with a 10-year-old son, had stumbled on three prisoners trying to hotwire a backhoe, *The Nation* reported.

The men planned to use the vehicle to run down a prison gate and escape, choosing the holiday period because they thought a shortage of staff would make the scheme easier to carry off.

When they realized they had been discovered, they took Mr Suthep hostage at knifepoint.

Officials surrounded the group and a stand-off ensued, but after two hours one of the prisoners handed himself in.

The surrender reportedly upset the other two inmates, who slit Mr Suthep's wrists and throat. Officials raided the building where the hostage was being held and shot the two inmates.

Corrections Department chief Suchart Wong-anantachai said he had applied for royal bathing rites – a great honor – for Mr Suthep, who had been on the job only one year.

Government faces trouble in 2013, opposition warns

AROUND THE nation

THE political opposition claims 2013 will be a tumultuous year for the government if it fails to change several of its key policies and tendencies.

Former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said the Yingluck Shinawatra administration's populist economic policies were damaging the country's finances.

"Everyone has come up with the same analysis – that if the government continues its current economic policies, the country will experience fiscal deficit and become weak economically," Mr Abhisit said, as reported by *The Nation*.

The government, Mr Abhisit said, is expected to increase its use of non-budget spending, something he said showed a lack of financial discipline and would put the country at risk.

"At some point this financial indiscipline will adversely affect confidence in the country and result in a financial and economic crisis. The government should learn from our own history or from what has happened in foreign countries," Mr Abhisit said.

The government's rice-pledging scheme is also a concern, Mr Abhisit said, because farmers had reported that the money was not reaching them but had fallen into the hands of others.

"Moreover, rice exports have



Former Prime Minister Abhisit attacks Yingluck administration's 'populist economic' policies. Photo: The Nation

dropped both in volume and in value, which has caused the country to lose markets, which will be hard to regain," he said.

Meanwhile, former Democrat leader Banyat Bantadtan, now a senior party MP, said the country had a gloomy political outlook as a result of several factors that cropped up last year.

The first was the government's adoption of an authoritarian

approach against political opponents. One such case is the move to press murder charges against Mr Abhisit and senior MP Suthep Thaugsuban. "Legal experts all said that these charges are far-fetched. Another incident was the violent crackdown on protesters who were led by General Boonlert Kaewprasit. History shows that wherever there is oppression, there will be more struggle for jus-

tice," Gen Boonlert said.

The second factor was the rising cost of living and plummeting prices of agricultural produce that have driven street protests by farmers.

The third factor was the push to amend the entire Constitution.

The increasingly arrogant and demanding red-shirt movement could also shape the political landscape, he said.

Sukhumbhand to fight Bangkok election, after Democrat governor enters the race

SUKHUMBHAND Paribatra, the current Bangkok Governor, has finally won the Democrat Party's nomination to stand in the capital's upcoming gubernatorial election.

Mr Sukhumbhand's nomination had appeared in doubt, with former finance minister Korn Chatikavanij almost stealing the chance to represent the party in the February 17 poll.

Mr Sukhumbhand's eventual

selection was the result of infighting within the Democrat Party leadership, a senior party source told *The Nation*.

Democrat Party members are "puzzled" by the party resolution preferring Mr Sukhumbhand over party deputy leader Mr Korn, a candidate seen as more likely

to win the race, the source added.

Former party secretary-general Suthep Thaugsuban, who has been in conflict with current secretary-general Chalermchai Sri-on, is believed to want to disrupt Mr Chalermchai's activities within the party.

Mr Chalermchai is known to be unhappy over what he sees as Mr Sukhumbhand's failure to partici-



Bangkok Governor Sukhumbhand Photo: The Nation

pate in or devote time to the party.

"Suthep lobbied party executives to support Sukhumbhand, who later won the voting 9-6 [over Korn] – despite knowing that the Democrat Party has a smaller chance of winning by nominating Sukhumbhand – simply because he knows that Chalermchai doesn't want Sukhumbhand," the source said.

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By the banks of Aleppo

Rebel funds from black market keeping Syrian currency afloat

SPECIAL REPORT

By Suleiman Al-Khalidi

IN SYRIA's eastern town of Deir al-Zor, a rebel commander flush with cash was swapping his dollars for Syrian pounds to pay fighters battling President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Money changers said that influx of foreign currency earlier this month helped push the pound's black market rate in the impoverished town up by at least 10%.

Hundreds of kilometers away in Damascus, panicked Syrians bracing for more violence sold pounds for dollars, driving the pound, which has lost half its value since the anti-Assad uprising erupted in March last year, the other way.

The events at opposite ends of the country illustrate the contrasting pressures on a currency whose sharp decline has been cushioned by factors including central bank intervention, flows of cash from Assad's friends and foes abroad, and even long term hopes for a wave of foreign investment if Assad were to fall.

By comparison, Iran, Assad's staunchest regional ally, has seen



Free Syrian Army fighters aim their weapons during a gunfight with forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on December 26. The US dollars being used to fund the rebels is floating the Syrian pound. Photo: Reuters

its own currency fall more sharply than Syria's, losing about two-thirds of its value since June 2011 because of Western sanctions imposed over Tehran's disputed nuclear program.

Damascus-based currency dealer Abdullah Abu Saloum, who also has an office in Deir al-Zor, said the rebel fighter's cash was one of many anomalies affecting

Syria's foreign exchange market.

"There was a large quantity of dollars that were offered for sale at an attractive price," he said.

"When problems grow, people decide to buy dollars, not sell dollars, but this is what Syria's conflict is producing – all types of distortions and contradictions."

The pound is trading at 94 to the dollar on the black market com-

pared to 48 before the uprising – a steep fall but less calamitous than might be expected given the devastating loss of state revenues and long-term damage wrought by the conflict.

But rebel funds are taking over in large parts of Syria.

"As long as there are large infusions of dollars coming to the rebels there will not be a total

collapse of the Syrian currency and only if it dries up then we will see a free fall of the currency and we will see increasing dollarization of the economy," said Samir Aita, a prominent Syrian economist who before the uprising was involved in economic decision-making.

Some businessmen see a gleam of hope if the conflict can be brought to a close, either by a political deal or a military victory by the rebels who are backed by wealthy Gulf Arab states.

If Assad fell from power, many expatriate Syrian businessmen who transferred their wealth abroad during 40 years of rule by Assad and his father, late President Hafez al-Assad, would be likely to repatriate some of their savings.

Syria, often cut off from international finance over the past four decades, could also attract significant international inflows of money.

"The important thing is, what solution is on the horizon?" a Damascus investor said. "There will be reconstruction and if one of the solutions is that someone like Qatar says 'we will pick up the bill and inject investments' then the pound will rise."

— Reuters

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Examine Phuket's crackdown culture

THE majority of readers who took part in the *Phuket Gazette's* recent online poll [see page 5] called for local authorities to strictly enforce existing law in regard to illegal "black plate" taxis. Unfortunately, the inability or unwillingness of traffic police to consistently seek out and punish violators virtually guarantees no change in the status quo. Thus, recent efforts by the Phuket Land Transportation Office (PLTO) to fine violators will likely turn out to be just the latest in a long series of come-and-go "crackdowns" that will have little long-term effect.

The past year saw one crackdown after another, with just about every vice or transgression imaginable up for the threat of "special suppression" at some point.

To get the ball rolling, every year starts with a "Seven Days of Danger" road safety campaign that is repeated a few months later during the Songkran holidays. While these campaigns may have a minor effect in lowering road accident death rates during the periods they are in effect, they are no substitute for what is really needed: strict, year-round enforcement of traffic laws, especially in regard to moving violations.

Other crackdowns on the annual calendar are as predictable as the cycles of the moon. In the run up to the annual Vegetarian Festival there is the inevitable crackdown on fireworks, price gouging on vegetables and unhygienic self-mutilation. No major sporting event, such as last year's Euro 2012 competition, would be complete without police threatening to throw the book at anyone caught gambling. Even the most romantic date on the calendar, Valentine's Day, only arrives after stern warnings are issued by district offices to the island's youth about the evils of unprotected sex.

In addition to these annual crackdowns are "event specific" suppression campaigns that follow highly-publicized disasters. A good example from 2012 would be the crackdown on building code violators at the island's nightspots following the Tiger Discotheque inferno in August that claimed four lives.

Of all the crackdowns and campaigns Phuket has witnessed in recent years, perhaps the most effective has been the "100% helmet use" drive that has seen the island become the province with the highest incidence of helmet use among motorbike riders and passengers in the Kingdom. Inexplicably unfortunate, however, is the fact that posters around the island encouraging helmet use bear images of cheap, flimsy helmets rather than the sturdy, full-face variety.

Getting back to the latest crackdown threat, the *Gazette* fully agrees with the majority of readers that there should be little room for leniency in regard to those who illegally operate taxis on the island. The island's image has already been harmed enough by legal taxi and tuk-tuk operators. Thus we wish the PLTO the best of luck in getting police to join in the effort to rid the island's roads of illegal taxis – they are likely going to need it.



Remembering where most were lost

Re: *Gazette online, Tsunami memorial morning service draws 'handful of foreigners', December 26*

It's not surprising so few foreigners showed up. First, there was very little advance publicity, but mainly it was because most foreigners go to the ceremony at Ban Nam Khem, north of Khao Lak, since this commemorates the area where most Thais and foreigners lost their lives and are remembered.

Alan
Gazette forum

Witnessing island road horrors

This is my first time on holiday in Phuket and I have been unfortunate enough to witness two horrific motorbike accidents within two days in Patong.

From what I understand from talking with locals this is a daily occurrence here on the island.

With speeding drivers, poorly maintained roads and a general lack of patience, it's no wonder people are being seriously injured and killed.

I have certainly been put off renting a bike while here on holiday.

K Fairbrother
Phuket

People first, always

Re: *Gazette online, Phuket tourists run for their lives as Patong hotel fire breaks out, December 26*

Kudos to Claude de Crissey for having the right attitude towards how to treat his guests when his own all teak luxury hotel goes up in flames. People first, always. The report indicated that the fire started at an electrical control room outside the hotel, but it does beg the question, where were the fire-suppression sprinklers fitted to the ceilings in each of the

Letters to the Editor

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

rooms?

Surely the Tiger Disco fire wasn't that long ago that we've all forgotten about the "blitz" on fire safety? Whatever happened to that? Looks like it was left in the ashes...

Jan Sweet
Phuket Town

Disgusting way to mandatorily proceed

Re: *Gazette online, Rape test results for Burmese teen handed over to Phuket Public Prosecutor, December 26*

A mandatory rape test? After the suspect has confessed? My deepest sympathies for the victim. I could not think of a more insensitive "standard procedure" for police to adhere to; this is even worse than the public crime re-enactments they make suspects perform.

I actually understand police requesting a victim to undergo such a test if the suspect has denied the charge, but this is just disgusting.

Jimmy Walsh
Phuket

Crying a tear for environmental change

I grew up in the US and used to love watching television. I remember plenty of television shows from those days (The Twilight Zone, Mr Ed the Talking Horse), but only one commercial has stayed with me all these years: a picture of an American Indian chief with a single tear rolling down his cheek.

Why was he crying? Because

we, the people, were littering his beautiful land.

I'm not sure if the ad stopped Americans from littering, but it definitely made me an ardent anti-litterer.

I'd love to see a comparable government-sponsored anti-littering campaign in Phuket.

Molly Canyon
Phuket

Praying for a fish

I wrote in to the *Gazette* some time last year about the obvious futility of fishing off of Rawai Pier – assuming the goal was catching fish. I believe I pointed out that there were other advantages to spending time at the pier and away from the wife, but that is neither here nor there, because last week I witnessed a miracle.

There I was strolling down the pier, as I often do, musing about the countless issues facing Phuket, from Sea Gypsy land property rights to the lack of fish in the sea, and I saw it: the five meter rod at the end of the pier started to take on a healthy bend from a real fish on the other end.

Moments later the man pulled a meter long barracuda from the water – it was a beautiful fish. So for those who like to live on a prayer, take note – they can be answered.

Greg Kilgore
Chalong

Found on in the surf

A funny thing happened on the way to the forum, the *Gazette* forum of course. I started stumbling through unassociated links and found myself face-to-face with none other than Paris Hilton.

I instantly closed the browser and was relieved to remember that such an interesting woman would not be gracing our little island.

Shawn N
Phuket

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Losing Patong's beauty to the dust of progress

FIRST PERSON

THE authorities in Patong Municipality should carefully review all construction plans before granting permission for projects to proceed, especially those on the hills that surround Patong, where we have created a serious problem with floods and landslides.

This problem has become worse as most of the natural canals that used to carry runoff rainwater to the sea have been covered over by roads and buildings.

Another thing that really concerns me is wastewater released untreated into the sea. Although Patong has a water-treatment plant, it is inadequate given the enormous volume of wastewater produced by the city. The color of the sea water has even changed over time. Now it looks dirtier and more polluted.

I can see how much Patong has changed. About 50 years ago when my father was the *Kamnan* of Patong, the place was quite rural. We still farmed rice paddies and buffalo numbered in the thousands.

We might not have been rich, but we didn't lack food. We supported ourselves by growing various kinds of fruit and vegetables and by fishing.

At that time the road connecting us to Kathu hadn't been built. The image of Patong villagers walking over the hills to Kathu carrying fresh produce to sell is still fixed in my mind.

Back then, Patong Beach was still fantastic and amazingly beau-



Wichan Sawatdirak, now in his 80s, was the *Kamnan* for Patong for more than 20 years, long before Patong became a municipality. Born in Ban Mon village, he has lived in Patong his entire life. Respected by Patong locals, he was instrumental in the development of Patong's transport infrastructure by providing the vital roads around Patong City and links to Kathu and Kamala.



Patong, once a haven of rice paddies and buffalo. Photo: AbovePhuket.com

tiful. A 100-rai mangrove forest grew at the end of the beach, filtering the wastewater before it reached the sea. Now it's all buildings; not even a rai of the mangrove forest remains. It's really quite sad.

About 20,000 people were living in Patong around that time. The only foreigners we met, on rare occasions, were backpackers, who came, stayed on the beach a short time and then left.

I guess things really started to change for Patong residents with the building of the roads to Kathu and Kamala in 1976. That was

followed by a permanent electricity supply in 1980.

After that the visitors kept coming, and in greater numbers. Slowly the rice paddies turned into building sites and the developers started creeping into the surrounding countryside.

The increasing number of people has caused its own problems; crime, drugs, mafia and illegal workers are all now part of what Patong has become.

It's a shame that the place we tried to improve for the benefit of local residents has now inherited these problems.



Jet-skis line Patong Beach in front of where separate swimming zones have now been marked off for safety. Photo: Orawin Narabal

Phuket, throw me another lifeline

IT MAY have taken more than a decade and several people's lives, but finally Patong and several other beaches along Phuket's west coast have had floating lifelines installed to section off designated swimming areas.

I first made the discovery several weeks ago when visiting Loma Park with my family. There we were heading down to the water – I couldn't believe my eyes. Right in front of me were two separate swimming zones with a clearly marked gap in between for the parasail speedboat and the jet-ski operators to come and go from the beach without placing swimmers in danger.

Even more incredible was that the jet-ski operators and parasail speedboat drivers were using only the dedicated channel to come and go from the beach.

Then I saw the *Gazette* story reporting that similar lifelines had been installed at Kata Beach. The story reported that the swimming zone was marked off there to spare people from being whacked by over-enthusiastic jet-ski and speedboat operators and to preserve the reef in the shallows at the northern end of the beach.

Island View

By Damian Evans

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

I'm not a diver or snorkeller, but I do understand the importance of preserving sea life. That said, I always vote for projects that put "people first". In that I will never forget the horrific story about the Russian man [Nikolai Nefedov] who had his foot nearly hacked off when he was run over by a parasailing speedboat during high season last year.

I cannot imagine the horror his wife and children must have endured while he was being rushed to hospital. Nikolai had also suffered deep cuts to the backs of his thighs. One chop of the femoral artery and he could have died.

Now that lifelines have been installed at Kata, such incidents should never again occur.

It may have taken a long, long time, but such simple improvements are the very things that will make Phuket the "world-class" tourist destination that the local authorities keep claiming it is.

Issues & Answers... ...asking the questions that affect you...

Loud music at Heroines Monument

I live about 3kms north of the Heroines Monument and am amazed at the volume of regular concerts which play in this area. Even though I live a long way from where the events are held, I still have to close my windows and doors to cut out the noise, and turn the TV up.

I feel sorry for residents living nearer, their life must be hell. Bass drum, screaming into the microphone. Is there no regulation concerning this type of event?

Merv
Thalang

Chawalit Chumputtipong, Public Health chief of Srisoonthorn Municipality, replies:

You can see us to let us know what is happening in the area and file a complaint.

In a case like this, where noise from a concert or an event negatively affects a large area, we will

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

Submit your issue at

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

send an officer to inspect the location and order any people involved to reduce or stop the annoying noise.

If the concert participants do not follow the officer's instructions, we can charge them with disobeying the officer's orders. We can also issue a fine.

Please inform us by calling Srisoonthorn Municipality at 076-617803 or faxing us at 076-272852 during office hours Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Lt Col Amnuay Kriwuttianant, Deputy Superintendent of Thalang Police, replies:

In this case you can call us at Thalang Police Station at 076-311123 and we will send an officer to confirm the problem.

We will ask the organizers to reduce the sound while we check the permit issued by the local administrative organization, which all entertainment venues and concerts must have. Normally, these events must end by 2am, but sometimes authorities make exceptions.

If the permit does not state an end time and the event continues past 2am, the owner will be charged with operating after the permitted time and with disturbing others with noise.

Any concert or entertainment venue not approved by local authorities will be stopped and the organizers charged with holding an event without a permit.

Chess? Your Move

I bought a new set of chess pieces whilst overseas, but now I need a good-quality chess board to go with it. Is there a game board shop in Phuket?

Ian
Layan Beach

Somyot Phaengsap, Secretary of the Phuket-Thai Chess Club, replies:

The stationery and sports equipment store called "Phuket Sagan-Phanich", on the corner of Yaowarat Road and Phang Nga Road in Phuket Town, has good-quality boards for sale.

The chess boards are made of good-quality plywood and lacquered with varnish. The price is around 220 to 300 baht.

Another shop that sells chess boards is Kiatsin, on Mae Luan Road in Phuket Town.

However, I would like to invite everyone who is interested in play-



Photo: Moyan Brenn

ing or learning chess to join us at the Phuket Chess Club from 6pm to 8:30pm daily. Our club is near Phun Pol Night Plaza on Phun Pol Road in Phuket Town.

We play international chess rules. We have many excellent players here to practice with and compete against.

To become a member costs 120 baht a year.

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The sweet taste of success at Vanich Sweetcorn Farm



ALL EARS: Students take a tour of the farm (above). Mr Apirag poses with the company mascot (right)



Some of the products on display. Photos: Wisuwat Romin

By Wisuwat Romin

MR APIRAG Vanich is the owner of the Vanich Sweetcorn Farm, which produces corn-based foodstuffs and drinks including; corn milk; boiled corn, fresh sweet corn and baby corn. They also produce three healthy drinks which are; butterfly pea flower tea, corn silk tea and mulberry juice.

Vanich Sweetcorn Farm, spread out over an area of about 67 rai, uses modern technology to improve the quality of the land and emphasizes eco-friendly products that avoid chemical substances.

In an interview with the *Phuket Gazette* Mr Apirag said: "This year, our sales target is to increase our customer base by about 15-20 per cent through planned promotional activities. I believe that with the increased purchasing power of customers, we will make our goal in this year."

Vanich Sweetcorn Farm has mobile units that move around Phuket targeting customers who are mostly Asian-based tourists.

"In addition to advertising on social media and via tourist agencies, we will also open sales and promotion booths at the *Daily Fresh* trailers near Surakul Stadium, other mobile units and at the Farm's shop. Since the Vanich Sweetcorn Farm name is already well known among locals, one of our key objectives is to increase brand awareness

and let customers know how good the products are by emphasizing safe, fresh food and the best flavor," he said.

Mr Apirag added that the most popular products among customers are corn milk (25 baht) and boiled corn (40 baht).

As the largest corn farm in Phuket, Vanich Sweetcorn Farm is also developing into a learning center for university students. Located just behind local government schools in Rassada on Soi Patchanee, Vanich Sweetcorn Farm has a steady stream of visitors from students wanting to learn more about agriculture and the company's integral strategy: Daily fresh products.

In Mr Apirag's opinion, making a successful farm requires two important factors; economy of scale, that reduces costs of product processing and product differentiation to help in the marketing.

He adds that Vanich Sweetcorn Farm products, have many health benefits for customers because they contain properties that help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer and dementia, cleanse the body of toxins and antioxidants and the slow the deterioration of the cells.

A healthy business model in every sense of the word.

For more information: contact Vanich Sweetcorn Farm on 089-8719198, 081-9798510, 076211536 or visit phuket-dailyfresh.com, facebook.com/PhuketDailyFresh.



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Investing in 'frontier markets'

As the world gets smaller, and the developing world grows, so will your stock portfolio

Island Investor

David Mayes

I HAVE recently come across an investment concept that's caught my interest, and for those of you with a speculative bit of capital to allocate – you might find it interesting also. Fund Management Group has recently launched an equity-based fund, spread across what they call new frontier countries.

According to them, frontier markets represent 40% of the world's population but only 15% of the world's GDP, only 3.6% of the world's stock market capitalization, and only 0.5% of the MSCI World Index. This will change they say, and they suggest you allocate one third of your emerging exposure to these economies with a long term time horizon.

They cite several reasons to expect substantial returns going forward as this untouched segment of the global equity markets gains attraction and funds flow from global and institutional investors.

Frontier market (FM) valuations can be attractive now, when compared with other emerging and developed markets.

These countries possess strong macro-economic fundamentals and good quality balance sheets, particularly when they are compared to developed countries.

Among the reasons they specifically list to invest in these economies are:

– A simple way to get diversified exposure to the "new world"

that is not included in BRIC or general emerging market funds.

– A second chance to replicate the last 10 years' spectacular BRIC returns.

– 39 of the world's fastest-growing economies through 2015 will be FMs according to International Monetary Fund.

– FMs include 3 billion people, who are tomorrow's consumers and producers.

– Exposure to FM stock markets is significantly under represented by global investors.

– Favorable FM stock market valuations.

That all sounds well and good to me and the thought of replicating the returns of the BRIC countries during the last decade is great. However, I would caution that there is an equal chance that many of these countries will continue to stagnate, or are affected by wars, political unrest, natural disasters, etc.

That being said, the diversification doesn't leave the fund overly exposed to any one economy as you can see from the portfolio breakdown.

The other reason I might think cautiously about these economies is that capital flows traditionally have been cyclical, and we have seen capital flowing from the developed world into the emerging world for quite some time now.

If this cycle reverses for the next decade or so, this strategy may be 15 years ahead of its time and the fund could see these markets declining.



Wang Jianzhou, Chairman of China Mobile speaks at a frontier market conference. Photo: World Economic Forum

I am not saying that this will happen but it is a possibility and you should think about how much exposure you want from these particular economies.

My hunch is, that globalization is here to stay and as time goes on more and more of these periphery economies will be brought into the global fabric of the modern world.


A fund like this may be a good way to take advantage of the natural progression of human development.

David Mayes MBA lives in Phuket and provides wealth management services to expats around the world, focusing on UK pension transfers. He can be reached at 085-335-8573 or david.m@faramond.com



Fresh food in Dhaka, Bangladesh – a frontier market. Photo: Wonderlane






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PROPERTY Gazette

RESIDENTIAL development will continue to be the core business for Land & Houses while it invests in related businesses as well as others with future potential.

"Our strategy is to manage our investment budget by balancing homes for sale and businesses that will generate a return in the long run," said Naporn Sunthornchitcharoen, a senior executive vice president.

The firm's latest investment was the purchase of an apartment building in California worth US\$10 million (306mn baht), using part of its capital-expenditure budget worth US\$50mn for the United States.

Up to 80 per cent of the company's annual revenue comes from residential sales and the remaining 1.5 to 2bn baht from investments.

For example, the company established Bangkok Chain Hospital 10-years-ago and it became successful. However, L & H believed that it did not have enough experience to drive growth further and that other firms could manage and improve the business better than it could, so its board decided to sell the stake in the hospital to new investors last year for a gain of more than 2bn baht.

The company also sold its holding in Quality Construction

Products last year to Siam Cement Group for a gain of 800mn baht.

L&H's investment portfolio is worth 13bn baht at cost but about 25bn baht by market value – or nearly double the cost basis.

A few of its businesses are Home Product Center, Quality Houses, Quality Construction Products, LH Bank, Asia Asset Advisory Co and LH Muang Mai Co.

"When we invest, we consider the benefit in the long term. This is to sustain our growth over the long haul," Naporn said.

Part of the company's strategy has been to branch out overseas, especially in the US.

Though the company reaps returns from its portfolio, it still develops residential projects to cover all market segments at a pace of 14-20 a year – worth 20 to 25bn baht, depending on demand.

"Some of them will replace our existing projects that sold out and are ready to be transferred to customers," he said.

The three key criteria for proposing a project are segmentation, or 'who is the customer for the product?'; design, or 'what do customers want?'; and location, or 'is it convenient for transport?'. Next year will see 14-20 projects introduced, depending on market demand, but their locations will hug the new mass-transit routes.

When the government set the policy to invest in mass transit and infrastructure to link the suburbs to Bangkok's central business districts and also to invest in infrastructure upcountry, that

Land and Houses to explore new markets



DIVERSITY: With market projections bleak, property developers are investing in new markets. Photo: Roger Price

changed the property market to urbanization, Naporn said.

Now there are more locations to launch a business that do not concentrate only on Greater Bangkok. This is the trend for property firms – to expand in the provinces – which started this year and will extend into next year.

"We have been in business in the provinces for more than 10

years but we will continue to expand upcountry at new destinations in 2013," he said.

The company is targeting revenue growth of 10-15 per cent this year, after aiming for an increase of 14-15 per cent last year from 23.29bn baht in 2011.

L&H showed revenue of 19.25bn baht and net profit of 4.09bn baht in the first nine months of last year.

"When we do business we're concerned about our stakeholders," he said. "They have to get more benefit from our business. They include stockholders, customers, staff and community around our projects. That's why we have to do business under the strategy of balancing businesses while maintaining our long term growth." – *Somluck Srimalee*



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2013 property ponderings



WHEN I lived and worked in the corporate rule, one of the true signs of executive prowess was the ability to read upside down. Now I'm not talking about taking up Japanese. Clearly that's a country in decline. You can see it in the first installment of *Die Hard*. That's where the trouble started.

But look at me, an American, we've been in a nosedive for so long I can't tell if the color of the sky is blue or has changed these days. Forget a fiscal cliff, just tune into those cliff divers in Acapulco who will momentarily soar before plunging facedown into the ocean depths. Well, that's Mexico, or shall we say Greater California.

Back on track. Reading things on other people's desks while sitting in front of them politely was an arcane pre-hacker must do. Company secrets, strategic business decisions, imminent firings and corporate acquisitions were all just sitting there in front of you. Or course, they were upside down.

Long gone Steve Jobs figured out the upside down thing with the "autorotate" anticipating our moves no matter which way you turned the damned thing.

Remember all those great heavy metal bands who embraced the occult, Black Sabbath, Blue Oyster Cult, and pushing it out a bit Judas Priest. That's before Ozzie went mainstream and the hoax, well Aleister Crowley, he's definitely still dead.

But my point in all of this is flicking to the next page and looking into the blank page of 2013. The jury is out on the 13th thing, lucky, not lucky, I've got no idea but for anyone who watches the news these days, this

'I'm looking forward to the opening of Point Yamu by Como. Will the East Coast finally get it's due? Will branded hotel villa finally break out of a slump due to a prolonged dose of no new launches?

We need a little sexy excitement.'

year looks to be a bit like heading up that river in *Apocalypse Now*.

Brando. Enough said.

What's worth looking at for island real estate and hotels in the year to come? My God, I can hear a sigh of relief from my editor's desk – an actual reference to property in what is loosely termed a property column.

In no particular order I'm looking forward to the opening of Point Yamu by Como. Will the East Coast finally get its due? Will branded hotel villas finally break out of a slump due to a prolonged dose of no new launches? We need a little sexy excitement.

Or the buzziness of The Naka,

which is arguably one of Asia's coolest designed hotels. And of course at last Kata Rocks will finally arrive. But what of Sansiri and their new plans to tap into higher level housing products to attract foreign buyers?

As last year's headlines blared of ultra small (I've been warned about using the term shoebox) condominiums.

And beach clubs. My forecast is hit the fast forward and let's say "same same" to both of these as likely repeaters in the months ahead.

We still continue to see island big events grow, from sporting, sailing and all manner of other happenings. Yes, there will be more retail shops coming, malls, and one key sector we see as active will be a number of amusement attractions and theme parks up and coming.

Certainly we continue to look over our shoulders as we walk through the forest at night to Grandma's house. This might be a forest that is a national park and as we've seen this year all hell can break out in the blink of an eye, and seemingly disappear in similar fashion.

Entertainment and politics make strange bedfellows in the trip from hero to zero or 'stinging like a bee'. Yes Ali knew all about butterflies.

We are digging down deep in 2013, "all the way to China", as they said in the old days. But is



DESIGNING THE DREAM: Tha Naka Island Phuket (above), by Starwood Hotels and Resorts and the award winning Kata Rocks club penthouse.



up down, down up? Steve, you've saved us from having to read upside down. In the day and age of the iPad things can always be up, just a long as you keep

your hands moving fast.

Bill Barnett is Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks and can be contacted through C9hotelworks.com.

Old developer gets new capital



New developments under construction in Bangkok. Photo: Hendrik Dacquin

KRISDA Mahanakorn (KMC), once a big player in the property market, is trying to regain its former glory by injecting 142 billion baht of capital in order to make a fast recovery from recent losses.

KMC's board of directors has approved a doubling in par value from 10 to 20 baht and offering 4.49 bn of new shares to existing shareholders for .5 baht, against the new 20 baht par value.

Then par value would be slashed from 20 to .7 baht in order to write down share and retained losses.

As of September, 2012, those losses totaled 28.7bn baht.

A total of 5bn shares with par value of .7 baht are to be offered in a private placement for not lower than 90 per cent of the market price.

Shareholders will meet on February 11 to approve the resolution, which involves the issuance of 12.1bn new shares. Asia Plus Securities expects a 78.3 per cent dilution effect, but the company would have more capital to fund expansion.

"The company plans to raise revenue in the short term by buying and reselling complete condominium buildings.

"It also has plans for two new

condominium projects and one detached-house project to boost 2013 presales to 3bn baht," said a spokesperson for the securities house.

"Success will depend on the management's ability, competition in the property market and the success of the KMC rebranding."

In the first nine months of last year, KMC showed a net loss of 51 million baht on 365mn baht in sales. KMC in 2010 and 2011 managed to report net profits of 30mn baht and 86mn baht against a 511mn baht net loss in 2009.

– The Nation

LaGuna
PROPERTY RESALE

Properties for sale within Laguna Phuket

<p>1 Allamanda Studio THB 6 M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 bed 1 bath Condominium • leasehold • golf view • fully furnished 	<p>2 Allamanda 2 Bedrooms Duplex THB 12 M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 beds 3 baths Condominium • lagoon view • freehold • fully furnished
<p>3 Laguna Fairway-Townhome II THB 19.5 M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 beds 2.5 baths Townhome • golf view • leasehold • fully furnished 	<p>4 Laguna Village-Townhome II THB 21.7 M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 beds 3 baths Townhome • lagoon view • leasehold • fully furnished
<p>5 Laguna Village-Residences III THB 35 M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 beds 3 baths Residence • lagoon view • leasehold • unfurnished 	

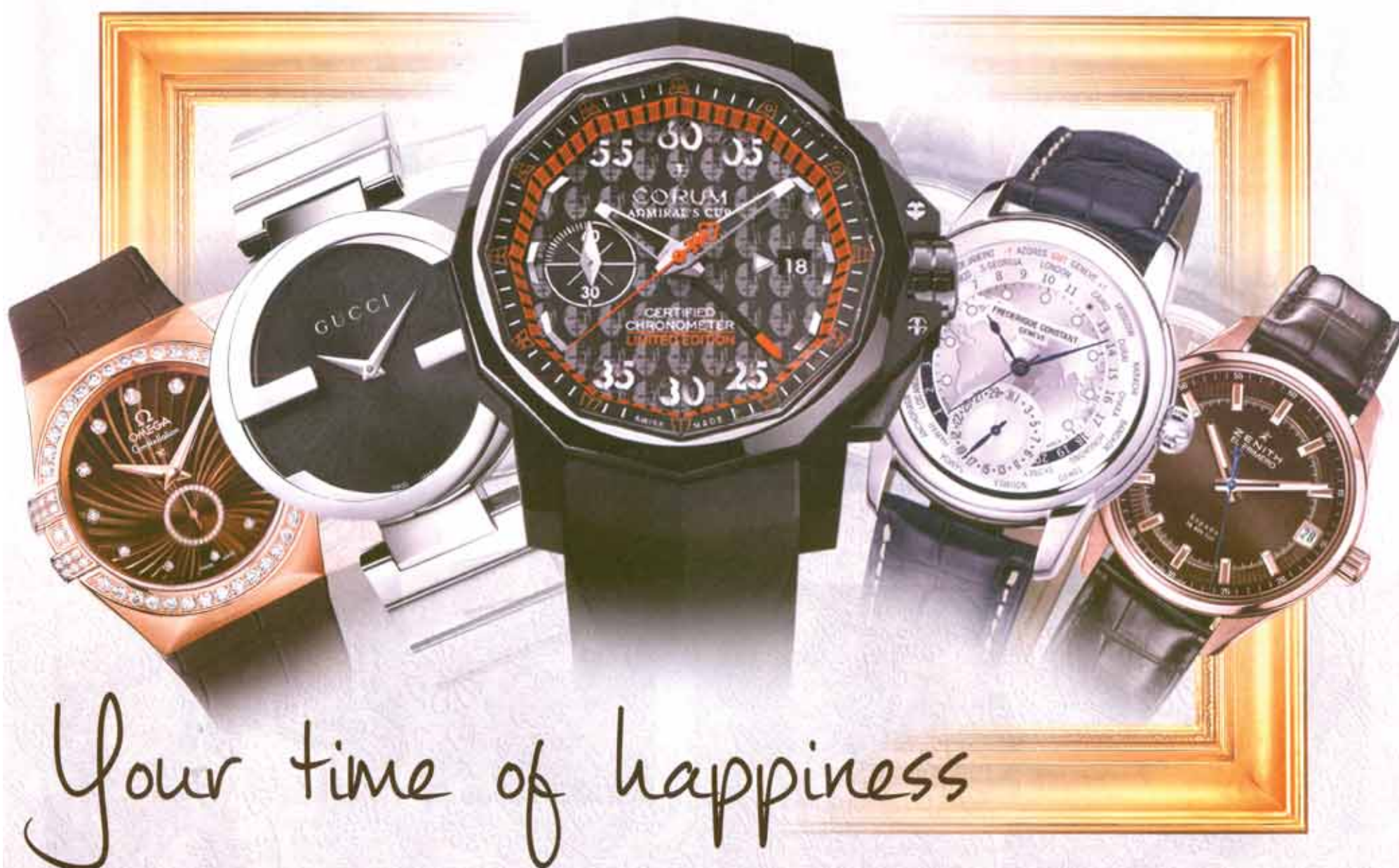
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YOUR Phuket



Members of the marketing team from The Kee Resort and Spa, Patong hand a gift to Ms Supanan Supawong, assistant sales manager of *The Phuket Gazette* (center).



Representatives from the Bangkok Hospital Phuket hand a gift to *The Phuket Gazette's* Mr Marc Mulloy (center).



The marketing team of Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club hand a basket over to Ms Krisana Mezenberger, advertising manager of PGTV (right).

Happy New Year 2013



Phuket Regional Blood Center Acting Chief Pornthip Rattajak handed a New Year's basket to *The Phuket Gazette's* Isaac Stone Simonelli on December 26.

SANSIRI LOUNGE PHUKET

Sansiri unveils 'Sansiri Lounge Phuket': first-ever lifestyle space dedicated to Phuket customers



Mr Apichart Chutrakul, CEO of Sansiri Public Company Limited and Sansiri management team hosted an exclusive media event to unveil "Sansiri Lounge Phuket", which is now open on the first floor of Central Festival Phuket.

NATUZZI EXCLUSIVE COCKTAIL PARTY AT RPM



Euro Creations has expanded their luxury furniture market to Phuket and recently held a cocktail party at RPM to promote their 2012 collection of Natuzzi.



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*The Gazette is the top-ranked Website for Phuket. (Google Analytics)

PROPERTY of the week

The Phuket Golf Residences Kathu



See page 19

JOB of the week

LaGuna
RESORTS & HOTELS

See page 23

DEAL of the week

TEERA MOTORCYCLE
TPMOTORCYCLE.COM



See page 26

BOAT of the week

SIMPSON
MARINE



See page 27

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Properties For Sale

OCEAN FRONT LAND



7 rai with 185m of sea frontage. Water, electricity, road, and boat access, located 800m from Yacht Haven Marina, perfect site for small beachfront development. For quick sale: only 5 million baht per rai. Tel: 081-343 0777. Email: montha_phuket@yahoo.com

LAND FOR SALE

Soi Salika, Rawai, at the top view of Chalong Bay and the Big Buddha. Does not need landscaping. 477sq wah or 1,908sqm. No brokers please. Tel: 084-745 4132.

HOUSE IN VILLA DOWROONG

Phuket Town. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 47sq wah. For more information please call 089-909 2771.

30 RAI IN TOWN

Flat land near Dowroong School in Phuket Town. Tel: 081-691 2526.

KHOK KLOY 8.5 RAI LAND



Beautiful land, 11km to beach, 2km from Sarasin Bridge. 750,000 baht per rai. From owner. Tel: 089-290 6579.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ENJOY?



Only 9.8 million baht from German private vendor. Tel: 089-868 6842. Picture choices and further information please see www.flickr.com/photos/thai stylevilla

LUXURY PANORAMA SEA & ISLAND VIEW



For sale. 3-storey villa, 1 rai, Yamu Hills, 560sqm, living area, 6 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 2 kitchens, infinity pool. Sale: 34.7 million baht. Tel: 089-582 8401. Email: pbbroze@gmail.com

STUNNING VILLA SITE

Prime unique development land including:
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– Stunning sea views along Karon Beach bay.
– Sloping to allow for views.
– Access from all units.
– Main road access.
– Beach access via right of way.
– Last Chanote-titled land site from Karon to Patong.
– Some infrastructure work already done.
Tel: 081-895 7727 (English). Email: jmlphuket@gmail.com

LAND FOR SALE

Near the main road to Baan Don-Cherng Talay. 68sq wah. 1.1 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118. Email: honda.1437@yahoo.co.th

HOUSE FOR SALE

Rawai, Sai Yuan Road, Soi Na nachat. 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. Thai+European+outside kitchens, parking for 3 cars. Price: 8.7 million baht. No brokers please. Tel: 084-745 4132.

LAND NEAR KATA CENTER

Great location, road access, 5 mins to Kata Beach and main road, 1,450sqm with title deed. Contact Lychee. Tel: 081-891 3048 (English & German).

LUXURY CONDO

Freehold, 114sqm, in Nai Thon Beach. 13,950,000 baht. Direct from owner. Contact Ben. Tel: 084-305 4753.

LARGE HOUSE + 1 RAI

3 bed, 2 bath with large garage and separate storage room. Nice pond and large garden in Thalang near PIA. 8 million baht. 0% finance available over 5 years. Tel: 076-621200, 080-141 8292 (English & Thai). Email: davestacey16@hotmail.com

POOL VILLA NEXT TO PIA



Brand-new, luxury villa with 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 12m swimming pool, guest bungalow, ready to move in. Perfectly located in a development with underground electricity and security, only 800m from Mission Hills Golf Course, less than 10 minutes to airport, Phuket International Academy and Ao Por Grand Marina. For sale: 14.9 million baht or long-term rent: 100,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-343 0777. Email: montha_phuket@yahoo.com

BEACHFRONT LAND FOR SALE



2 rai absolute amazing beachfront, few minutes boat ride from Phuket, facing west to sunset and views of Phuket. 13 million baht per rai. Tel: 086-278 8300. Email: izzy.serenitygroup@gmail.com

SEAVIEW PENTHOUSE FOR SALE



360° panoramic sea view and mountain view. 310sqm, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms with option to convert into 3 bedrooms. Spacious living area. 9.25 million baht. Tel: 086-278 8300. Email: izzy.serenitygroup@gmail.com

1.5 RAI NEAR LAGUNA PHUKET

Chanote title, quiet location, gentle slope, highest point of Pasak 8, easy access. 8.5 million baht. Tel: 089-875 9609 (English), 087-418 5924 (Thai). Email: claudbaltes@gmail.com http://phuket-land-villas.blogspot.com/

MODERN SEAVIEW POOL VILLA

Near Phuket Town. For sale. Chanote land: 855sqm, house: 650sqm. Furnished. Price 54.9 million baht. Tel: 081-895 3628.

2-RAI SEAVIEW LAND FOR SALE

Beautiful 180-degree seaview land plot, near Bang Pae waterfall. Peaceful with a lot of privacy. One of Phuket's last available seaview plots. Only 3.8 million baht per rai. Brokers welcome. Tel: 086-747 9294 (English), 081-970 5204 (English & Thai). Email: claudstrey@gmail.com

HOUSE FOR SALE IN BAAN PROMPHAN

2.5 floors, 5 mins to town, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Good for stay! 2.85 million baht. Tel: 083-506 9155. Email: sumitra.saetan@gmail.com

PRIVATE SALE OF HALF A RAI

At Ao Makham. Land is located opposite Port of Phuket and next to Bel Air Cape Panwa Resort. Price 4.2 million. For more information please call: 081-891 5932, 089-035 6702.

KAMALA LUXURY 68SQM

Freehold unit, full resort facilities, private. Sale only 3-4 million baht. Tel: 083-982 9105.

CONDO IN SUPALAI PARK



for sale. Near Seng Ho Bookstore in Phuket Town. Studio, 30sqm, floor 15, sea view, aircon, furnished. Price: 1.9 million baht. Ready to move in. For more info call 089-472 9118.

TOWNHOUSE IN KOH KAEW



Corner unit, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fully furnished. 3.5 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118.

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D CONDO 1, KATHU

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-29.70sqm, mountain view, price 1,280,000 baht.
-29.79sqm, pool view, price 1,330,000 baht.
-29.70sqm, pool view, price 1,365,000 baht.
Contact Vutdy on 081-892 3709.

HOUSE & FURNITURE

Single house, 60sqm. 2 floors, 3 bedrooms and 3 toilets. In Chaipruek Village at Land & Houses Park, Chalong. Good location and entrance from Bypass road. Built 2 years ago. Tel: 084-627 7001.

NAI HARN HOUSE FOR SALE

Nice boutique house for sale, swimming pool, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished. Asking price: 5.9 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 081-370 9661.

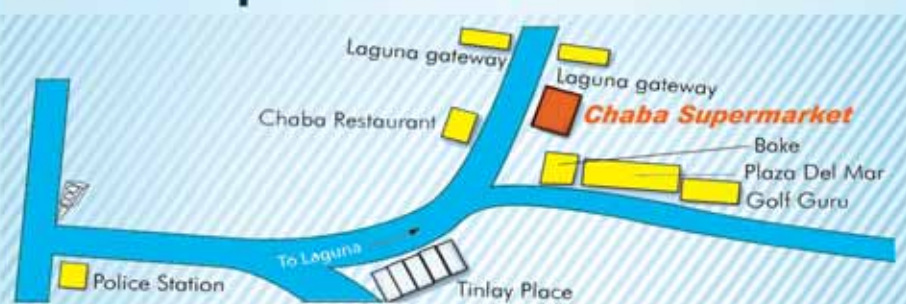
PHUKET VILLA 5 VILLAGE



For sale. Price 4.5 million baht. No agents, no furnished, with 4 aircons, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen and car park. Behind Kajonkiet International School on Chao Fa West Road, 5 minutes to Central Festival. For short or long-term rent, 16,000 baht per month. Call to see 087-270 9093.

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NEW FULLY FURNISHED HOUSE



2-storey house, 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 20,000 baht per month, quiet area. Ao Ma Kham Bay, 4km from town, 2km to beach. Tel: 081-892 4311. For further details, please see our website at panwagreen.weebly.com

HOUSE AT PRIME PLACE VILLAGE



Near Heroines' Monument. Furnished, aircon, 3 bedrooms, cable TV, kitchen. Tel: 086-607 7493.

1, 2, 3-BED PATONG APARTMENTS

Large pool, gym, parking, maid, free WiFi. Rates from 22,000 baht per month. Tel: 080-052 8082 (English & Thai). Email: phvcondo@aol.com

URGENT: HOUSE FOR RENT IN KARON

25,000 baht per month, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Yearly contract. Quiet location, close to the beach. Tel: 081-878 2199. Email: sumonmarn@phuketrealife.com

WALK TO KATA BEACH

New home with 2 bedrooms and 3 baths. Available January. Call Mam or Dan. Tel: 081-472 1010 (English & Thai). Email: kahunadan@hotmail.com

CONDO FOR RENT



Just 10 minutes to Patong. Studio 30sqm, fully furnished, near swimming pool. Short or long-term rent. Tel: 081-607 8567. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com

LARGE HOUSE KAMALA

Furnished, 280sqm, 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, office, sundeck, pool, jacuzzi, carport. 25,000 baht per week or 35,000 baht per month, minimum 6 months contract or sale 3.5 million baht lease hold. Tel: 084-716 0502.

BOAT LAGOON HOUSE

2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Close to Major Mall, beach and school. 1 year minimum. 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-958 7684.

PATONG APARTMENT LONG-TERM RENT

8,000 - 20,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-290 9567.

NICE HOUSE IN CHALONG



Single house (74sq wah) with lovely garden for long-term rent in Soi Parichart, Land & Houses Park. It has 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, 24 hr security + clubhouse facilities. Price: 25,000 baht per month or special price of 20,000 baht per month without furniture. Contact the owner. Tel: 081-867 6466 (English & Thai). Email: bow.jariya@gmail.com

PHUKET VILLA 5 VILLAGE



For sale. Price: 4.2 million baht. No agents!, not furnished, with 4 aircons, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen and car park. Behind Kajonkiet International School on Chao Fa West Road, 5 minutes to Central Festival. For short or long-term rent, 16,000 baht per month. Call to see 087-270 9093.

4 BEDS FOR RENT IN KATHU

Located in a secure estate, 5 mins to golf courses, 10 mins to BIS, 15 mins to Patong and Central. 65,000 baht per month. Owner pays gardening, pool and common area min 6 month term. Short term 125,000 baht per month, all inclusive. Tel: 083-967 5777 (English & Thai). Email: don mountford@hotmail.com

2-BEDROOM HOUSE

Brand-new house in quiet gated community. 5 mins from shopping malls and Phuket Town. Fully furnished with TV and aircon in all rooms. 2 bathrooms. Hot water & washing machine. Car port & garden. Sat TV & Internet ready. Tel: 081-893 9127. Email: duncan@eclipse marine.net

2-BED BEACH HOLIDAY APARTMENT

Spacious, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, terrace, common pool, free WiFi, Nai Ham Beach 3 minutes walk. Email: resortgm@gmail.com

SINGLE HOUSE FOR RENT/SALE



In Thanapa Park View village in Koh Kaew. 57sq wah, with 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a kitchen, a carpark and a garden. Rent: 11,000 baht per month. Sale: 2.25 million baht. Contact owner. Tel: 083-180 2143. Email: nana1225@gmail.com

PRIVATE POOL VILLA AVAILABLE NOW

3 bedrooms, full furnished, located in secure area. Tel: 089-472 9870. Email: dchai but@gmail.com

CHALONG HOUSE FOR RENT

3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, fully furnished, 24hr security, long-term rent: 20,000 baht per month. Call for more information. Tel: 088-765 0886.

2-BEDROOM HOUSE, BANG TAO



2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, terrace, living room, parking, fully furnished, cable TV, internet, 2 aircons, hot water. Only 5 mins to Surin Beach, Bang Tao Beach and Lotus Cherng Talay. Tel: 089-470 7488. Email: nattamon.m@gmail.com

DELUXE BEACHFRONT CONDO

At Kalim Beach, 2 beds. Also in Phuket Town, 1 bedroom, kitchen, lounge, many facilities. Tel: 081-892 0038.

THAI-STYLE VILLA

In Nai Ham, 2 bedrooms, pool, furniture, 3-month rent minimum. 77,250 baht per month. Call agent. Tel: 082-420 7052.

HOUSE FOR RENT

Fully furnished, 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, quiet area near Laguna, rental 13,000 baht/month. Tel: 084-051 1955 (English & Thai), 080-521 9888 (English & Thai). Email: sornin_s@yahoo.com

CHALONG BEACHFRONT POOL VILLA



At Rawai. For rent. 3 bedrooms, fully furnished. Land: 1 rai. Contact Siripom. Tel: 089-649 9939.

POOL VILLA FOR RENT



Near Chalong, short or long-term rent. 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, fully furnished, European kitchen. Tel: 081-607 8567. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com

TOWNHOUSE IN KOH KAEW



Corner unit, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fully furnished. 3.5 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118.

FULLY FURNISHED HOUSE FOR RENT

3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen. Near Tesco Lotus shopping center, 10 minutes to Bang Tao Beach, Surin Beach and Kamala Beach. 20 minutes to Ao Por Marina, Boat Lagoon and Phuket International Airport. 10 minutes to Phuket International School. Only 15 minutes to Phuket Town. Available now! Only 16,500 baht per month. Tel: 089-724 2787.

THE WHITE HOUSE FOR RENT

Please check out this wonderful villa for rent. Tel: 081-968 9046 (English & Thai). Email: info@mindproperties.net

PATONG STUDIO 50SQM

For rent. 14th floor, sea view, pool, garden, bathroom, kitchen, terrace, parking, security, fully renovated. Tel: 081-086 3586.

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Organizing paperwork, documents and computer-based information. Taking care of inventory and stock levels. Providing secretarial support to the Director. Basic accounting. Dealing with customers. Tel: 085-331 0295. Email: m.hill@phuket soccerschools.com

BARTENDER

More bartenders needed for Elvis Rock & Roll Bar in Kamala. Thai only. Tel: 085-158 7638. Email: info@husi-phuket.se

TOUR STAFF NEEDED

Thai staff needed at busy boat charter and events company. Duties include tour guide, wedding & events host and more. Salary + commissions. Tel: 076-221 442, 081-956 9961 (English). Email: info@coral seekers.com

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Brainy House is an English-language school, which is committed to provide all of our students with quality teaching and prices that are affordable. Qualifications;

- Applicants must be native English speakers.

- Bachelor's degree and TEFL are required.

- Teaching experience would be an advantage.

- Must be able to start in December.

- We offer competitive salaries and work permit. Tel: 080-907 7466. If you are interested, please contact Sasi or send your CV and recent photo to info@brainy-house.com

MARKETING REPS NEEDED

EZYSTAYS looking for marketing representative. No experience required, full training provided, work permit and good income. Email: leoinphuket@gmail.com

ANDAMAN CRUISES COORDINATOR

Looking for coordinator who is responsible for working with crew to organize the cruise, manage bookings, provide administrative assistance. Excellent benefits provided. Tel: 076-316 537, 081-370 5689. Email: hr@twinpalms-group.com

SCUBA DIVE AND TOUR SHOP

We are looking for a Thai staff to book our scuba diving customers when they come into the shop, and also book the island tours we sell. Must speak, read and write English. Must be very happy and good with customers. Salary: 15,000 to 20,000 baht, depending on the person. Tel: 076-388 684, 082-810 2443 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-388 684. Email: mjrossi2004@yahoo.com

ESTATE/RENTAL MANAGER

Intira Villas is looking for a Thai person with a happy and positive attitude. Must be able to communicate in English and Thai, both in speaking and writing. Experience in management and rentals. Tel: 081-472 4925 (English). Please send CV and salary requirement. Email: jonas@intiravillas.com

PART-TIME MAID FOR VILLA

Experienced maid to work 3-4 hours in the afternoon, 5 days per week. Tel: 083-399 1323 (English). Email: pruet.kimberly@gmail.com

WAITRESS, SURIN BEACH

New beach restaurant needs highly trained waitress, must speak English and have a bubbly personality. Top wages and benefits. Contact Maya. Tel: 085-783 8938.

MARKETING MANAGER

Phuket Wake Park is looking for a Russian English-speaking person. Salary: 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 082-938 7748, 082-415 4546. Please send your CV to: lizunov.o@mail.ru

GENERAL FOREMAN

Will work for Bayshore Projects Co. Ltd. Thai Nationality. Minimum 5 years experience in residential development as site agent or construction foreman. Tel: 081-968 5963. Email: c@bayshoreprojects.com

SALE / MARKETING

Marketing employee urgently needed. Male or female. Good salary. Tel: 089-618 6894.

GENERAL FOREMAN

Will work for Bayshore Projects Co. Ltd. Thai Nationality. Minimum 5 years experience in residential development as site agent or construction foreman. Tel: 081-968 5963. Email: c@bayshoreprojects.com

WINE & TAPAS BAR

Staff required in Phuket Town, available on October 2012: bartender, helpcook, waitress. Tel: 083-969 7807.

SALES CONSULTANT REQUIRED

Club Asia Fitness requires a Sales Consultant. Applicants should be fluent in English and a Thai national. Excellent remuneration offered. Tel: 080-698 5021.

SPA STAFF AND MANGER NEEDED

Newly remodeled spa and massage parlor hiring staff for immediate start. Competitive salaries and accommodation offered! Tel: 083-391 0291. Email: kamal.mail2000@gmail.com

CHEF REQUIRED

Small international restaurant in Kalim seeks for independent working kitchen chef with experience in preparing Thai and international dishes. Tel: 080-555 2377 (English & Thai). Email: 55inkalim@gmail.com

DISTRIBUTORS / RESELLERS WANTED

Thai national. Sales of manufactured modular and customized activation, booth, display and expo solutions. Network and infrastructure in place. Thai/English speaking. Excellent earning. Email: sales@bconcept.asia

VILLA MANAGER

Experienced Villa Manager required to manage an 8-bedroom private residence in Kamala. The VM is responsible for managing an in-house team for maintenance, housekeeping and F&B. Operate the villa in a 5-star manner for both owners and guests. Applicants need to have strong leadership skills, excellent command of English, hotel experience. Applicants will be required to have their own car and driving licence and to be able to live-in when required. Tel: 076-527633, 087-881 0003. Please send CVs to: hr@phuketvillasandhomes.com, www.luxuryvillasandhomes.com

STAFF WANTED

- Receptionist, good written and spoken English is a must. Word and accounting experience is a plus. Must have a friendly outgoing personality. Salary: 12,000-20,000 baht depending on experience.

- Office admin, good computer skills, Excel, and accounting is required. Good written and spoken English is a must. 15,000-22,000 baht monthly depending on experience level.

- Office manager, must be proficient in Excel, written and spoken English. Prior experience required. Salary: 25,000+ baht monthly depending on experience. Please send your resume at smartbusinessphuket@gmail.com

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To invite the clients to see the holiday consultant.

Qualifications:

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Go Vacation Thailand™ and LTU Asia™ is one of the leading inbound- and airline ground handling agents in Thailand. We are part of one of the largest European trading groups, the REWE Group. Well-known overseas tour operators and airlines such as Meier's Weltreisen, DERTOUR, Emirates Holidays, Jahn Reisen, Aida Cruises, Airberlin Group, TUIfly, Novair, Virginblue and others, are our customers.

The company is currently looking for experienced professionals (Thai Nationals Only) as:

Operations Officer (Based in Phuket)

Qualifications:-

- Thai national only
- Minimum 2 years experience in travel agent operation
- Good knowledge of written and spoken English
- Computer literate, Microsoft Office knowledge
- Good personality and leadership skills
- Willingness to work in shift duty
- Ability to negotiate with suppliers and guides
- Experience to communicate and to work with foreign nationals

Interested applicants shall send your curriculum vitae indicating your work experience, a recent photograph and expected salary to **Khun Thomas Berlin** at Thomas.berlin@go-vacation.com

Tel: 076-349964-9

PRIVATE TEACHER

Looking for private teacher for teaching a 10-years-old child. Any nationality is entitled to apply, as long as fluent in English and certified for teaching. Good salary. Tel: 081-728 8269. Email: psupparin@yahoo.com

WEBSITE PROGRAMMER

Solid HTML and CSS coding experience with knowledge of JavaScript and PHP. Design and English skills are an advantage. Start immediately. We are located in Karon. Tel: 085-758 3780 (English). Email your CV to shotham.hari888@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.paroot.com

STOREMAN/SITE CLERK

Will work for Bayshore Projects Co. Ltd. Must be Thai national. Tel: 081-968 5963. Email: c@bayshoreprojects.com

LIVE-IN DRIVER AND MAID

Experienced live-in staff wanted for a holiday villa in Surin start December. Driver must speak English. Tel: 084-689 4658 (English), 081-693 1621 (Thai). Email: malinlson@hotmail.com

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

Female caucasian native English speaking teacher with experience to teach class of 10-12 children, ages 2-6 years old. Monday-Friday 8am-4pm. Chalong. Tel: 080-624 7060. Email: buds.span@yahoo.com www.buds-phuket.com

LOOKING FOR STAFF

Aroi-Corner Restaurant in Rawai is looking for staff. Waitress and bartender with experience. Working hours: 3pm-11:30pm, one day off, good salary. Contact 084-442 8330. Khun Peter. Email: hp.sch.ranz56@gmx.ch

British International School, Phuket

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

• Junior Secretary at Headmaster's Office**Qualifications**

- Female, Thai Nationality
- Bachelor's degree in related field
- Excellent English, Computer literate and good people skills
- Able to coordinate with other department in academic function

• Telephone Operator & Public Relations**Qualifications**

- Diploma or higher education, Thai nationality
- Good command of spoken & written English, Computer literate
- >1 year's experience in hospitality & service industry
- Customer service skills, Good operation & communication skill's
- Interpersonal and problem-solving skills
- Good personality, Team player

• Human Resources Officer**Qualifications**

- Thai Nationality, age not over 35 years old
- Bachelor's degree in Human Resources, Administration, Business law or related fields
- Some experience in HR, Time Attendance and General Affairs a function are preferred
- Proficient in using computers and ability to read, speak and understand English
- Cooperative team member, maintain good staff relations and service-minded person

• School Driver**Qualifications**

- Excellent driving record with 3 years of experience
- Knowledge of safety rules and regulations
- Professional attitude / Good organizational skills

Interested candidate please submit your cv and recent photo to patcharakornrnt@bisphuket.ac.th or sirirats@bisphuket.ac.th



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E-mail: patcharakornrnt@bisphuket.ac.th or sirirats@bisphuket.ac.th

**SECRETARY
KINDERGARTEN**

Must have good English & computer skills. Monday-Friday, 7.30am-5pm. Chalong. Tel: 080-624 7060 Email: phuket preschool@yahoo.com www.buds-phuket.com

**VILLA MANAGER
WANTED**

Villa manager for a six-bedroom holiday villa in Surin. Live in or live out. Must be able to speak English. Tel: 084-689 4658 (English), 081-537 2549 (Thai). Email: malinlson@hotmail.com

SITE ENGINEER

Will work for Bayshore Projects Co.Ltd. Thai Nationality: Minimum 5 Years experience in residential development. Must hold national diploma in civil or structural engineering. Tel: 081-968 5963. Email: c@bayshoreprojects.com

**SMALL BUSINESS
LOOKING FOR**

Thai male/female wanted to work in our office. Must have good English (speaking and spelling) and good computer skills. Job involves talking with clients, recording, keeping, and doing quotations. University degree desired, but not required for right applicant. Thai male wanted to work in Phuket. Must have good English (speaking and spelling). Job involves mechanical/electrical engineer work within the marine industry, preferably with experience. 076-239 112. Email: damian@electrical-marine.com

ARCHITECTURE

Thai national wanted. Ability to use AutoCAD, Sketch-Up and 3D-Max is a must. Tel: 081-788 1639. Email: sec@phuketawnings.com

**RESERVATIONS
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Full time. Western. Must have excellent written English, organizational and computer skills. Self motivated / good communicator. Send CV to phuketbookings@gmail.com

**RESTAURANT
MANAGER**

New restaurant, Surin Beach, needs front of house manager. Must be fluent in English, have experience in managing large restaurant, will be responsible for management of bar and wait staff, including high-level training, recruitment. Good salary plus generous incentives. Tel: 076-325 755.

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Phuket-based architectural practice urgently requires a senior architect to oversee design of luxury villa and hospitality projects. Proficiency in written and spoken English required. Please send CV and expected salary to: info@imedgeconcepts.com

**LOOKING FOR
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Phuket Wake Park is looking for Chef of Thai Cuisine, Cook / Waiter, Operator of Cable Ski Line, Cashier. Tel: 084-889 4942 (English). Send CV to office@phuketwakepark.com

ADMIN MANAGER

Admin at cable ski required good spoken English, water sports experience. Good salary. Tel: 082-938 7748. Contact Kiki. Email: phuketwakepark@gmail.com

RUSSIAN STAFF

Russian manager requires. Good spoken English. Responsibilities: marketing, management, PR, translating. 25,000 baht per month+premium. Contact Kiki. Tel: 082-938 7748. Email: phuketwakepark@gmail.com

**STAFF WANTED FOR
BEACH BAR**

All staff needed for new beach bar on Surin Beach. Competitive wages, good hours and a fun place to work. Please e-mail your resume. Everyone considered. Email: jessezurn@hotmail.com

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We are looking for a Thai female with teaching skills for four English teachers and our security guards. Tel: 076-336 084, 081-607 6637, Fax: 076-336 085. Email: pornthip@sgsphuket.com

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Luxury villas looking for cooks, maids and managers. Live-in and live-out positions available. Tel: 080-699 2436. Email: kokakat@gmail.com

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Laguna Resorts & Hotels is a respected and responsible company whose interests combine hotels and real estate, with an emphasis on quality and environmental protection.

To meet the Group's exciting expansion plans, we are currently seeking qualified candidates for the position of **Public Relations & Marketing Communications Manager**.

Key responsibilities:

Manage all aspects of media relations for Laguna Phuket. Responsible for maintaining/updating all website copy and images. Managing Laguna's social media campaign, copy writing of a quarterly magazine and other copy writing assignments.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Mass Communication, Public Relations or a related field
- At least 3 years work experience in a PR or Marcomms role
- Excellent command of both written and spoken English
- Proficiency in MS Office
- Proficiency in social media

The successful candidate will be offered attractive working conditions, together with an excellent remuneration and benefits package.

Application

Please submit your CV (in English) with photograph and expected salary to:

Human Resources Department, Laguna Resorts & Hotels PLC
390/1 Moo 1 Srisoonthorn Road, Chermgtalay, Thalang, Phuket 83110
Tel. 076-362300 ext. 1510 | Email: career@lagunaphuket.com

Please be informed that only short-listed candidates will be notified.

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- 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
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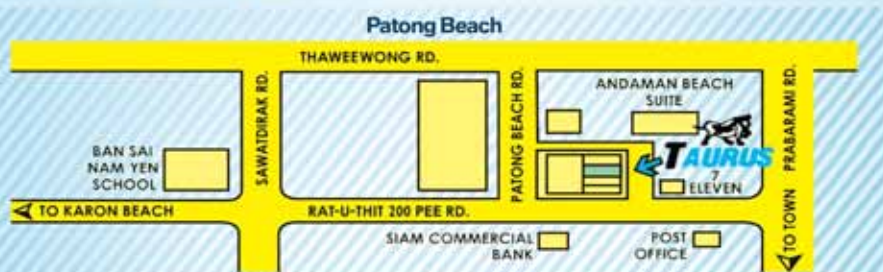
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SOLUTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S
CrypticCrossword

COFFEE break





Mr Phichet Ko, manager of Phanason Resort Laemhin, Phuket (second from right) hands a gift to Ms Ratchaneewan Na Nakorn (third from right) for the first house warming ceremony.



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CENTRA SENDS NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO PATONG MAYOR



Wilawan Chiammanasombut (right), general manager of the Centra Ashlee Hotel Patong, and Sudawan Koliyanon (left), assistant sales/PR manager, paid a visit to Patong Mayor Pian Keesin to wish him a happy and prosperous new year.






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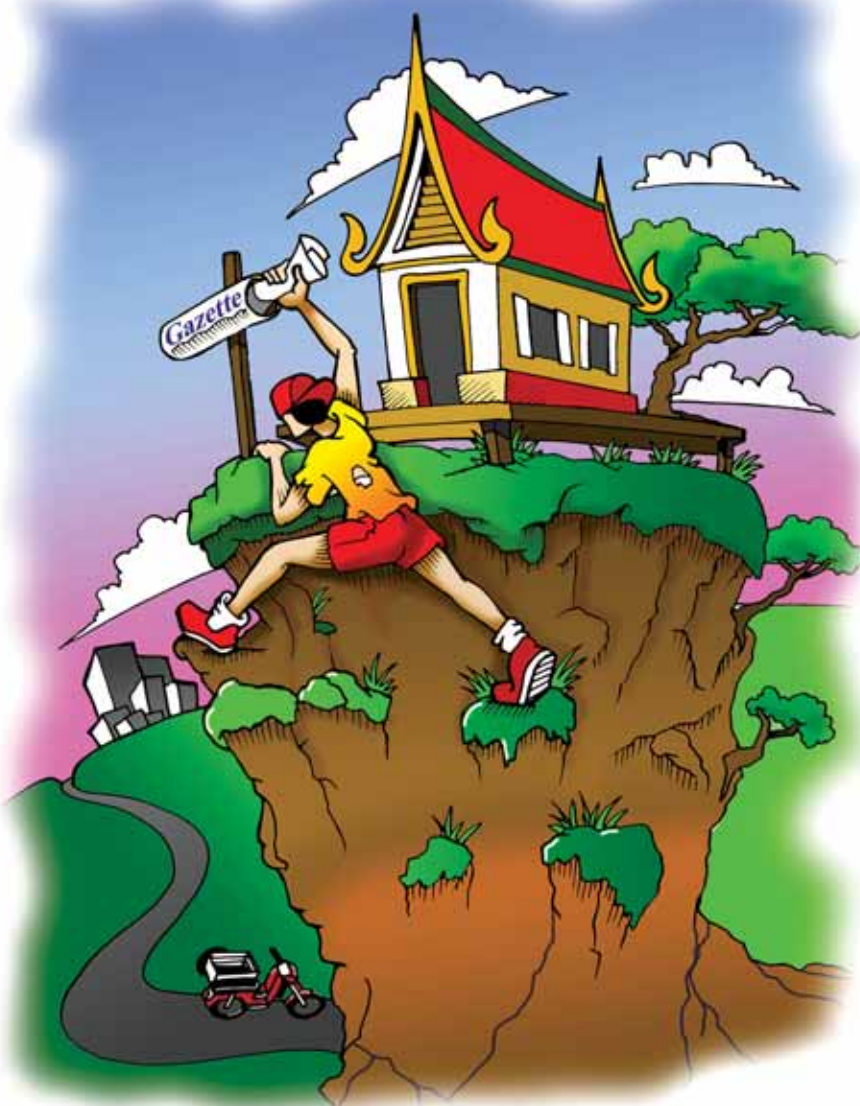
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January 4-10, 7 to 8:30pm: Opening Exhibition at Mom Tri's VR Gallery

Phuket artists Watcharin Rodnit and Kriangrat Thephabuttra will have a joint exhibition of oil on canvas and mixed media sculpture. Watcharin has a Masters of Fine Art from Silpakorn University and has exhibited internationally. Kriangrat also attended Silpakorn University where he received a Bachelors of Fine Art. His paintings and sculptures have been exhibited throughout Thailand. Both artist are part of the Chino Art Group in Phuket. Contact Sylvie: 076 3335368

January 5; 12 to 3pm: Saturday Brunch at Two Chefs Bistro

Saturday brunch at Two Chefs Bistro. Every Saturday we are setting up our brunch buffet, filled to the limits with home made delights. In our smoke house, we smoke all of our fish and meats by ourselves, and in the bakery we bake all our own bread. With very well trained chefs and a Swedish head chef, we can promise you that you won't leave hungry or thirsty. All this for only 395 baht. For more info: twochefsbistrodeli.com

January 6, 13; 11:30am to 2:30pm: Sunday Lobster Lunch at RE KA TA Beach Club at Boathouse

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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

our wonderful salads. DJ sets by Jamie O'Rourke and Ms Nok til sunset. For more information call: 66-76-330421.

January 15, 6pm to 12am: Tapas & Wine at RE KA TA Beach Club at Boathouse

Tapas and wine every Tuesday night at RE KA TA Beach Club at Boathouse. Free tapas with each drink! Wine list with 50 per cent discount. Pitchers of Sangria for 250 baht net. DJ set by Jamie O'Rourke. For more information call Annie at: 66-76-330421

January 17, 11:30 am to 2pm Phuket International Women's Club monthly lunch at Trisara

We shall be treated to a fabulous seafood lunch at "Seafood" in Trisara. All are welcome but prior registration is essential. Members price is 500 baht; non-members 650 baht. All profits go to the PIWC scholarship fund. For more information visit: phuketiwcc.com.

February 25: Makha Bucha Day (Public Holiday)

Makha Bucha Day, which falls on the full moon of the third lunar month, commemorates the Buddha's ordaining of 1,250 monks who had arrived unannounced from afar only seven months after the Buddha began his teachings. It is also the date

the Buddha delivered his Fundamental Teachings – just months before his death.

Apr 13 to 15: Songkran Festival
Songkran is the Thai New Year Festival. Also known as the 'Water Festival'. Held during the driest month in Thailand, Songkran is celebrated by Thais throughout the country pouring – traditionally only a little, but these days a lot – of water on other people to wish them good luck for the New Year.

May 5, Coronation Day
Coronation Day commemorates the accession to the throne of HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej on May 5, 1950.

May 6, Substitution for Coronation Day (Public Holiday)

May 24, Visakha Bucha Day
Visakha Bucha Day is observed on the day of the full moon during the 6th lunar month, which usually falls in either May or early June. It is a day to commemorate three important incidents: the birth, the enlightenment and the passing away of the Buddha. Miraculously, these events fell in the same month and on the same date in the Buddhist era.

May 24, Arsarnha Bucha Day
This full-moon day of the eighth lunar month commemorates the Buddha's first sermon to his first five disciples after attaining Enlightenment more than 2,500 years ago. Evening candlelit processions are staged in all Thai Buddhist temples.

Tapas and wine at RE KA TA



January 15

For more information call
Annie at: +66-76-330421

August 12, Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday

Her Majesty's Birthday is a public holiday in the Kingdom.

October 23, Chulalongkorn Memorial Day

Chulalongkorn Day commemorates the reign of Rama V, who is best remembered for abolishing slavery in Thailand.

November 17, Loy Krathong Festival

One of the most beautiful festivals in Thailand. It is traditionally performed on the full moon night of the twelfth lunar month, which usually falls in November.

A Krathong is a banana-leaf cup containing flowers, a candle and incense sticks, which will be floated away in a canal or river. The idea is to worship the river's Goddess and at the same time to float away any bad luck. Loy Krathong is not a public holiday.

December 5, His Majesty the King's Birthday (Public Holiday)

Also marked as Father's Day in Thailand.

December 31, New Years Eve

This is a public holiday in Thailand.

January 1, 2014 New Years Day

This is a public holiday in Thailand.

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JAILBREAK: Cop prepares to leave her cage. Photo: Toffee Omyim

Call of the wild

A family's journey out of captivity

THIS past year has been an incredibly busy time at the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project (GRP), but fortunately, with the arrival of a new crop of enthusiastic volunteers to help out, the day finally came when the GRP were able to release the 2012 gibbon family (Cop, Jorn and baby Sherpa) into the wild.

On the climb up to the release site to let the new family go, the research team were fortunate enough to come across another reintroduced family whilst passing through their territory.

The family of 'Kip' celebrated their 10th anniversary as wild forest gibbons in September of 2012. The adult couple has raised three babies in the wild since their release and the oldest of these wild born offspring has already started her own family.

Those involved in the release said that watching the 'wild' family casually foraging in

the trees on their way up to release a new and naive gibbon family into the forest, was a good omen.

Since 2002, the GRP has released eight breeding families of gibbons into the local rainforest here on Phuket, and this year it was Cop, Jorn and baby Sherpa's turn.

The female, Cop, is just ten years old and arrived at GRP in 2004 from Patong Beach, where she had been used as a photo prop for tourists. Her mate, Jorn, had been kept as a pet before his rescue and is eight years old. Sherpa, who turned two in October 2012, is the couple's firstborn baby.

"This is the youngest family the project has ever released; all three individuals have a wonderful long life ahead of them in the forest and carry a minimal amount of bad experiences from life with humans," says Petra

Osterberg; GRP primatologist and long-term volunteer.

"The process from release to actual independence is lengthy and requires many adaptations and adjustments from the individual animals. We are hopeful that the young ages of this year's family will make them adapt to the forest easier and more naturally than gibbons who have gathered more traumatic experiences from captivity."

Since the first day of their release all three gibbons have chosen to stay well off the ground; exploring their new canopy universe with great enthusiasm and ignoring all of the human onlookers below.

Young Sherpa has spent the majority of his waking time learning how to navigate his new forest playground whilst his parents are trying out all of the delicious foliage the surrounding trees have to offer.

Both Sherpa and Jorn have taken a few tumbles to the ground in their first days out, when they misjudged the safety of the branches, but have not let small mistakes hold them back.

"It is to be expected that reintroduced gibbons may have to learn a few lessons the hard way," says Mr Osterberg.

On day six, Jorn started to sing a tentative solo from one of the high emerging trees next to the release cage and Cop and Sherpa soon rushed to his side to join in the chorus.

It was a great moment for GRP staff and volunteers, listening to the family lay claim to their forest territory and raising their voices for over 20 minutes.

The episode got an abrupt end when Bank, a large adult male from a neighboring group, turned



Jorn swings from a tree at the family's designated territory inside Khao Pra Taew National Park. Photo: Toffee Omyim

up and started a singing in response from a tree only 150 meters away.

Cop immediately took Sherpa to safety whilst Jorn positioned himself in between his family and the potential intruder. Luckily, on this occasion GRP staff were there to act as protectors

outlook:

"Sadly, reintroducing captive-raised primates into the wild is neither a conservation, nor animal welfare, solution to the problem of the illegal wildlife trade in Thailand. The white handed gibbon already became extinct on Phuket in the early 1980s due to the trade.

"Every year new baby gibbons, slow lorises and other wildlife arrive from the mainland to 'entertain' the thousands of tourists that travel here each year. Many people are sadly still unaware of the devastating trade that brings exotic wild-born, baby animals into the tourist hotspots for entertainment and as photo-prop animals.

The only way to stop this trade is to stop the demand and to spread the message never to pay for photographs with endangered wild animals."

— *Phuket Gazette*



Jorn and baby Sherpa, one week after their release at the end of last year. Photo: Toffee Omyim

of the new family and were able to scare Bank off. In the coming weeks we hope that the family will gain enough confidence in the canopy to ward off any intruders themselves.

Although the gibbons have much to learn, so far they are adjusting extremely well to their new forest home.

However, Mr Osterberg gives a staunch reality check on the program's often optimistic

All sightings of illegal wildlife used as photo props may be reported to the GRP or directly to the DNP at dnp.go.th/complain/index.asp. Visitors are always welcome to GRP's Education centre and Rehabilitation site, in order to learn more about GRP's work and also about the gibbons we have staying with us. Some of the gibbons that cannot be released can be seen from our viewing platform. We are located at Bang Pae waterfall, 9kms east of the Heroines Monument.

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Saijai Wunphanit

RELAXING on the shady verandah of her colonial-style Pa Khlok home, Saijai Wunphanit rummages through a black plastic bag and brings out intricate Yao embroidery she has picked up from her recent "treasure hunt" trip up North.

"Aren't they beautiful?" she asks, contemplating her finds.

An avid collector of fine regional artifacts and proprietor of Ban Boran Antiques, on Takuapa Road in town, Saijai is known for her knowledge on Southeast Asian art. Indeed, Ban Boran is a treasure trove filled with rare textiles, tribal handicrafts, silverware, ancient beads and jewelry and religious iconography. Lately, a body of Chinese antique furniture has been added to the stock.

So large is Saijai's collection that it spills over into her 5-bedroom home, taking up most of the living space. Many rare Buddha statues of different styles and periods – Mandalay, Sukhothai, Shan, grace her large living room.

"My clients love coming to visit me because they know that I keep the best pieces at home," says Saijai. "There's one who comes every year because he is after one particular Buddha. He offers me a handsome amount but I just can't bear to part with the piece yet. It has personal, sentimental value, and is therefore priceless."

A native of Phuket, Saijai holds a degree in political science from

THAI
gallery
By Nanthapa Pengkasem

Ramkhamhaeng University. She thought the degree would be a passport to becoming a *Nai Amphoe* (district officer) only to find out that the position was not open to women back then.

Having lived in Chiang Mai in the mid-1980s she spotted a niche for a tribal crafts market in Phuket and opened Ban Boran Antiques, first on Yaowarat Road, in 1987. It became an instant hit with tourists and locals alike and the business has been growing ever since.

Saijai credits her success with the commitment to follow her heart and not fashion. "My philosophy is to buy what I like and if something doesn't sell I'll keep it. I appreciate crafts that are made for personal use. Many tribal works are like that – they seem to take on the personality of the owners/makers and embody a certain kind of spirit."

Over its 20 year existence, Ban Boran Antiques has welcomed many world-famous designers and celebrities. Saijai remembers the British fashion designer Paul Smith who was "always attracted to quirky artifacts," and Kenzo,

with whom she bantered. And there was also the cast of the movie *The Beach*, with the likes of Tilda Swinton (with whom she had picnicked) and Leonardo DiCaprio (who bought a small Buddha). The actor Jude Law also made a quiet appearance one day and left with a woodcarving.

"Antiques is a strange business," observes Saijai. "It's not always about money. There has to be a chemistry between the buyer and seller before a piece changes hands."

As much as Saijai has enjoyed the success of her endeavor she admits that the antique business has already peaked and has now subsided due to the changing times. "The new generation have quite different interests and antiques are not one of them."

And so Saijai has branched out into property and for five years now, has been buying old townhouses and renovating them – keeping her busy.

She still keeps Ban Boran Antiques going but is shifting her attention to her home. Apart from looking after her two sons (aged 16 and 17) and an elderly mother, Saijai would like to turn to the rubber business making full use of the 20-rai farm that surrounds her house.

"I quite like the idea of self-sufficiency and at the same time preserving green spaces for the environment."



About Thai Gallery

The individuals profiled in "Thai Gallery" are chosen on the basis of their contributions to Phuket as an *international* community, and, often, for having made those contributions through successful social and/or working relationships with foreigners. This implies some foreign language skills and an interest in interacting with different cultures. They are people who in our experience help make the lives of expats far more enjoyable here than might be the case without them.



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*The Charm Residence Project: Proving Co., Ltd. is the owner of the land, the land allocator and the marketer of the project. It's company registration number is 082952010143, with its registered office at 5/41 Thaveewong Road, Tambon Patong, Amphoe Kathu, Phuket Province. The company's registered capital is THB 96,000,000.00 (based on the company's certification document dated 30 November 2012). The company is developing the project to be a residential condominium, comprising three five-story residential buildings, and one seven-story residential building, with a total of 348 residential condominium units (and no commercial condominium unit). The company is also developing a residential land allocation project locally at Thaveewong Road, Tambon Patong, Amphoe Kathu, Phuket Province. It is being developed on the land under the land deed number 12177, land plot number 6, page search 980, Tambon Patong, Amphoe Kathu, Phuket Province. The area of the land subject to the development has an approximate area of 3 Rai, 1 Ngan and 15.8 square Rai. The company is the owner of the land. The land is encumbered to Kaikorn Bank PCL. The project is currently being developed. Once the buyer pays the full purchase price under the sale and purchase agreement, the company will be ready to transfer the ownership to buyers within 30 days. The development of the project commenced in April 2011, and the development of the common properties and public services in the project should be completed around December 2013. Once the development is completed, the company will register the condominium. The buyers of the condominium units will be required to pay the common area fees, taxes, and other fees as determined by the developer or the condominium joint's person, subject to the laws on condominium and the terms and conditions set by the company.

Infections of epidemic proportions



Live Wire

By Woody Leonhard

MY fellow editor at InfoWorld, Robert Lemos, published a story in eWeek last month that took Thailand to task for its incredibly lousy record with different kinds of malware.

Quoting a study from antivirus company Sophos, Lemos says that Thailand is the third worst country in the world for PC infections.

According to the eWeek report: "A user surfing the Web in the third riskiest online nation, Thailand, has a greater than one-in-five chance of encountering malware each quarter, according to Sophos. The nation has ranked high on lists of most infected countries for more than a year.

In April 2011, for example, antivirus firm PandaLabs named it the No 2 most infected country, with nearly two-thirds of systems infected by some form of malicious software."

While I doubt PandaLabs contention that two-thirds of the PCs in Thailand are infected, I'd be willing to bet that Sophos' observation of one-fifth is too low. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if simple scans of local PCs turned up half or more infected with a huge range of viruses, botnets, and all sorts of creepy-crawlies. Your PC, too.

Lemos goes on to say:

"Many of the threats that impact those nations take advantage of older vulnerabilities, says Richard Wang, manager of

Sophos' research labs. That is a pretty strong indication that there are a lot of PCs out there that are not being protected by updates or any form of security software," he said.

I've been preaching about this problem in Phuket for nigh on ten years now. Richard Wang got part of the problem right, but he missed the biggest problem: pirate software. I'd be willing to bet that 80 per cent – probably closer to 95 per cent – of the PCs in Phuket are running pirated versions of Windows.

Some people think that they got "genuine" copies of Windows when they bought their PCs, but they didn't.

Others took perfectly good PCs in for repair and, unbeknownst to them, the repair

or later. Some pirate copies include spyware, built right into the CD, at no extra cost.

Here are the four easiest ways to avoid becoming infected:

1) Don't install a pirate copy of Windows.

You don't have to install it, personally. The company that sold you the computer, if you bought it in Thailand, probably stuck a pirate copy on the machine just to be nice. The wonderful repairman who gave you all that new software probably gave you a pirate copy of Windows too.

2) Don't run Windows XP

Even a "genuine" copy of Windows XP has so many security holes in it, it's just a disaster waiting to happen. I don't know how many times I've found copies of Windows

XP running botnets and rootkits that are completely undetectable without an offline scan.

3) Don't run Internet Explorer 6

Microsoft is trying hard to wean people off IE 6.

They even have a deathwatch for IE 6, at ie6countdown.com.

I just published a list in InfoWorld of the worst Microsoft mistakes ever – and IE 6 was #1 on the list.

More computers have been infected through IE 6 (particularly through Flash, Adobe Reader and ActiveX running on IE 6) than any other source.

4) Update everything

Security patches exist for a reason, and it has a whole lot more to do with keeping you safe than with any nefarious attempt to track you or play Big Brother.

You need to update everything: Windows; Office (if you have it); Flash; Adobe Reader (or dump it and use Foxit); your antivirus software (I still swear by the free Microsoft Security Essentials); your browser(s); Photoshop; AutoDesk; QuickBooks and all that other stuff you run.

Here are the best solutions that I know:

1) Get genuine

Not sure if your copy of Windows is for real? Click Start, right-click Computer (or My Computer) and choose Properties. At the bottom you'll see if the copy of Windows that you have passed Windows Genuine Advantage. Even if the notice says you have a "Genuine" copy, you don't necessarily have a genuine copy.

If you aren't using Microsoft Security Essentials, download and install it. If you can download and install MSE, your copy of Windows is genuine enough.

If you have a fake copy of Windows, it might help to figure out how it got that way. If a repairman stuck a fake copy on your genuine machine (if you bought the PC in North America



A botnet operator, once gaining command and control of many users' PCs or servers, will then sell access to spammers. Image: Tom B

or Europe, it's probably genuine), scream bloody murder. If you're stuck, you may have to buy a new copy of Windows. I've been recommending for more than three years that people install Windows 7 on any PC other than old laptops (which can't handle it).

If you have friends in North America or Europe, they can buy copies of Windows 7 Home Premium for US\$50 or less, in three packs, and about US\$100 for single packs. The cheapest copies of Windows 7 I've found in Phuket are at SuperCheap, but there are many alternatives, and they aren't a whole lot more than 3,500 baht.

2) Dump XP

I know that many of you swear by XP but, for heaven's sake, it's been around for about twelve years now. That makes it about 144 in internet years. Dump it.

Get an iMac or a Nexus, or even a netbook.

If you can't bear to part with your old hardware (which is probably worth, oh, about 500 baht by now), upgrade your current PC to run a genuine copy of Windows 7.

3) Get another browser

You can use IE 8 (if you're running Windows XP), IE 9 or IE 10, the latest versions of Firefox or Google Chrome – or, better, IE, Chrome and Firefox. A whole new world awaits.

4) Get updated

Download, install, and religiously use Secunia PSI. PSI scans your computer constantly and figures out if there are updates for any of your programs. Optionally, it'll automatically install all of the latest updates.

Free, and it's worth its weight in gold.

Worried that you may have a rootkit? It's much more common than you think. Download and run Windows Defender Offline. That's the only tool I know that can find and will disinfect most Windows rootkits.

You can't run WDO from inside Windows, it has to be run outside.

Full instructions are on the Microsoft site.

We're running informal computer clinic roundtables every Sunday morning at Sandwich Shoppe Chalong, located 1 km north of Chalong Circle on Chao Fah East road. If you have a Windows problem that needs to be solved, or a question about internet service in Phuket, drop by and ask one of the assembled gurus. Sponsored by the Phuket Gazette and Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppes.

Live Wire is Phuket Gazette columnist Woody Leonhard's weekly snapshot of all things internet in Phuket. Shoot him mail at Woody@KhunWoody.com, follow him on Twitter, @PhuketLiveWire, or "like" his page at facebook.com/SandwichShoppes.



CREEPY: Don't get caught on the Web. Photo: D Noble

technician blasted a pirate copy of Windows onto their machines just because it's faster and easier than installing a genuine copy.

Some pirate copies of Windows get updated properly, with new security patches applied the way they should be. Many do not. Some pirate copies turn off Windows Updates because the updates have a nasty habit of identifying pirate software, sooner

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GAAAAARGH!: Not all pirates are so playful.
Photo: Abuk Sabuk



A Brief History of Brunch

Sunday lunch used to be preserve of left-over pizza and stale beer. Now we're luxuriating in a deluge of oysters, rocket salad and chocolate fountains. How did it all go right?

By Baz Daniel

BRUNCH Upon a Time... for many of us living in Phuket, Sunday mornings were largely an unconfirmed rumor. Many of us who grew up in the seventies used to emerge from a standard Saturday night Bacchanal around two o'clock the following Sunday afternoon, wolf down some left-over pizza and whatever hadn't been drunk the night before and collapse in front of the TV.

Such were the rigors of Western life during the seventies and it was a system we would have quite happily continued, had it not been for a revolution in society that brought with it such worrying innovations as teeth whitening services, SUVs and something called **BRUNCH**.

Time wipe to 2012 in Phuket, where we're in the midst of a social revolution to adopt all things fashionable, in order to accommodate all those well-heeled visitors and millionaire retirees who are flocking to our shores. "Brunch" is one of these.

Brunch is a word that immediately arouses suspicion... one of those schizophrenic, made-up terms, that can't quite decide what it wants to be... somehow untrustworthy, precious and well, just not English.

"Doing brunch" is now at the forefront of Phuket's social groundswell and, reeking of lazy decadence as it does, tends to feature an endless array of world-class food, hot tropical breezes, stunning views, cool music and copious supplies of naughty libations.

How did all this start?

Long-time Phuket resident Bruce Stanley recalls, "The mid-1990's was the Dark Ages of international tourism when it was very challenging to find western style foods outside the five star resorts. It was impossible to buy butter, coffee and cheese except at a little store, Sin & Lee, in Phuket Town. As the number of expat managers of resorts, dive operations and tour agencies expanded, so grew the demand for places to eat well and socialize.

"The enterprising GM of what was then the Sheraton Grande Laguna Beach, John O'Shea, developed the island's first sumptuous Sunday brunch at the waterside Bird of Paradise

restaurant. The event was an immediate success with hungry westerners lining up to enjoy the *haute cuisine* only found every Sunday for brunch. While the offering of cuisine was extravagant, the added bonus was the opportunity for the major players and their families in Phuket's early years of international tourism to get together and enjoy each other's company outside of the workplace."

As with so many things trendy and innovative, one has to look no further than the cool minimalism of the Twin Palms Resort on Surin Beach to understand the commercial growth of brunch. In the early Noughties the Oriental Spoon launched their own Sunday brunch with a welter of jet-fresh cold water oysters, Alaskan crab claws and a cascading chocolate fountain.

Through some savvy market-



DELICIOUS DELIGHTS: Indulge your sweet tooth at brunch. Photos: Baz Daniel

ing, brunch at Twin Palms rapidly became the island's premier people-watching venue, as rumors swirled around of Mick and Paris sightings and apocryphally of Pete Doherty falling asleep face-down in a salad bowl. The island's glitterati flocked to Twin Palms to discover what this growing phenomenon was all about.

The resort's General Manager Olivier Gibaud says, "We were able to establish our Sunday brunch as THE place to see and be seen when you visited Phuket, or if you lived here. We saw this socially-focused event as a fantastic opportunity to drive the appeal of our brand and so we were at pains to make it successful."

Phuket's Champagne and Chardonnay Wars Take Off

Success always breeds "the sincerest form of flattery" in Phuket, and soon there was a clamor of brunching spots fighting for the attention and patronage of the island's growing brunching fraternity, each one attempted to get a leg up on its



SUNDAY FUNDAY: Lies Sol smiles for the camera before delving into what has become an island institution.

competitors.

While Twin Palms was undeniably cool, another dimension of brunching became family-friendliness.

"Sail's brunch at the Hilton Arcadia positions itself as 'the family-friendly' place to brunch, with wandering clowns offering face-painting and balloon twirling as a jazz band blows riffs by the pool. The Mangosteen Resort also offered a very family-friendly ambiance with a low price of entry and the use of all the resort's

pools and waterways for the kiddies. And Two Chefs differentiated themselves by starting the weekend early, offering a Saturday brunch with a free-flow

Carlsberg beer option for their many Scandinavian loyalists.

Clearly location is a determining factor in winning the 'brunch wars' on a tropical island and the terrace at the Royal Meridien Yacht Club on Nai Harn Bay at one time proffered the ultimate ocean views. Since the demise of that particular brunch, Trisara has snagged the gong for superlative views. The resort's genial GM Anthony Lark explains: "When we decided to offer a brunch in March 2011, it was all about quality not quantity. We didn't want to compete with the 'all-you-can-drink cheap wine brunches' and we knew with a little live jazz in our intimate beachfront location, this would be the perfect place for a lazy Sunday gourmet experience."

One of Phuket's most expensive and indeed expansive brunches is at Indigo Pearl, where sitting

amidst their cutting edge machine-techno design, you might say brunch is a "riveting experience". Whatever the puns, they offer an extravaganza, including unlimited champagne and wines with your meal, clearly designed for the true libertines among us who fancy pushing the Sunday boat way out to sea, while surrounded by our supermodel girlfriends and sundry visiting aristocrats.

The bottom line is "you pay your money and you take your choice". But from a standing start a few years ago, when anyone who said the word "brunch" in Phuket would have been thought to have a speech impediment, to today's booming range of options, we can celebrate our good fortune in having so much choice in so many wonderful and varied locations.

Let there be brunch!



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HONDA



By Captain Nick Coombes and Linda Cartledge

THE Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions are fast becoming some of the best cruising grounds in the world – a fact well known to those who have cruised them for many years, but something that is only now becoming common knowledge around the world.

“Recent expansions in marina facilities have provided the kind of support today’s demanding professional captains are used to and the pristine ecosystems found throughout these diverse regions are exactly what yacht owners have been missing all these years”, reports Nick Coombes of Asia Pacific Superyacht.

An Overview of the Journey

At first glance it might seem daunting... but with an abundance of stunning cruising possibilities and the excellent shore-based assistance now available, it really is a joy to cruise throughout Asia’s waterways. Working on an early September departure from the Mediterranean, a Suez Canal transit and a passage through the Red Sea will put you out into the Indian Ocean to start your journey to the pristine islands of the Maldives.

Journeying on to Sri Lanka and Langkawi, Malaysia respectively in October and November, December and January will find you in Phuket, Thailand and at the half-way point in February in Myanmar. Then it’s on to the Andaman Islands in March, Singapore in April, Koh Samui, Thailand in May, Hong Kong in June and a final stop in the Philippines in July, prior to a stunning end in Indonesia in August and the option to journey further to

Australia and New Zealand.

Stunning Asian regions are briefly described below in planning a cruising itinerary, which comprises a Superyacht year-long journey through Asian waters.

Maldives – September

First Port of call is Malé, the Capital of the Republic of the Maldives. Arrival formalities are



AN ISLAND IN THE SUN: Medhufinolhu Island in the Maldives.

simple although you will need a pilot for your first entry (Port regulations); clearance is done in an hour’s time and then you’re free to leave the Customs anchorage.

Most yachts head north approximately four miles and anchor off the resort island of Bandos. Unlike some of the other exclusive resorts, Bandos gladly welcomes yacht crews and generally several yachts will be at anchor when you arrive.

Ruhiveli Island (Bird Island)

As there are no Marina facilities in the Maldives large enough for today’s Superyachts, you must rely

on your ship’s tenders or boats provided by the agent. Basic spares are available in Malé and Petrol/Diesel can be supplied at anchor anywhere close to Malé.

The Maldives are a nature lover’s paradise with more than a thousand small islands surrounded by pure white beaches, like ‘Bird Island’, and pristine reef systems, providing an unending opportunity to fish, dive and

snorkel to your heart’s content.

In all but the heaviest weather there are plenty of places to cruise. The best and busiest time is November to April and Asia Pacific Superyachts Maldives’ Mohamed Hameed and his team are helpful and can provide excellent dive and fishing guides. A little planning will help you avoid having to ship lots of supplies into the Maldives.

Sri Lanka – October

A very short 450NM passage from the Maldives takes you up to Sri Lanka – a good option for a fueling point. The islands 18 million strong population provides an intoxicating mix of cultures and diverse ethnic groups. There are three main ports: Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee.

Colombo and Galle are both manmade while Trincomalee is one of the world’s largest natural harbors; all have deepwater berths for Superyacht use.

Malaysia – November

Captain Nick Coombes, who’s based in Malaysia, reports: “My first stop east of Sri Lanka is always Langkawi. This group of 99 Islands is the perfect place to re-supply and relax. As the region’s only ‘Duty Free’ port, you will find cheap, low sulphur diesel, as well as petrol, A1 jet fuel, alcohol (including fine

wines) and tobacco products. Two Superyacht marinas provide safe berthing, with a varied supply of support services available in the main town of Kuah.”

There is a custom built Superyacht refit center, with a 500 ton travel lift, 2 x 60 meter work sheds and plenty of hard stand. For larger yachts the shipyard offers a 100 meter floating dock for short or extended visits. For the crew there are plenty of beaches, restaurants, bars, 5-star hotels, golf courses, uninhabited islands and an international airport.

Cruising around Langkawi’s 99 islands will provide guests with plenty to do and allow easy access to the southern Thai islands in the Butang Group. Nick suggests the best time to visit is September through May.

Phuket – December and January

Just a few hours north of Langkawi you will find the very popular Island of Phuket. Dubbed the ‘Monaco’ of South East Asia, Phuket now has two Superyacht marinas and more are being planned.

The locals are very friendly and there is a substantial ex-pat population on the island. For off duty crew the nightlife in Patong and Phuket City is spectacular with plenty of 5-star restaurants and wine bars along with a great mix of local restaurants. Lots of high end beach clubs are being set up, giving owners a choice of secluded

sea or further south, the islands of Koh Phi Phi, made famous by the film, *The Beach*.

World class diving is within easy reach and guests can beach, swim, snorkel, look for monkeys and wildlife before heading off to the Similan Islands; 60NM’s north west of Phuket and classed as one of the ‘top ten global dive destinations’ – a paradise for diving and snorkeling and often guests will enjoy 30M+ water visibility.

For a more private diving experience, head a little further north to the Surin Islands and the Surin Archipelago, a 135 square kilometers area lying in the Andaman Sea some 53 kilometers off mainland Ranong Province (the park’s five islands lie just south of the border with Myanmar).

Gordon suggests a brief return to Phuket for refueling/re-provisioning before heading off for Myanmar. Yachts planning to be in Phuket for Christmas can also join the exclusive Asia Superyacht Rendezvous. It’s an event aimed at both motor and sailing yachts and a great way to start the festive season.

Myanmar – February

Travelling further north is Myanmar and the Mergui Archipelago, partly famed as the home of small groups of ‘Moken’ (sea gypsy) villages. The Archipelago is lightly populated and it’s easy to find perfect places to relax and enjoy the solitude and beauty. The Mergui Archipelago and the Andaman Islands are among the world’s top preferred diving destinations.

Andaman Islands – March

Moving from the Mergui Archipelago, you will soon encounter the vast spread of the Andaman Islands in India. The journey offers stunning cruising vistas as well as land attractions and discoveries.

Visitors will find deserted islands of pure white sparkling beaches and crystal clear water. Moving inland, lush vegetation and towering cliffs with unusual bird and flora/fauna all wait to be explored and active volcanoes can be viewed during the journey.

The Andaman Islands of India deliver adventuresome cruising and vessels often seek out Asia Pacific Superyachts Andamans’, R Rathnam, to create an itinerary that opens onto a secret world of tropical jungles and serene beaches



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Proboscis monkeys along the Kinabatangan River in Borneo.

bays or exclusive nightlife.

Malaysia – Gayana

Experienced Asia Pacific Superyachts Phuket’s Gordon Fernandes can recommend the best in yacht planning, noting, “Starting out and staying close to Phuket you have Phang Nga Bay with its limestone monoliths rising out of the



scattered throughout much of the Andaman Archipelago.

Travelling on, some of the most enticing of unexplored waters can be found in the Bay of Bengal, with deep seas and hundreds of hidden bays teeming with marine life.

Mr Rathnam notes the best cruising months for the Andaman Islands are between November to April.

Singapore – April

Heading back south along the Malay Peninsular you will arrive at the island city of Singapore. This is one of the financial shining stars of South East Asia, and offers all the trappings of a modern city, all packaged together on a tropical island.

“Singapore is one of the busiest ports in the world and as such requires some pre arrival formalities and pilotage services for any vessel over GRT300,” comments Asia Pacific Superyachts Singapore head, Captain Scott Walker.

Scott and his team can easily handle all requests and will ensure your stay is very enjoyable, noting:

“As you can imagine, a port as busy as this also has an extensive choice of shore support facilities and pretty much all major repairs can be completed locally.”

Koh Samui – May

Koh Samui is a lovely sand-kissed island, offering opportunities to enjoy some of Eastern Thailand's legendary hospitality and some very good diving, reports Captain Charlie Dwyer of the 36m *Yanneke Too* – heading up Asia Pacific Superyachts Samui.

Koh Samui is the ‘Jewel of the Gulf of Thailand’ – filled with natural beauty and many options for anchoring along the coast along with many attractions both on Koh Samui and the surrounding islands. The island offers elephant trekking, snake and monkey shows, temples, waterfalls, Thai cultural dancing and a mountain safari trip. The island is also home to some of the finest restaurants and spas in Thailand.

Of special interest and just 20 NM from Koh Samui, is the Angthong National Marine Park with its spectacular group of 42 uniquely different and exciting islands. A mere 7 NM from Samui is the tropical island of Koh Phangan, famed for its natural beauty and world-famous ‘Full Moon Party’. To the north is Koh Tao, famed for its diving.

Koh Samui is used as a base for discovering the many beautiful

islands located in the turquoise seas of the gulf with names like Koh Chang and Koh Samet. From Samui it's possible to sail on to Pattaya and Bangkok - the cultural capital of Thailand. The best months to visit are May through September.

Hong Kong – June

Hong Kong, at the mouth of the Pearl river delta, part of China yet so different, is a busy commercial port with a high rise skyline and one of the most exciting cities in Asia, where east meets west. Though Hong Kong does ‘urban’ well, surprising to visiting yachts are the beautiful seascapes and the fact that almost 60 per cent of Hong Kong's land mass is still country park.

Hong Kong's 236 islands, studded with beaches, provide unexpected stunning cruising offsetting the fast pace of life in the world's third financial center. Business combined with entertaining on board is normal practice in Hong Kong.

The proximity of museums, fine dining, tourist attractions and shopping plus some world famous international sports events make Hong Kong a unique destination.



Imagine taking a year off to cruise Asia's most exotic destinations.

The occasional typhoon may occur between June-September; however, Hong Kong waters are mainly protected. Outside the harbor, you can anchor almost anywhere hassle free or dock at Gold Coast Yacht & Country Club where Asia Pacific Superyachts Hong Kong's Bart Kimman and his team can arrange typhoon proof berths for Superyachts and any other services required.

The marine department facilitates guaranteed corruption-free port clearance facilities and it's a free port, making it easy to obtain spare

parts. There are excellent shipyard facilities and repairs can be arranged for with an agent. The APS Hong Kong team has a ‘can do’ attitude to make life for the visiting yacht easy and exciting and most crews love to stay in Hong Kong.

The Philippines – July

Most yachts stay around the brilliant scenery and prime anchorages of the Puerto Galera and northern Mindoro areas. You can make day trips and overnight stays to the white beaches of Mindoro and the Maricaban Islands. There are great bars and restaurants along the commercial side of the island and end the holiday with a sail back to Manila Yacht Club, taking about 15 hours with plenty of beaches to anchor.

Borneo – August

Heading South from the Philippines, you will find the island of Borneo with the best cruising to be found in the state of Sabah”, explains Alvin Teh, heading up the Asia Pacific Superyachts Borneo team. Sabah's cruising waters from Labuan to Sipadan offer spectacular and beautiful waters, islands and mainland attractions.

Tropical islands and mainland coastal bays offer extraordinarily diverse mainland beauty which includes the highest mountain in Southeast Asia, Mount Kinabalu; virgin rainforest conservation areas (including the Maliau Basin, known as the ‘Lost World’); exotic wildlife and flora and fauna and a myriad of adventure and eco-tourism activities – all accessible as a day or overnight excursion from your yacht.

A stopover in Kota Kinabalu at the Sutura Harbor Marina which will allow for land excursions to the wild interiors of Borneo, diving at Layang (famed for schooling hammerheads) and the jewel of Sabah, Sipadan.

And for true adventure, take a river journey up the famed Kinabatangan River to see rare and endangered species including orangutans, proboscis monkeys and pigmy elephants.

Indonesia – September

As Indonesia spans the equator, she is unique in her diversity and opportunities for year round cruising.

“From November to March, the northern sector is at its best”, explain Richard Lofthouse & Captain Jimmy Blee of Asia Pacific

Indonesian Papua and spend time in a place called Fak Fak!”

In November and December a run to the Spice Islands and the beautiful Molluku area is a must – a living history of nutmeg, old forts and unique beauty.

From April to October, the 8th Parallel is ripe for exploring – from

Borobudur in Java, Uluwatu in Bali or the dragons of Komodo and Rinja.

Then there's Sumatra and Sulawesi – (two of the biggest islands in the world), Kalimantan (the Indonesian side of Borneo), Sumba (‘The land that time forgot’) or many other of the 15,000 islands Indonesia has to offer, you will see that the riches

available are abundant and the exploration, endless.

Captain Jimmy and Richard have over 20 years experience exploring Indonesia and making even the most remote trip possible.

For more information or for a more detailed look at each region's cruising options, visit asia-pacific-superyachts.com and click on region/country and view photos, testimonials, itineraries, description and contacts by region agent directly.



Hong Kong harbor. Photos: Asia-Pacific Superyachts.

Superyachts Indonesia, “From Borneo it is only three to five days steaming or sailing to Bitung in North Sulawesi where you can clear in and take good quality fuel.”

From there you have ready access to Bunaken National Park, the world class muck diving of Lembeh and deserted islands to the north – all within a fifty mile radius.

Moving East is the untouched Halmahera and the diving at Raja Ampat. Beyond that is the opportunity to discover new tribes in

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SUDOKU: Each row, column and 3x3 sub-grid must contain the number 1-9 once only. © Kevin Stone (brainbashers.com)

COFFEE break

Across:

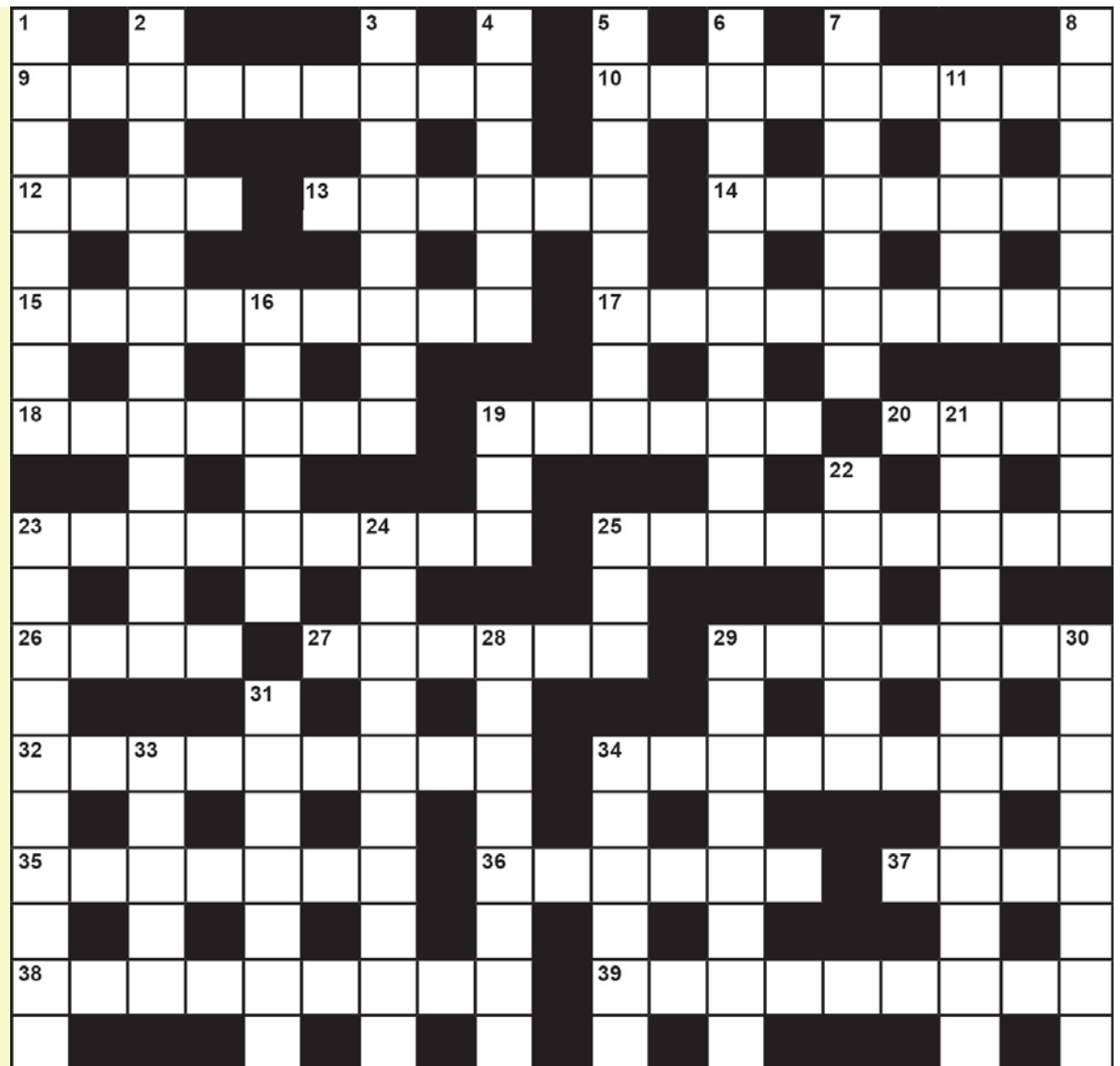
9. Hide ready to surprise a twin, I possibly lie first (3,2,4)
10. Weighs up, set a value to be altered (9)
12. Credit Eastern wife in company (4)
13. A poet, I abused a drug (6)
14. Free one soul perhaps (7)
15. I turn barb from place where the Bunnies can go freely (6,3)
17. Radio identifications for almost every signal (4,4)
18. Chartered Accountant runs grounds as place for temporary vehicle storage (3,4)
19. Dubious sums about the Spanish shellfish (6)
20. A page, Saint note, in church

recess (4)

23. Let Street arrange type of printing (9)
25. For each, possibly mean New Testament is for all time (9)
26. Swirl dyed in a whirl (4)
27. Second taxi driver has acne (6)
29. Conservative, look after contest (7)
32. Putting up with one claret, perhaps (9)
34. If fed badly, let out of the ordinary (9)
35. Music without a scale opened by remote (7)
36. Was full of things, meet back with editor (6)
37. Eastern ruler in the mire! (4)
38. Range of plum, date I chew (9)
39. Study point of view in Alpine lake (9)

Down:

1. Charged vote Right in command (8)
2. Around Red Beret rave echoed (12)
3. New, park him around the Thai



dip (3,5)

4. In street, wet weather causes tension (6)
5. Justifications of French barriers (8)
6. Informal clothes cause a law to change, right? (6,4)
7. As cults destroyed sailors' weapon (7)
8. Assent mess came from judgement (10)
11. Strip to a minimal bathing costume (5)

16. Game is changed by representations (6)

19. Master at floor covering (3)
21. To arrange in advance, page about put off mine (12)
22. Little chap in name, perhaps (6)
23. Luke, make at new tribal village in Phuket (4,6)
24. Short periods not in start the round (7,3)
25. Give money for parking, yes (3)
28. Sort of puffed, the bread,

maybe (8)

29. Fine cafe provides stimulant (8)
30. Discouraged, put off communist (8)
31. See fair sort of flower (7)
33. Put away turn in organized play (3,2)
34. Doctor, note Northern church souse (6)

Cryptic crossword compiled by Patong Bill. Answers on page 27.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20):

Capricorns could find it hard to understand others' motives this week. The stars suggest that other earth signs are likely to disappoint and you may consider cutting business ties accordingly. Personal relationships are also affected by these uncertain cosmic conditions; a water sign's hopes for romance will be hard to disappoint. Those celebrating a birthday in the days ahead will be inspired to leave their comfort zones during the coming year.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19):

Strong ambition could cause those born under the sign of Aquarius to move too quickly in the world of work. You are advised to wait until later this month before making commitments that will be impossible to reverse. Sharper communication skills should be used to your advantage until the middle of January – another air sign can be won over, but energy spent trying to impress a fire sign will be wasted.

PISCES (Feb 20-March 20):

It can be hard for Pisceans to find the right words this week. The stars indicate that you will be taken by surprise where work is concerned – delay responding until you have thought

things properly through. In the realm of romance, sentiments spoken in the heat of the moment will be regretted. Infatuation with an air sign is forecast to soon blow over. Lucky days for finances are Tuesday and Wednesday.

ARIES (March 21-April 20):

Your attention span is likely to be shorter than usual this week and the stars suggest that important details could be missed. Trust can be an issue where working relationships are concerned; another fire sign's loyalty can be misplaced, but an earth sign is ready to prove they are on your side. Sizzling days for romance are Sunday and Monday. Wear the color olive green to encourage better concentration.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21):

Minor problems can be blown out of proportion, especially when dealing with fire signs this week. Taureans are reminded to focus on what is important right now and allow the future to take care of itself. In the realm of romance, jumping to conclusions is not recommended; this weekend is an auspicious time for heart to heart conversations. Bargain hunting with other earth signs is well starred this weekend.

YOUR horoscope By Isla Star

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):

Twists and turns in the world of work keep Geminis on their toes, but the stars indicate that you should be satisfied with results reached by the middle of this month. Where affairs of the heart are concerned, a confession from another air sign lights up your weekend. Those still seeking a soul mate see their natural charm working magic on a water sign. Your lucky color this week is amber.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):

It may seem as though not much progress is being made at work, but the stars promise that Cancerians are moving forward. A slow start to the year gives you opportunity to reflect on which direction you want to go in. In the realm of romance, there are hints that you should avoid taking too much for granted. An air sign partner in particular is starting to feel neglected.

LEO (July 24-Aug 22):

Technology can be unreliable this week and Leos are advised to follow up on important communications if responses are delayed. However, there are signs that this will be a slow month where work matters are concerned. An ongoing financial dilemma can be solved more easily than you think. In the realm of romance, you could be left feeling out of control; the stars recommend thinking before making rash promises.

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept 23):

Where finances are concerned, there are signs that change may be hard to accept this week for those born under the sign of Virgo. The stars suggest that mixing business with personal relationships could have caused this situation and you should aim to draw a clearer line in future. Your romantic outlook is smooth – those involved with another earth sign will have something to celebrate this weekend.

LIBRA (Sept 24-Oct 23):

Impatience can have a negative effect on your week. Librans are advised to remember that others may prefer to start the New Year at a more leisurely pace. A romantic

fire sign partner will be happy to see you adopting a more laid back attitude towards life – the stars suggest that this person has been bottling their feelings up for a while. Lucky days for money matters are Wednesday and Thursday.

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22):

Work can be tedious, but the stars advise that this is not an auspicious month to think about moving on. Agreements with other water signs are likely to take longer to reach and it would be wise to use this time for double checking small details. Romance is sweet and sour. Some Scorpios may discover that an earth sign is having second thoughts, but love with another water sign becomes more serious.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21):

Work and business are well starred for those born under the sign of Sagittarius. Your innovative ideas are forecast to be appreciated this week and this is an ideal time to make contact with old colleagues. Romance may be hard to fathom; your insecurities could lead to stalemate with an earth sign. Those who are single find that an air sign has more on their mind than friendship.

Van Persie vital to title race

By Mark Meadows

MANCHESTER United striker Robin van Persie bagged a contrasting double in a 4-0 win at Wigan Athletic on Tuesday to hand Roberto Mancini another painful reminder of why he looks the difference in the title race.

Mancini's Manchester City did their job by winning 3-0 at home to Stoke City, but the Premier League champions remain seven points behind rivals United following Van Persie's masterclass, with Tottenham Hotspur up to third after a 3-1 victory over Reading.

Dutchman Van Persie was pinpointed by Mancini in the pre-match buildup as the reason why United may snatch back their title and the former Arsenal hotshot continued 2013 where he left off in 2012, curling in a beauty just before the break.

A late tap-in took Van Persie's total to 16 league goals this season as the leaders powered on to 52 points from 21 games, their best tally at this stage in six years.

Arch poacher Javier Hernandez, who had one effort ruled out for offside, gave United the lead at lowly north west rivals Wigan when he slotted the ball in after Patrice Evra's effort was saved in the 35th minute.

The Mexican then grabbed his second after 63 minutes to underline his abilities as an able deputy to the injured Wayne Rooney.

"Wigan are a difficult team to play against, particularly at their own ground, so 4-0 is a good result for us," United manager Alex Ferguson told the *BBC*.

"The game started slowly, but once we got the first goal we were away and we were happy to go in at halftime 2-0 up," added Ferguson.

"Javier Hernandez is a goalscorer, a real penalty box player. Van Persie's ability is exceptional and his first goal was magnificent – we expected him to be a major player and add something to us and that is exactly what he has done."

INTERNATIONAL Sport

The New Year brought a rare goal for City defender Pablo Zabaleta before in-form Edin Dzeko doubled the lead after the break to show Mancini that his strikers are still top class despite the failure to sign Van Persie from Arsenal in August.

Sergio Aguero, who later limped off, squeezed in a penalty to make it 3-0 after Steven N'zonzi clipped the heels of David Silva – possibly outside the area.

"Today [January 1] we did a good performance," Mancini told *Sky Sports*.

An usually fragile Stoke were completely outgunned by City for most of the first half, much as Aston Villa were at Swansea City as their run of three defeats while conceding 15 goals and scoring none looked set to continue before they sealed a 2-2 draw.

Wayne Routledge rounded the goalkeeper to give the Welsh side a deserved advantage but Paul Lambert's young Villa team summoned some fighting spirit after a difficult few weeks and Austrian Andreas Weimann netted just before the interval.

Christian Benteke then coolly converted an 84th-minute penalty after Nathan Dyer's foul but 16th-placed Villa's victory hopes were denied by a stoppage-time leveller from Danny Graham.

Fifth-placed Arsenal were brought back down to earth after Saturday's thumping 7-3 win over Newcastle United when they were held to a 1-1 draw at struggling Southampton and only scored through a Guilherme do Prado own goal.

His 41st-minute equaliser, after Gaston Ramirez's opener arrived after some woeful Arsenal defend-



DOUBLE DUTCH: Robin Van Persie scoring second of his two goals against Wigan. Photo: Reuters

ing, came from Theo Walcott's cross, but otherwise the former Southampton man flattered to deceive following last week's hat-trick.

North London rivals Spurs moved back up to third, pending Chelsea's home game against bottom club Queens Park Rangers, despite going behind early to second bottom Reading at White Hart Lane.

Pavel Pogrebnyak netted after four minutes after reacting quickest when Ian Harte's free kick came back off the woodwork.

Michael Dawson quickly equalised with a header from a corner before Emmanuel Adebayor leapt to head his first league goal of the season and Clint Dempsey added a late deflected third.

Fulham winger Alex Kacaniklic secured a 2-1 win at high-flying West Bromwich Albion to end a sorry run of results for the Londoners who had gone in front through Dimitar Berbatov after 39 minutes.

West Brom improved markedly after the break and on-loan Belgium forward Romelu

Lukaku is likely to see increased media speculation about a possible recall by parent club Chelsea this month after capping a superb display with a 49th-minute tap-in.

The hosts then hit the post twice but 13th-placed Fulham would not be denied and Swedish winger Kacaniklic expertly spun on the edge of the area before stroking the ball home 13 minutes into the second half.

Mid-table West Ham United eased to a 2-1 home win over stuttering Norwich City. – *Reuters*



SPANISH golfer Miguel Angel Jimenez will be out of action for at least three months after breaking his leg in a skiing accident on December 29, the European Tour said on Sunday.

"I was skiing in Sierra Nevada, I lost control and fell," Jimenez was quoted as saying in a Tour statement.

"I felt a huge stab of pain and I knew straight away I had broken something," he said, adding that he had been operated on at a clinic in his native Malaga.

"I broke the top of the tibia in my right leg, just where it meets the knee, and they put in two pins.

"It will take three, four or five months to recover and be able to

Golfer Jimenez breaks leg

return to competition. I was playing very well but... these things happen in life."

Jimenez, who will be 49 on January 5, was named European Tour golfer of the month in November after his victory at the Hong Kong Open made him the oldest winner in Tour history at 48 years and 318 days.

A lover of fine wines and cigars and known for his trademark ponytail, he said he had become a keen skier some years ago and was well aware of the risks.

"The surgery was successful," the Tour statement said.

"He was discharged on December 31, so that, armed with



Miguel Jimenez. Photo: AFP

crutches, he could see out the year at home with his family," it added. – *Reuters*

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FAT head feeling the pressure



LION KINGS: Singapore celebrate clinching the AFF Suzuki Cup. Photo:AFP



Embattled Thai FA President Worawi Makudi. Photo:AFP

By Kitinan Sanguansak

THAI fans are still trying to get over bitter disappointment after their national football team failed to end a decade-long wait for a fourth Asean Championship crown, following a painful loss to old foes Singapore in the final.

After going unbeaten in an impressive run to the final of the biennial tournament, the Thai side, coached by the hard-working trainer Winfried Schaefer, stumbled at the last hurdle as the 3-1 first leg deficit proved just too big to overcome.

The defeat to Singapore, a side tied with them on three title wins, not only prolonged their barren spell but also confirmed that they were no longer the frontrunners in the region.

The men from the Lion City/State deservedly clinched a record fourth title.

It also means that the Thais have yet to get one over Singapore in their two meetings in the finals of the tournament, now known as the Suzuki Cup. The Kingdom, whose last triumph came in 2002, also fell to a narrow 3-2 aggregate defeat in 2007.

Can the result be interpreted that Thailand have made no progress in the last five years, that

they are not able to defeat a team once regarded as rank outsiders?

Unfortunately, a majority of Thai fans think so, and it is no coincidence that the team's dramatic decline started when Worawi Makudi became the Thai FA boss.

Actually, Thailand have won nothing more than the SEA Games title in Nakhon Ratchasima since Worawi's much-criticised reign started five years ago, and things came full circle with another loss to Singapore in the final. More worryingly, pundits are saying that Thailand has already overachieved by finishing second best, given the relatively poor preparations for the eight-team finals in comparison to other rivals.

If not for Schaefer's magic touch to get the best out of his charges, the Thai side would have suffered the same fate as two years ago when they exited from the competition at the group stages without a single win.

The veteran German coach made no attempt to disguise his disappointment with Thai FA's preparation plan as he reacted with gasps of exasperation when asked how he felt that his side only faced lowly opponents such as Bhutan and Bangladesh in the run up to the championship.

Schaefer even admitted on the

eve of the first leg final in the city state midweek that he was uncertain whether his team would make the final when he took the first training session for the event at the beginning of last month.

The fact that the Thai side did not see any action for seven months after they went out of the third round of the World Cup qualifiers at the end of February further highlights the poor team management under Worawi's leadership.

If Thailand had managed to turn things around and clinched the elusive title no one could have been happier than Worawi, who also sits on the FIFA's powerful executive committee, as the title victory would certainly help silence, temporarily at least, the growing criticism against him. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

The under-fire FAT president, instead, found himself under the microscope following the team's failed tilt at the title. It remains to be seen whether the latest failure will put a final nail in Worawi's coffin.

With Worawi's third term ending next year, many fans, who have become more and more disillusioned with his management, are keeping their fingers crossed that the turn of the year will bring winds of change to Thai football.

Indigo Pearl help keep Dylan on track

DYLAN Young's racing sponsors, Indigo Pearl, held a post race party for the MRF Challenge Formula 2000 driver at their Tongkah Tin Syndicate bar, just before Christmas.

The General Manager of Indigo Pearl, Kelly Lewis, VIP guests and selected media attended the event to help Dylan celebrate his two top ten finishes at the Buddh International Circuit, New Delhi.

Dylan Young spoke exclusively to the *Phuket Gazette* about his

season and how important corporate sponsors like Indigo Pearl are.

Phuket Gazette: What is this party for?

Dylan Young: We have already announced our partnership with Indigo Pearl and this is a bit of a post race celebration. We would like to do something next year where we are involved in the F1 program but to get into F1 is about securing the funding, and I can't do it without people like Indigo Pearl. The way motor sport is these days you need corporate partners.

PG: How has your season gone so far?

DY: My season didn't start at the beginning of the year, as I was planning to race in Europe, but that didn't happen. This MRF Championship is like a summer championship, which runs at the end of the European season. It hasn't finished yet but in every race we have improved.

I am really hopeful that as long as we keep up this progression I will be near the front soon.

PG: How was your last racing weekend?

DY: We improved every race over the four races, with a top result of 9th out of 18. My next race is not until February, so it will be good to relax for 2 months.



FAST FORWARD: Dylan Young and the GM of Indigo Pearl, Kelly Lewis.

Phuket remembers a hero



Camara Ahmed. Photo: Phuket FC



FORMER Phuket FC player Camara Ahmed has passed away at his home in the Ivory Coast.

Camara suffered a cardiac arrest on October 30, 2010, during a 1-0 playoff win over Chainat FC. The popular footballer was moved from a hospital in Phuket back to his native Ivory Coast a few months ago.

Phuket FC's manager, Mr Jakkapop said, "I heard that he had died from Nene Bi, who was a friend of Camara. This is the

saddest news of the year for our team."

Camara Ahmed enjoyed a successful period with Phuket FC during his loan spell from Muang Thong United: winning the AIS League Division 2 Championship in the 2010 season, reaching the Champions' League semifinals and playing in the Thai Yamaha League 1.

Phuket FC continued to support Camara with his spiraling hospital bills on Phuket and even while he was back home the team sent him

50,000 baht a month to help with medical costs.

The Islanders played a friendly game at Surakul Stadium against a foreign all star team last week in honor of Camara.



The moment he collapsed.

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Julian Seal's journey passing the baton

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED: Julian Seal's route took him through remote passes of the Altai Mountains, which join together Russia, China, Mongolia and Kazakhstan. Photo: Rob Mills

By Patrick Campbell

JULIAN Seal is a man on a mission. Inspired originally by "Met Track", a London Metropolitan police initiative to get disaffected teenagers off the streets by using sport, his enthusiasm was galvanized by the success of the 2012 Olympic Games, and the inspiring way in which it showed how sport can foster not only excellence, but can instill in young people such fundamental human values as selflessness, team-spirit, fair-play, commitment, and a joy in taking part. Sport crosses the divide that separates people from different cultures and creeds. A *lingua franca*.

Julian, who has always believed passionately in the inspiring value of sport, decided to make his own contribution by undertaking a 35,000 mile round-the-world journey. Five Olympic rings, five regions of the world to be travelled. Hence the birth of "Sports Trek".

He established links with five London Primary schools, made friends with James Ellington, a black Olympic sprinter who works with young people.

Armed with an autographed football from the Olympic football competition donated by Lord Coe, his marathon began with the acquisition of an orange special edition Land Rover Discovery G4. On launch-day, it appeared, phoenix-like, parked on the ashes of Croydon's Reeves Furniture store. Having survived

for 140 years, the store had been burned to the ground by an angry mob of young people during the London riots of 2011. Now, Mr Reeves was there. So too was James Ellington. An iconic launch-pad.

Since that eventful day, Julian has driven across Europe, across the vast steppes of Russia, over the snowy 3000 meter passes of the Golden Mountains of Altai, where Russia, China, Mongolia and Kazakhstan meet, and on to remote Ulaan Baator and Siberia. His Discovery, shipped from Vladivostok, is now on its way to Australia.

There he is hoping to drive coast to coast and especially to the Northern Territories to link up with aboriginal children. And then? South America.

A professional photographer, Julian has taken thousands of pictures. Pictures, they say, speak louder than words: where language fails to communicate, these images can reveal to children worlds they might never dream of otherwise seeing.

These photographs become a way in which links can be forged with other children from different parts of the globe.

And on Julian's visits to schools, a key part of his mission, each and every boy and girl has a chance to hold and kick that Olympic football.

What he has experienced is a life-transforming experience. Precipitous, pot-holed roads; sometimes no road at all; unbelievable extremes of wealth and poverty; remote communities with nothing but a communal well in the street for their water.

'Sport has the power to change the world....It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers.'

— Nelson Mandela

Mongolia left an indelible impression; it was, he said, like being in a time-war where nothing had changed for centuries.

Six year olds were expert horsemen. But the people were happy. And the children wrote letters to Julian to show their appreciation. Contentment is not always dependent on wealth. And kindness in poor communities is rarely in short supply. We in the West have lessons to learn too.

Here in Thailand, Julian has made contact with Muay Thai boxers from the Rawai Muay Thai and Sumalee Gyms and is following their progress.

Muay Thai boxing is a prime example of how sport can foster international friendships, since so many of the young people who train here come from all over the globe.

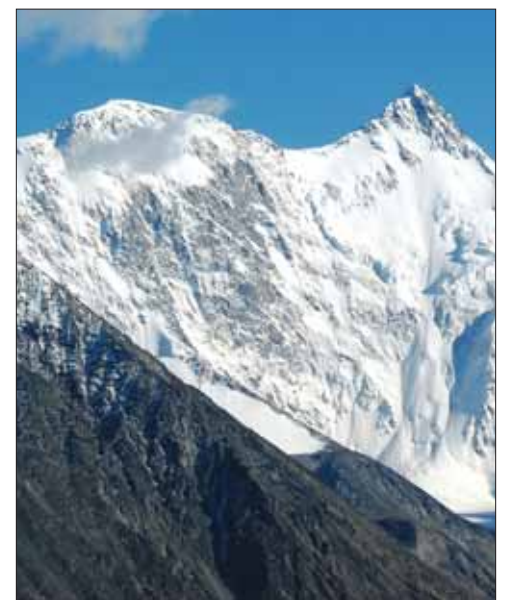
What of the future? Julian is hoping to mount an exhibition of his photographs, many of which already appear on his website, on Facebook, and on LinkedIn.

Maybe eventually he will publish a book which tells the story of his "Sports Trek" through its text and pictures.

But the important thing is to pass the baton, spread the good word about sport and encourage young children every where to not only get involved, but to communicate their enthusiasm to others. As Nelson Mandela averred: "sport breaks down racial barriers"

Julian, whose trip is largely self-funded, welcomes any offers of sponsorship or financial assistance.

For more information, visit: sports-trek.com
He can also be reached through Facebook, Twitter and the Sports Trek blog as well as at Flickr Julian Seal Photography or by email: sportstrek2012@gmail.com.



Mount Belukha, Siberia. Photo: Franco Pecchio



Julian Seal with Olympic sprinter James Ellington on launch day in London, July 2012. Photo: met-track.co.uk

Schaefer avoids the noose

FOOTBALL Association of Thailand president, Worawi Makudi has confirmed that Winfried Schaefer will keep his job as national coach even though he failed to guide his charges to their fourth ASEAN Championship title.

Schaefer's men were unable to reclaim the title they last won in 2002 despite clinching a 1-0 home victory in the second leg of the final, going down 3-2 on aggregate to Singapore, who became the first side to win the event four times.

It was a case of *deja vu* for Thailand, who lost to the Singaporeans



Manager, Winfried Schaefer.

by the same margin last time the two sides met in the final – five years ago. The Thais' latest failure led to speculation over the future of the 62-year-old German, who still has one and a half years to run on his

current contract.

Worawi, however, dismissed suggestions that Schaefer's job was in danger, saying:

"We have the opening two Asian Cup qualifiers coming up...[and] I can confirm he [Schaefer] will take charge of the team for those two games. We'll have a board meeting early next year to assess the team's performance. But that doesn't mean Schaefer will get the sack... He will definitely stay until his contract expires in mid 2014," said Worawi.

— The Nation

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RESTAURANT
Off Course

Vettel interests Ferrari

By Alan Baldwin

TRIPLE Formula One world champion Sebastian Vettel would be Ferrari's first choice should they ever need to replace Fernando Alonso, president Luca di Montezemolo revealed.

The Red Bull driver has been repeatedly linked to Ferrari this season, with talk of a pre-contract for 2014, although the 25-year-old German and his team have tried to put the speculation to rest.

Speaking at Ferrari's Maranello factory before the Christmas break, Montezemolo left no doubt about the Italian team's admiration for Vettel.

"If for whatever reason Fernando Alonso were to leave one day, maybe because he wants to retire in Hawaii with his girlfriend, then I want Vettel," the *Gazzetta dello Sport* quoted him as telling German media.

"Sebastian is a potential Ferrari driver for the future." Whether Vettel and Alonso ever pair up at Ferrari remains to be seen, however, with Montezemolo previously saying he did not want to have "two roosters in the same hen house" but rather two drivers "who race for Ferrari and not for themselves."

INTERNATIONAL Sport

Montezemolo said Alonso, Vettel and Lewis Hamilton were clearly a cut above the rest in Formula One and he preferred the Red Bull driver to the Briton "because he's younger and hasn't been around so many teams".

Hamilton, the 2008 world champion, will be racing for Mercedes next year after six years with McLaren – the team who have backed him since he was in go-karts. He will be 28 this month.

Vettel is now on his third F1 team, having made his debut for BMW-Sauber and then raced for Toro Rosso before joining sister team Red Bull.

In a separate interview with Britain's Sky Sports television, Montezemolo sounded more positive about Hamilton.

"Alonso is in Ferrari. If tomorrow, and I would be very unhappy with this, he will decide to go to live on the moon then for sure Hamilton is a driver that



HATTRICK: Sebastian Vettel celebrates winning his third world championship. Photo: Reuters

I like very much," he said.

Double world champion Alonso, 31, has a contract with Ferrari until at least the end of 2016. He won his two titles with

Renault, after starting out with Minardi, and was Hamilton's teammate at McLaren in 2007.

"I'm immensely pleased with Alonso. He's more than a driver,

he's a key figure. He fits into the way the team works perfectly," said Montezemolo of the Spaniard who finished runner-up to Vettel this year. – *Reuters*



Williams claims she's matured.

Serena has become serene

SERENA Williams has credited a more subdued lifestyle for the current form which has put her on track to succeed fellow-American Chris Evert as the oldest world number one in women's tennis.

Williams, who recorded a serve of 200kms an hour during a second-round 6-2 6-2 win over France's Alize Cornet at the Brisbane International, is currently ranked third in the world.

However, the 31-year-old is regarded as the pre-eminent woman player at the moment after winning the Wimbledon, US and Olympic titles last year. Evert was aged 30 years 11 months when she was number one in 1985.

"I'm really boring now," Williams told reporters. "I used to be fun."

"For a fun time, call Serena. Now for a

fun time, do not call me. I don't know what happened to me.

"I think I just got older and I realized I can't be that fun girl for the rest of my life. I think that's pretty much what it is. I could be the oldest number one. I don't know how that goes with the funnest."

Williams said she had not celebrated New Year's eve.

"I've been having insomnia," she said. "I don't know what time zone I'm in. I don't know if I'm in Florida or if I'm in Mauritius or if I'm in Brazil."

"I just don't know anymore. My body is like telling me, 'Don't sleep ever'. I'm nocturnal right now. I can't sleep at night. I was awake for New Year's eve. I heard all the fire crackers and I would have loved to have seen it but I had a match

today so I didn't do anything fun."

World number two Maria Sharapova's preparations for the Australian Open starting in two weeks' time were interrupted by the collarbone injury which led to her pulling out of an exhibition match against Caroline Wozniacki at the end of last year.

Sharapova withdrew from her second-round match against Australian Jarmila Gajdosova and said she had been just practising ground strokes because of the injury.

"I still have quite a bit of time to prepare for the Australian Open," she said. "I'm on the right track, been training really well, so I just don't want to jeopardize what I've gained in the off-season so far."

In other matches, world number six Sara Errani was defeated 4-6 6-1 7-5 by Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova. – *Reuters*

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Australia attack with pace

AUSTRALIAN cricket skipper Michael Clarke declared himself fit to play before announcing a team featuring four fast bowlers on the eve of the third test against Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

Clarke has been struggling with a hamstring injury but took a full part in training at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) before springing a surprise with the team selection for the match, in which the hosts can wrap up a 3-0 series sweep.

With the nation debating which of the fast bowlers would be dropped, Australian selectors

decided to include Mitchell Johnson, Mitchell Starc, Peter Siddle and Jackson Bird in a four-pronged attack.

"I'm fit and playing and we're going with four fast bowlers," Clarke told a news conference at the SCG.

"There's a fair bit of grass on the wicket and the boys bowled really well in the last test."

"Bringing Mitchell Starc back in obviously helps our attack with the form he's in, and Mitchell Johnson's batting, he's batting as well as an all rounder now."

"I'm confident we've got enough batting... and we have some extra bowling, which is a real positive for us."

Starc returns after being rested for the innings and 201-run victory in the second test in Melbourne, which gave Australia an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series.

Team: Michael Clarke (captain), David Warner, Ed Cowan, Phil Hughes, Mike Hussey, Matthew Wade, Peter Siddle, Mitchell Johnson, Mitchell Starc, Jackson Bird, Nathan Lyon.

Phuket United back home

By Wisuwat Romin

PHUKET United returned to their home stadium at Saphan Hin to beat Samut Sakhon Futsal Club 7-3 in a fantastic match on December 26.

The game was played in front of 1,000 people and was the second home match since Phuket City Municipality forced Phuket United to play home games at Fashion Island Stadium in Bangkok, until the playing surface at Saphan Hin was relayed.

Before the game, Mr Surapong Plyouwong, Samut Sakhon's head coach told the *Phuket Gazette*: "We are 100 per cent ready for this match. We aim to play a quick game and take the match to Phuket United."

The Andaman Pearl took an early lead through Brazilian player Jardel de Andrade Apolonio in the 1st minute. This early setback forced Samut Sakhon into life and Natee Tusiri equalized in the 3rd minute. Samut Sakhon scored two more goals in the first half to put them 3-1 up going into halftime.

Phuket United improved in the second half and two goals by Jackson Santos leveled the match. Jardel put Phuket United in front before Jackson



Rogerio watches from the sideline.



HOME COMFORTS: Phuket United pose for a photo before their game against Samut Sakhon.

Santos scored his third to take the score to 5-3.

The Andaman Pearl continued their relentless attack and took advantage of a power play to score their 6th. Captain Nattapon Buachay scored Phuket United's 7th to complete a rousing comeback and show the home fans what they've been missing.

Mr Suphol Senapeng, Phuket United's head coach, told the *Gazette* that December has not been a lucky month for him: "I am unlucky this month because my car windshield was smashed

by a robber who stole 10,000 baht, my notebook valued at 20,000 baht, Ipad, mobile phone and other things all worth 100,000 baht," he said.

The coach also added some information about why Rogerio Moreira was missing from the game: "Our team had some



BACK FOOT: Phuket United defend against a Samut Sakhon attack. Photos: Wisuwat Romin.



Suphol Senapeng, head coach (left).

problems with Brazilian Rogerio Moreira who had secret negotiations with other clubs in the Thai Futsal League. We have punished him and he was sent back to Brazil on December 28 because what he did was a violation of team and Thai Futsal League rules."

Phuket FC continue recruitment drive



HAPPY TO SIGN: Sakareeya Kolae



SAFE HANDS: Ninuruddin Nide-ha

PHUKET FC's new signings, Sakareeya Kolae and Ninuruddin Nide-ha, have pledged to lead The Islanders to the Thai Premier League by the start of the 2014 season.

Phuket FC team manager Mr Jakkapob Soo-ngan has welcomed his team's new 25-year-old wing back from Yala province, Sakareeya Kolae, formerly of Pattani FC – noting that Sakareeya was ranked as one of the best wing backs in the AIS League Division 2.

Sakareeya helped Pattani FC reach the Division 2 Champions League last season.

Sakareeya signed with Pattani FC in 2009, moved to Yala FC in 2010, then returned to Pattani FC in 2012.

Phuket's newest addition said he is looking forward to playing in Yamaha League 1 and hopefully improving with the team to reach the Thai Premier League: "I will develop my skills to help Phuket FC," he said.

Thai Port FC were interested in him but he chose Phuket FC.

Phuket FC also signed goalkeeper, 29-year-old Ninuruddin Nide-ha of Pattani Province, formerly of Pattani FC.

Phuket FC's manager, Mr Jakkapob, said: "I believe Ninuruddin is a very good goal keeper. Our team supports new players and we will continue to work hard this season to reach the Thai Premier League." – WR

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