

# Phuket Gazette

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Tanan Tanphaibul, head of the Phuket Real Estate Association.

## Phuket shrugs off fallout from Bangkok blasts

THE recent bombings in Bangkok have not resulted in cancellations of hotel bookings in Phuket and the island's tourism industry prospects for 2012 remain strong, the Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) has announced.

Barring a "major incident", Phuket can expect to have strong tourist arrival figures from both Europe and Asia throughout 2012, PTA President Jirayus Somboon told the *Gazette*.

Sustained and aggressive destination marketing, including roadshows to India, has resulted in continued growth in the Indian inbound market, he said.

Meanwhile, Tanan Tanphaibul, the head of the Phuket Real Estate Association (P-REA), has announced that Bangkok-based developers will generate as much as 30 billion baht into the local economy this year,

See 'Booming despite blasts' and 'P-REA expects B30bn in 2012' on pages 10-11

# STRANDED

## Hundreds of tourists struggle to get home after Air Australia collapse

SCORES of Australian tourists in Phuket have spent the past week scrambling to get home after the overnight collapse of Air Australia last Thursday.

Some tourists have spent up to AUS\$500 out of their own pockets so that they can return to work, study and other commitments. Many others simply did not have the cash and were forced to phone family and friends in Australia to come up with the funds to buy new flight tickets to get home.

"Our bags were already on the plane and we were about to board when they canceled the flight," said Trevor Moloney, 30.

"We were told they couldn't afford to pay the petrol bill," added his partner Caley Wilkinson.

The flight in question was scheduled to take off at 7:30pm.

Michaela Colahan, 19, arrived in Phuket with a party of female friends on February 3. "We had to get taxis back to Patong, but a lot of people stayed in the airport as they had no other choice," she said.

"They just said they couldn't put us up and said sorry for the inconvenience. They were not helpful at all," she added.



Many of the stranded tourists had to sleep at the airport. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

Phuket Airport Director Prathuang Sorngkam denied reports that stranded tourists were kicked out of the airport in the early hours of the morning. "The airport is open 24 hours. Some of the Australians stayed overnight at the airport. It's not true that anyone was kicked out of the airport," he told the *Gazette*.

Mr Moloney and Ms Wilkinson were lucky. "We got a room for a few hours to get some sleep before we came back to the airport. We couldn't get on to a computer to book another flight to fly home so we rang home to our families.

"We have now got a flight booked for tomorrow to go to Singapore for seven hours and

then to Australia, so we will get home by Sunday night," Mr Moloney said.

"We have to spend a lot of money that the airline won't cover. Meanwhile, the insurance we have won't cover Air Australia," Ms Wilkinson added.

Australian national carrier Qantas and fellow Australian airline Jetstar stepped in to provide some relief. Qantas allowed stranded passengers with tickets to board their flights in Bangkok. Jetstar provided a special flight last Sunday and allowed stranded tourists with tickets to occupy spare seats on the airline's direct flights from Phuket to Australia.

Air Australia's creditors are reportedly facing losses in the tens of millions of Australian dollars. Australian newspapers reported that Turkish airline Atlasjet within days repossessed the A330 aircraft that was stranded on the tarmac in Phuket after a fuel supplier had refused to extend credit, prompting the airline to enter voluntary receivership.

Three other A330s and one A320 aircraft leased to Air Australia were expected to be repossessed by their owners by this weekend.

## Prompong pushes for 10bn baht rail link

By Chutharat Plerin

GOVERNMENT Spokesman Prompong Nopparit has voiced his support for a 10-billion-baht extension of train lines from Surat Thani to just north of Phuket.

Currently, rail passengers and freight bound for Phuket can travel only as far south as Surat Thani.

The extension would be about 160 kilometers long, stretching from Keereerat District in Surat Thani province to Baan Thanon in Phang Nga – or even as far south as the Sarasin Bridge.

Regardless of the final destination, the move to extend the rail network to support Phuket received his full backing, he said.

Mr Prompong made his announcement at a meeting of high-ranking officials held to finalize which projects will be presented to the Cabinet at their meeting in Phuket next month.

"I also suggest presenting the idea of lengthening the runway at Phuket Airport to the Cabinet. The 5.7bn baht budget to boost the airport's annual capacity to 12.5mn passengers by adding 15 more aircraft gates has already been approved. So

we should use this opportunity to present the runway extension scheme to Cabinet," he said.

Mr Prompong said he understood that what people really needed was improved public utilities and traffic infrastructure.

"Every April Phuket faces a water shortage. So we should think about an external water supply from Phang Nga and Krabi to support Phuket.

"Having a convenient transportation system and reliable public utilities will improve the lives of Andaman residents and support the tourism industry," he said.



Government Spokesman Prompong called for a slew of new projects to support Phuket tourism. Photo: Nopparat Nambunyen

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## This Week

### News



Going underground: an underpass for Bang Khu junction. **Page 5**

### Live Wire



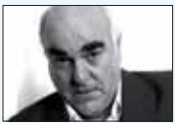
Khun Woody presents a download speed update. **Page 12**

### Music



7th Phuket International Blues Festival and a loaned guitar. **Page 17**

### Entertainment



First time to Phuket Punchline: Steve Frost interviewed. **Page 18**

### Property



Going up-market: Soi Bangla Mall to open next month. **Page 27**

### Sport



By invitation only. The Phuket car rally for charity. **Page 48**

### Saturday



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### Sunday



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### Monday



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### Tuesday



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### Wednesday



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### Thursday



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# Chlorine gas cloud puts nine children in hospital

By Atchaa Khamlo

POWDERED chlorine being mistakenly mixed directly into a resort pool water treatment tank resulted in nine children under the age of fifteen being rushed to hospital last Saturday.

In addition to the nine young children 26 others, mostly tourists, were hospitalized.

Among them was 27-year-old Annika Ober Hrnice of Sweden, who is seven months pregnant.

Initial reports by media that an "explosion" at the Phuket Orchid Resort in Karon had caused "mass injuries" sparked quick action by local emergency workers.

On arriving at the scene, however, they quickly realized that there had been no explosion.

Tourists had reported the sound of the powdered chlorine rapidly expanding in the tank, causing several resonating booms.

Patong Hospital official Hathairat Rangsansarit told the *Gazette* that 37 people were rushed to Patong Hospital for immediate treatment for chlorine inhalation. All 37 victims were later transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital, Bangkok Hospital Phuket or Phuket International Hospital.

As of Monday, all had been released with the exception of Mrs Hrnice, who remained under observation at Bangkok Hospital Phuket because she is seven-months pregnant, Ms Hathairat confirmed.

Staff at Bangkok Hospital



One of the nine children under 15 years old taken to the hospital. Inset, Phuket Orchid Resort General Manager Philip Raiss.

Phuket declined to divulge details of Mrs Hrnice's condition to the *Gazette*, other than her still being under observation in the intensive care unit.

However, Ms Hathairat, who has continued to follow the Swede's condition, on Monday said, "Even though her fetus is fine, Mrs Hrnice has to remain under observation. She will probably be released in a few days."

Mrs Hrnice, who initially had difficulty breathing, has discontinued the use of an oxygen mask, she said.

Mrs Hrnice's husband Adnan and their daughter Laura had both already been released from hospital.

A report at Patong Hospital revealed that nine of the 37 injured

were children under 15 years of age, the youngest was one year old.

"Most of the patients were released Saturday evening. A few were released on Sunday," Ms Hathairat said.

The news of people being released from hospital on Sunday followed Phuket Orchid Resort General Manager Philip Raiss announcing at a press conference on Saturday: "Every single person taken to hospital has returned to the resort. Not a single person has checked out. They are all okay."

Chalong Police Deputy Superintendent Boonlert Onklang and Muang District Chief Supachai Pochanukul were both present at the press conference.

## Phi Phi suspect pleads not guilty

A THAI man accused of stabbing a British tourist on Phi Phi Island last year, pleaded "not guilty" to charges of attempted murder before Krabi Court on February 20.

The suspect, 23-year-old Hamed Poonyung, has been charged for the attempted murder of Nicholas Palmer, 23, during a beach party in October last year.

Mr Hamed appeared before Krabi Provincial Court for the second time Monday, when he pleaded "not guilty" to the charges.

Boontham Srisaeng, an official at the Krabi Provincial Prosecutor's Office, told the *Gazette*: "Mr Hamed denied the charges, so we have to investigate further and collect more evidence. Witnesses at the scene will be questioned for



Nicholas Palmer at hospital.

more details about the event."

"I advised him to confess. Had he done so, he would only have been sentenced to five years in prison. If he is found guilty after our investigation, he will now face a sentence of 10 years to life in prison," he added.

## Surat Thani to the Sarasin Bridge

From page 1

"I believe this is worth the investment," he added.

From a wider perspective Mr Prompong noted that there were many projects outlined at the meeting that he would present to Cabinet.

They included the widening of a 200km stretch of the Petchkasem Highway to four lanes from Phang Nga to Chumphon at a cost of about 4bn baht and the addition of a new Prince of Songkla University campus on 300 rai (480 square

kilometers) of land in Phang Nga.

"These are projects that will be most advantageous to people in the Andaman region," Mr Prompong said.

Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha, who chaired the meeting, announced that the Phuket projects that will be presented to Cabinet next month are the Airport-Phuket Town monorail, the Patong tunnel, the Phuket Airport expansion, the Convention and Exhibition Center, the Klong Koh Pee Road improvement project, the Central Festival

Phuket and Tesco Lotus Phuket underpasses and the Phuket Hospital expansion.

"The budgets for all these projects will be discussed at a later meeting," he added.

Present at the meeting were Phuket Senator Thanyarat Achariyachai, who is currently chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Tourism, as well as Phuket MP Raywat Areerob, Phue Thai party list MP Kohkaew Pikulthong and representatives from Phang Nga, Krabi, Trang and Ranong.



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## Tremor hits Phang Nga, no damage reported

COASTAL residents of Takuapa District in Phang Nga were put on alert on Monday morning following a minor earthquake.

The localized tremor caused no damage.

Somkiat Intorrajana, director of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation office in Phang Nga (DDPM-Phang Nga), said the 2.7-magnitude tremor hit at 3:48am and lasted just 10 seconds.

Initial analysis put the center near the village of Baan Bang Rak Nai in Khok Khian sub-district.

Residents of the area felt the tremor, but no injuries or damage were reported.

Provincial officials were told to monitor the situation and prepare to take measures in case the tremors were a foreshock of a larger event yet to come.

Officials who inspected the area discovered that the tremor failed to cause any panic among local residents.

Takuapa District Chief Siriphat Phattanakul said he put coastal residents on alert as he was not immediately sure whether the event was just a small localized event or the effects of a larger earthquake further away.

# 'I'm not the bad guy'

## Alleged assassination mastermind surrenders, claims innocence

By Atchaa Khamlo

PHUKET businessman Atsadakorn "Pod" Seedokbuab, wanted by police as the alleged mastermind behind the assassination of Phuket newsman Wisut "Ae Inside" Tangwittayaporn last month, surrendered to police on February 12.

Mr Atsadakorn, owner of KPP Cable TV and a vice president of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, flatly denied any involvement and was quickly released after posting 3.4 million baht bail bond with Phuket Provincial Court.

"I had nothing to do with it. I knew Ae very well. When he joined the red shirt protests in Bangkok, he called and asked me for money. I gave it to him. I supported him," Mr Atsadakorn told the press at Phuket City Police Station.

"We had a good, close relationship. Why would I kill him?" he asked.

Mr Atsadakorn denied knowing fellow suspect Noppadol "Pae" Praisri, arrested by police in Chana as the alleged getaway driver for alleged gunman Tossaporn Ketkaew.

However, Mr Atsadakorn admitted to knowing the fourth suspect, 48-year-old Somkuan



Mr Atsadakorn denied any involvement in the murder of Phuket newsman Wisut 'Ae Inside' Tangwittayaporn last month. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

"Boy" Deepan, before the killing.

Mr Somkuan, wanted as the man who arranged the hit and paid the gunman, remains at large.

"I know Khun Boy. He is a

friend. I once hired him to operate a digger at a construction site at one of my developments, but I do not know where he is now," he added.

His delay in presenting himself to police stemmed from the fact that he was in Burma on business and only learnt he was wanted in Phuket upon returning to Bangkok, Mr Atsadakorn said.

"I have surrendered to police so I can clear my name. I assure you that I had nothing to do with the murder. I don't know why I was dragged into this," he added.

Mr Atsadakorn confirmed to the press that he did take umbrage over comments published by Mr Wisut in the final issue of his political journal *Inside Phuket*.

The comments refer to an unnamed media business owner who received sexual favors from a certain woman in return for protection for her unspecified "bad deeds".

Mr Atsadakorn denied having sex with the woman, saying he was a married man. "I used to do some bad things, but I have cleaned myself up. I will never do those things again," he said.

His surrender did not depend on his being granted immediate bail, as was widely reported, Mr Atsadakorn said.

"Today I surrender to the police, I am willing to accept whatever actions the police want to take from here," he added.

## Murder fugitive Aldhouse wins right to appeal in UK

THE return to Phuket of fugitive British murder suspect Lee Aldhouse remains on hold, as the kickboxer has won the right to appeal an extradition order, the UK media has reported.

Lee Aldhouse, 27, fled Thailand after he allegedly stabbed American Deshaun Longfellow to death in August 2010. He was later arrested at Heathrow Airport on an unrelated charge when he tried to re-enter the UK.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) in Bangkok, citing the volume of evidence in the case, moved quickly to request the extradition of Mr Aldhouse. The OAG assured the British Government that Aldhouse would not face the death penalty if convicted.

However, despite British Home Secretary Theresa May previously claiming Aldhouse "had forfeited his right" to appeal extradition, two senior judges have now ruled his complaints were "far from frivolous" and allowed him to press ahead with his High Court challenge, according to a report by the *Birmingham Mail*.

Mr Aldhouse has argued his extradition should be blocked because conditions in Thai jails breach Article 3 of the Human Rights Convention, which prohibits "inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment", said the report.

"Whichever way the issue might



British fugitive Lee Aldhouse has won his right to appeal extradition to Phuket to face murder charges. Photo: James Goyder

go, it is far from a frivolous one... The issues are of sufficient importance and arguability for it to be only just that the appeal be heard. Accordingly, we find against the Government of Thailand and Home Secretary on this preliminary issue," one of the justices wrote.

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## Paiboon resigns to allow snap election

PAIBOON Upatising has resigned his position as president of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) so elections can be held before April 20.

"My term as president was scheduled to end on April 20, and elections must be held within 60 days of the end of term," Mr Paiboon told a press conference on February 16.

That meant that *OrBorJor* elections would have been held around the middle of June, but going to the polls early would give the

*OrBorJor* enough time to form a council and ensure that major administration tasks continue smoothly, Mr Paiboon said.

He cited the example of the *OrBorJor* hospital in Rassada needing to have contracts renewed. "We should have a new council by May to continue the contracts, otherwise the hospital will have to close. Also, the budget for the next fiscal year must be filed by October, or else there will be delays in securing funding for major projects," he explained.



Mr Paiboon said an early election would not give him an advantage at the polls. Photo: Chutharat Plerin



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# More CCTVs for safety Underpass

GOVERNMENT spokesman Prompong Nopparit was back in Phuket on February 19 to launch a new tourist safety campaign that will see a rapid expansion in the number of closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV) in Patong and other popular tourist destinations.

The purpose of Mr Prompong's latest visit was to launch a nationwide "500,000 eyeballs for tourist safety and security" campaign. Phuket will serve as the pilot province for the campaign, which will subsequently spread to other tourist destinations, he said.

Accompanying Mr Prompong on his tour of Soi Bangla were Preechavude Keesin, in his capacity as chairman of the Patong Municipality Community Groups Association, and Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA) President Weerawit Kurasombat.

Both men presented to Mr Prompong a document assuring the readiness of their respective groups to join the campaign, a key of which is to have business operators take the lead in installing CCTV cameras to boost surveillance.

Mr Prompong, who oversees the Andaman region for the Pheu Thai Government, said the visit to



MP Prompong Nopparit

Phuket follows an order by Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in the aftermath of the recent bomb explosions in Bangkok.

His mission is to quell fears about tourist safety in the region and enlist local business operators and residents in ensuring tourist safety and preventing similar incidents from occurring here, he said.

The name of the campaign stems from the fact that Phuket has a population of 250,000 people listed on house registration forms, which calculates to 500,000 eyeballs, Mr Prompong said.

The goal is to expand surveillance capacity to "full coverage"

by installing cameras not only in front of local business operators establishments, but also behind and in nearby areas of high risk, Mr Prompong said.

He estimated that some 10,000 cameras would be needed to reach the goal in Phuket.

Patong currently has "very few" [government-installed] CCTV cameras and some of these do not function properly. Only 18 of these units are confirmed to be operational, he said.

He had already discussed the need for more CCTV coverage with Phuket officials and intends to ask PM Yingluck to fund CCTV expansion in other tourist destinations including Chiang Mai and Pattaya, he said.

As it would take too long to wait for central government budget approval and disbursement of funds, the private sector is the key to increasing coverage, he said.

Mr Weerawit said his PEBA members have already encouraged staff to look out for the safety of tourists, but agreed that an expansion of CCTV coverage in risk areas would further improve safety and security.

— Warisa Temram

**OFFICIALS last week unveiled at a public hearing proposed plans for an underpass that is to be built at the Bang Khu Intersection.**

**The move raised hopes that traffic congestion at the critical junction will finally ease, but also raised concerns that the tailbacks at the Koh Kaew Intersection down the road would worsen. The Gazette's Chaiyot Yongcharoenchai reports.**

HIGHWAYS Department officials last week presented to local residents their preferred option for a two-lane underpass at the Bang Khu Intersection, north of Phuket Town. The news received mixed reviews, as the initial proposal was to build a flyover at the busy junction, which handles nearly all traffic to and from the airport.

Krabi Office of Highways Deputy Director Lerd Pachawee chaired the public hearing at the Boat Lagoon Hotel conference room. It was the second meeting with local residents to gather feedback on their perceptions and input on the project.

At the first public hearing, held in August last year, the idea of an overpass being the solution was discussed. However, following research, an underpass is now the favored plan.

Weerawat Deeprasertwong, project manager of consulting firm Epsilon Co Ltd, explained, "We came up with six designs, includ-

ing overpass and underpass options. In the end it was an underpass design that best met all criteria and scored much higher than the others.

"A two-lane underpass is the preferred design. It's the perfect solution for heavy traffic," he said.

"Vehicles heading south-bound on Thepkasattri Road towards Patong will follow the curve right to traffic lights at the Bang Khu Intersection with the bypass road.

"Vehicles from Patong on the bypass road travelling to Phuket Town, will also have to

wait for traffic lights before turning right and following the curve onto Thepkasattri Road," he said.

"The underpass will be straight along Thepkasattri Road and used by traffic going from Phuket Town to the airport.

"Vehicles from the airport heading to Phuket Town will use the straight road at street level with no traffic lights," he added.



Phuket City Traffic Police chief expressed concerns over motorbikes using the tunnel.

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# plans start driving forward



Tailbacks in Koh Kaew have become a common feature. Photo: Gazette

“The underpass will be open to allow as much natural light as possible. The section covered by the road will be permanently illuminated.

“We will also install automatic pumps to remove excess water during the rainy season,” Mr Weerawat explained.

**TAILBACKS**

Kuakiat Jitkua, president of the Koh Kaew Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) voiced his concerns over the siting of the project. “Why build the underpass at that intersection. The worst area for traffic on Thepkrasattri Road is the Koh Kaew Intersection [the next set of traffic lights just north of the junction]. Will you consider building one there too?”

“Also, will you allow motorcycles to also use the underpass?” he asked.

“It could be very dangerous.”

This concern was echoed by Phuket City Police Traffic Deputy Superintendent Chalermchai Hernsawat.

In response, Arun Sanae, chief of the Highways Department Phuket Office, said the study had identified the Bang Khu junction as the priority. “Furthermore, there are insufficient funds to build another underpass,” he said.

“However, I will dedicate one lane for motorcycles to go through the underpass safely,” he said.

“We haven’t decided the exact location for the ends of the underpass or how long the underpass will be. However, the project will budgeted from 400 to 500 million baht,” he added.

**TROUBLE AT MARKET**

Another concern raised was that motorists travelling north through the junction will exit the underpass right where local vendors currently



Traffic along Thepkrasattri Road will flow smoothly, proponents say. Image: Highways Dept Phuket Office

set up a small roadside market every morning. “They have complained that sales have dropped drastically since the Highways Dept marked the curb red and white, as a clearway [no stopping]. Can you at least paint the curb yellow and white to allow temporary parking?” asked Mr Kuakiat.

To this Mr Arun replied, “We will consider providing temporary parking zones along the street.”

He explained that the plans include expanding Thepkrasattri Road to four lanes each way for 1.5km from the Bang Khu intersection to the Koh Kaew traffic lights, which have become notorious for tailbacks, night and day.

However, Mr Arun said that the Koh Kaew lights will stay. “We are looking into how to change the timing in order to minimize the congestion,” he said.

“I also suggest the Koh Kaew *OrBorTor* provide a special parking lot for the market vendors and

their customers,” Mr Arun added.

In closing the meeting, Epsilon consultant Mr Weerawat explained that a third and final public hearing will be held at the Mongkolwittaya School in Baan Sapam, just south of the Bang Khu Intersection, on March 1.

“That meeting will be smaller and will primarily involve food vendors and other local residents directly affected by the project,” Mr Weerawat said.

The project committee will announce the final plan by the end of March, he added.



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## QUEER news

### Defrocked for drugs and prostitutes

A SEX-CRAZED monk in Lamphun has been defrocked and charged by police for allegedly selling *ya bah* (methamphetamine) to local teenagers.

Phra Phichat In-wan of Wat Rongkutai spent much of his drug profits on prostitutes that he had sex with on temple grounds, according to police. The disgraced clergyman kept the bra and panties of the women as souvenirs.

Officers arrested Phra Phichat, 24, after he purchased *ya bah* pills.

In his possession, police found 90 *ya bah* pills, two mobile phones and 14,000 baht.

Officers escorted the monk to his temple, where they carried out a search of his sleeping quarters.

There they discovered a large number of pornographic DVDs and four sets of bras and panties.

They took him to the chief of the local *Sangha* (monks' association) in Pasang subdistrict in Lamphun to be defrocked.

They then took him to Pasang Police Station for questioning and charged him with possession of drugs with intent sell.

Phra Phichat told officers that he sold the pills to local teenagers for 200 baht each.

He used the money to shop, go out and, on five occasions, pay for the services of prostitutes – whom he brought back to his temple quarters for sex, he said.

After the encounters were over he always asked for the women's panties and bra as a souvenir, the former monk said.

# Beach battle saga continues

THE battle to keep Phuket beaches free of illegal vendors continues to be a pitched one, with each small advance seemingly followed by a setback.

In the latest development, four local residents have set up small restaurants on the sands of Kata Beach with low-to-the-ground Japanese-style dining tables selling grilled and barbecued meats every evening starting at dusk.

Orders by Karon Municipality for the vendors to vacate the site have gone unheeded, the vendors arguing that as local residents they have the right to make a living on the beach.

A different group of local residents complained about the restaurants to the Damrongtham Center at Phuket Provincial Hall, which serves as the Phuket ombudsman's office.

Municipal workers ordered the operators to leave, but they stayed and continued to cite their right to make a living. At last report Damrongtham Center officials were trying to find a solution.



New restaurants on Kata Beach have been a source of complaint at Provincial Hall recently. Photo: Warisa Temram

Karon Municipality is responsible for administration at three beaches: the three-kilometer Karon Beach as well as Kata and Kata Noi beaches, both one-kilometer long.

It uses a tripartite committee comprising municipal officers,

the business owners and their staff in order to maintain order and cleanliness at the beach and resolve disputes between operators. Three different kinds of businesses fall under the committee's administration:

beach chair and umbrella rental; massage; and vending operations.

A total of 20 such businesses are registered with the municipality.

The system worked in the past, when only local people were involved and everyone followed the rules, Karon Mayor Tawee said.

Current problems at the beaches stem largely from an influx of people not native to Phuket, including people who have relocated from Pattaya as well as foreigners, including a group of about 10 Cambodians, he said.

These vendors roam the beaches, annoying foreign tourists by selling items such as sunglasses that they source for just 50 baht a pair and sell for 1,000 baht or more, Mayor Tawee added.

Efforts to fine violators have done little to stop the practice because the maximum fine the municipality can issue in such cases is just 2,000 baht, he said.

In cases involving foreigners, the relevant police agencies would be called in, Mayor Tawee warned.

## Ancient artifacts unearthed in Krabi

A TROVE of ancient artifacts unearthed in Krabi recently could be up to 3,000 years old, Fine Arts Department Office experts have estimated.

Supoj Matbutra, village headman of Baan Khao Ngam, in Baan Klang subdistrict, Ao Luek, said residents discovered the relics about a month ago while excavating the rich soil in the area for use as fertilizer.

They found numerous artifacts near Pha Khao Ngam, a hill and cliff formation at the center of the village. The area has been marked a "no entry zone" to protect the site from looters.

Inside the protected area is a

pile of earthenware, hundreds of big animal bones and exotically-shaped objects carved from stalagmites and stalactites.

"Some [items] were damaged, but others were in perfect condition. They also uncovered a stone axe, assorted tools, and a large number of beads," Mr Supoj said.

After, the Krabi Provincial Culture Office and 15th Regional Office of Fine Arts in Phuket investigated the find, they informed Mr Sopo that the artifacts likely dated back at least 3,000 years.

The investigating teams told Mr Supoj that the area was one of the best-preserved ancient settlement sites in the Andaman region.



Mr Supoj points out some of the earthenware recently found in Krabi.

## Readers vote Patong Carnival as Phuket's number one free funfair

THE annual Patong Carnival is Phuket's top free funfair according to a recent readers' poll by the *Phuket Gazette*.

The two-week poll, launched late last month, asked readers, "Which of the following annually-staged free events do you most enjoy?"

Patong Carnival ranked as the top response, garnering 59.7% of votes overall.

The Old Phuket Town Festival ranked second with 16.2% of the votes, followed by the Phuket Vegetarian Festival, which scored 12.6% of the votes.

Losing out were the annual Wat Chalong Fair (5.1%), the Phuket Local Food Fair (3.6%) and the Phuket Red Cross Fair (2.8%).

Thai nationals who took part in the poll were divided in their top choice. They ranked the Patong Carnival and the Old Phuket Town Festival equally at the top, with



An acrobat tumbles mid-air at the Patong Carnival this year. Photo: Gazette

each scoring 33% of the votes.

Thais voted the Phuket Vegetarian Festival as a close "third", with 29% of the votes.

Local foreign residents were more decisive in declaring

Patong's week-long party as their top choice. The annual event garnered 64% of foreigners' votes, followed by the Old Phuket Town Festival (16%) and the Phuket Vegetarian Festival (10%).

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## Najib Razak opposed to Deep South insurgency

MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Najib Razak told Thai premier Yingluck Shinawatra that his country opposed the insurgency in the Muslim-majority Deep South of Thailand. The statement came during a one-day visit by Mrs Yingluck to Kuala Lumpur last week.

Speaking at a press conference, MP Najib said there was a "need to find a long-term and durable peaceful solution in the south (of Thailand)," the *Malaysian Insider* reported.

"We both agree this is a domestic matter for Thailand and people in the south must not seek for a separate state," he said. "They must reject violence and extremism. They must be loyal Thai citizens and loyal to the King of Thailand."

Thailand has in the past accused Malaysia of training insurgents before sending them over the border, an accusation that the southern neighbor has denied.

# Hunt on for bomb suspects

## AROUND THE nation

A MANHUNT is underway for suspected conspirators in a failed bomb plot believed to have targeted Israeli diplomats in Bangkok.

The botched operation, resulting in three explosions in central Bangkok on February 14, has led Thailand to consider whether its "open door" visa policy has made the country a haven for terrorists.

Police suspect as many as six Iranian citizens in the plot, believed by many analysts to be part of a campaign of attacks against Israeli targets around the world amid escalating tensions between the two Middle Eastern states.

Authorities were alerted to the plot when a bomb went off at a house on Soi Pridi Banomyong 36 in the Ekkamai area of Bangkok. Three suspects emerged from the building. The third, identified as Iranian national Saeid Morabi, appeared to be injured.

Mr Morabi then went on a bomb-



Police are searching for three more Iranian suspects possibly linked to the Bangkok bombing. Photo The Nation

ing rampage, throwing explosives at a taxi that refused to take him and an approaching police officer.

The second bomb reportedly bounced off a tree and exploded, blowing his legs off. Graphic footage of the legless Morabi quickly circulated on the internet. Four Thais were wounded in the blasts.

The other two suspects fled. Mohammad Kharzei was arrested at Suvarnabhumi Airport. Masoud Sedaghatzadeh was arrested in

Malaysia. The suspects face charges including possession of explosives, attempted murder, attempted murder of a policeman and causing explosions that damaged property.

Thailand's police chief Gen Prieuphan Dhammapong said the men had plotted to kill Israeli diplomats. "I can tell you that the target was specific and aimed at Israeli diplomatic staff," he said, as quoted by Associated Press.

At least three other suspects are sought.

The Interior Ministry has instructed governors of provinces with popular tourist attractions to impose stricter security measures, especially in areas where Israelis, Iranians or those from the Middle East reside or gather.

Provincial authorities have been ordered to implement the measures discreetly to avoid panicking foreigners and affecting tourism.

## Elephant whistle-blower raided and investigated



Wiek's whistle-blowing quickly led to the investigation of elephant camps.

THE founder of an animal sanctuary in Phetchaburi alleges he has been the victim of several days of harassment and intimidation because he spoke out against elephant poaching in Thai national parks.

Edwin Wiek said scores of officers from the National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department, more than 30 of them armed, showed up at his Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT) sanctuary demanding he prove he had legal custody of many of the 450 animals in his care.

His wife Jansaeng Sangnanork was arrested and 13 of the animals were taken away.

Mr Wiek claims the searches, which took place over five days, amounted to a campaign of harassment designed to silence him.

Last month Mr Wiek wrote an open letter to the Thai media alleging that high-ranking government officials, politicians and business-

men were involved in smuggling baby elephants to tourism camps.

In an op-ed for *Phuket Gazette* sister paper *The Nation* on January 24, Wiek claimed that "Baby elephants are being taken out of the jungle in Thailand at any cost... and 'tamed' through week-long torture rituals to break their spirit"

"I challenge them [government official or politician] to visit the elephant camps in Ayutthaya, Pattaya, Hua Hin, Samui, Chiang Mai, Phuket or anywhere else in the country, and force the owners of all elephants of up to 20 years of age to allow a DNA check on their animals," he went on. "That would verify whether young elephants really are the offspring of their alleged 'mothers'."

The challenge was taken up in Phuket with the results for three of the baby elephants on the island expected to be released after the *Gazette* goes to press.

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# Truth is not a PR option

SINCE Phuket's emergence as a tourist destination in the 1980s, the island has maintained a remarkable ability to attract foreign visitors – through good times and bad. Apart from the 2004 tsunami disaster, few other events – locally, nationally or globally – have been able to buck the trend in any appreciable way.

Despite an endless series of "tourism threatening" issues over the years, arrival figures continue to grow and grow. Expecting the trend to continue, industry leaders are now grappling with ways to get even more people here. Airport runway expansion and high-speed rail links are the latest projects talked about.

But regardless of Phuket's tourism industry's ability to shrug off all but the most catastrophic events, local leaders and their counterparts on the national stage continue to view each and every development with eyes so narrowly fixed on the prism of "tourism" that they sometimes lose sight of the big picture – often embarrassing themselves in the process.

Official reaction by some members of the military to the bungling exploits of a group of would-be Iranian terrorists on Valentine's Day is a case in point. Rather than deal with what transpired in a transparent and factual manner, the reaction to downplay events was almost Pavlovian. Some military officials even suggested that the bombs were "too small" to serve as real implements of terror.

This version of events would be a hard sell to anyone unfortunate enough to have been in the vicinity at the time. A better tack would have been to note how quick police rounded up suspects, or even point out how the "terrorists" were somehow unable to obtain firearms, if assassination in fact was their motive.

Coming just four days and hours of global media coverage later, the accidental release of a cloud of chlorine gas at poolside at a resort in Karon couldn't have come at a worse time.

The words "blast" and "bomb", incorrectly used by some media outlets to describe how the release occurred, were picked up by news agencies around the world.

The resort manager took appropriate action in trying to get across the message that no explosion occurred and that some media reports were sensationalist and misleading.

However, telling the media that "nothing happened" and "nobody was really injured" went beyond downplaying events: it was clear falsehood.

Only time will tell whether the resulting lack of consumer trust could be more damaging to the resort's business than the short-term irritation to eyes, nose and throats some guests suffered.



## Who guards the guardians?

Re: Gazette online, Phuket officials set agenda for Cabinet visit, February 17

I really hope Phuket doesn't get too much "quasi-autonomous" control. If I look around currently, I see an incredible amount of unregulated buildings and construction.

We need Bangkok to stop the corrupted system on Phuket. Bangkok keeps control over authorities and fights and prosecutes corrupt officials.

Please safeguard Phuket.

PhuketExpat  
Gazette forum

### Shrewd maneuver

Re:Gazette online, Phuket's Paboon resigns in shock move, February 16

Given his admitted reason for resigning, which is to "pave the way for elections before April 20", it is clear he hopes to prevent the opposition from mounting an effective campaign.

So the opposition won't be alleging vote-buying this time, as they won't have time. Clever move.

Chas  
Gazette forum

### Wanted: free flight one-way

Re: Gazette online, Air Australia tourists tired, angry over Phuket ordeal, February 18

I feel sorry for these passengers, but for the one woman to say she never wants to return to Phuket and another asking for free flights is just stupid. It's not Phuket's fault that an Australian airline has gone bust and it's not the responsibility of other airlines to give free passage home.

Jon Patong  
Gazette forum

### Letters to the Editor

#### Animals crawl back to Soi Bangla



A slow loris being held on Soi Bangla. Photo: Nolly Gross

For many years I have been visiting Phuket/Patong twice a year.

I can remember that some time ago the new Chief of police promised several important things would be changed, like forbidding people to carry around animals for tourists to take pictures with on Soi Bangla.

In January, I was again in Patong, and the situation had only become worse. At first they "only" had iguanas, but now also monkeys, and some are so small that they fit in the palm of the owner's hand.

Unfortunately, I couldn't take a picture of the little monkey, but happily I was able to get one of a bigger one [slow loris].

I sincerely ask immediate actions be taken to end this form of animal torture and also for the police uphold the promise that was made.

Nolly Groos  
Netherlands

#### Soi Hippocrocapig

Re: Gazette online, Tough love for street beggars in Phuket, February 13

I have never felt threatened by a beggar. I don't condone it, but Phuket has many more important things to address than this.

What about the horrible haridan that walks around with baby gibbons and grins at the police when they pass her by? And the ones who think it is funny to stick a lizard in your face?

Get this lot off the streets first.

Andre  
Gazette forum

#### CCTV alternative

Re:Gazette online, Prompong in Phuket to launch tourist safety campaign, February 19

Instead of installing pointless CCTV, which will need skilled labor to operate 24/7, why not install speed cameras and traffic light cameras to stop the speeding and driving through red lights? This seems to be the cause of most tourist issues and would also increase revenue for the government as they could provide automatic fines to the owners – all bikes and cars are registered (or should be).

Simon  
Gazette forum

#### Terror warnings

Re:Gazette online, Phuket on high alert in wake of Bangkok terror bombs, February 17

Only pure luck that this team was blown, they could have brought death and destruction for sure. The reason "the West" gives out these warnings is to save lives, not money, or to affect the Thai tourism industry, as some ill-informed people have claimed.

Col Mustard  
Gazette forum

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# Society is creating young drug users

I'VE been working for the civil service for more than 30 years and from the start was involved with preventing youngsters from getting hooked on drugs.

Before becoming Chief of Phuket Muang district in January 2010, I served as a district chief in both Krabi and Phang Nga.

Drug abuse is a nationwide problem and I've been tasked to crackdown on it in Phuket. Drugs are a problem everywhere, even in protected environments such as schools and prisons. This is not acceptable.

It's our social system that is creating younger drug users. When being rich is accepted by society as the number one priority, selling drugs is seen as the quickest way to achieve it.

Those involved believe it's an easy job with good benefits, which is why teenagers are frequently targeted and recruited to help increase the distribution and consumption of drugs.

I coordinate with the Semarak Center, as they look after the interests of children who habitually skip school, run away from home or have run-ins with the police. The Semarak officers have their own methods, however, anytime they need assistance I'm willing to help.

A child's behavior is a parent's responsibility. If we catch children with drugs we will meet with their parents and teachers to discuss the



**Supachai Pochanukul, 57, is the Chief of Muang District. Originally from Songkla province he now describes himself as Phuket's son in law. He has spent the last ten years in charge of combating the youth drug scene. Here Chief Supachai speaks about his role in cracking down on teenage drug abuse.**

problem. If we catch the same child three times, the parents are likely to be punished.

When we catch teenagers we try to find out where other youths go to take drugs and where they are buying them.

I work alongside public health officers as well. If they want to search a drug store at night I can go with them as a representative of the Narcotics Control Board (NCB), as I don't need a court order to conduct a search.

The youth drug-misuse issue has to be coordinated. It's got to involve government departments, home, school and the private sector. Anyone in the business of dealing with children and teenagers during and after school should be involved. I am talking about places teenagers hangout, like game centers and entertainment business taking responsibility,

rather than only thinking of themselves.

There are even locations that function as 'open houses' so kids can try out drugs for free. They [those holding the open house] boil kratom leaves and give away *ya ice* (crystal methamphetamine) or *ya ba* (methamphetamine). This is how they trick the kids into being their future customers.

In the past *ya ice* was sold in relatively large packages. You needed thousands of baht to get it, but now it's divided up and sold in much small amounts. Teenagers are able to buy a hit for just a few hundred baht.

I want parents to care for their children and spend time with them. Of course they have to earn money to support their family, but they must not forget that their children should be their number one priority.



**CLOSING TIME:** You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here.

## Patong naughty child syndrome

### Island View

By Tim Devlin

Do you have an opinion to voice?  
Email [Editor@PhuketGazette.net](mailto:Editor@PhuketGazette.net)

IN A resort area like Patong, which depends on tourism for its income, closing-hours are more about the public and their needs during their short stay in 'Paradise' than about stringent laws and policing.

When you don't mind earning your living from tourists you need to put up with a certain amount of inconvenience.

The effort should not be in enforcing closing-hours, but in enforcing behavior and other laws. Friendly, helpful policing and the supervision of bars and clubs is the way to go.

If an individual bar or club is creating a problem outside what would be considered reasonably acceptable, then they are the ones who should have their hours shortened, which is better than a blanket closure of all bars. Knowing others will be staying open is an encouragement for them to police themselves, rather than be closed.

After a night-out in paradise, the majority of tourists only want a night cap and a chance to relax before going to sleep, since they will also be taking advantage of the opportunity to sleep in – it's all part of enjoying their vacation.

Penalizing the problem makers, but letting responsible businesses and responsible tourists get on with the joy of a brief, but wonderful vacation in Patong is the way to go.

And never forget the importance of stories tourists take home to potential future-tourists. There are a lot of other quality destinations where you're not sent home at two in the morning like a naughty child.

## Issues & Answers...

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

### Fake police or real police trying to get into my house?

A couple of days ago I was at the entrance of my house and was stopped by two men getting out of a car. They said that they were "Army police" and that they were coming for "information".



**Sometimes it's hard to tell if a cop's legitimate, sometimes it's not.** Photo: Robbie Sproule

They asked to enter my house, but I refused them access, because they weren't in uniform and also weren't using an official car.

They told me that for what they were doing being in an official car or uniform was not necessary.

At the end of our discussion they asked me to make a donation with them. I told them to give me the address of their office so I would be able to make a direct donation. Of course, they just went away.

I want to know if in some cases an uniformed official might ask to enter a house, ask for information or for a donation. What is the best way to tell if they are real police officers or if they are con artists? How should people like this be treated?

**Federico Parodi  
Nai Harn**

**Wichit Inorrasorn, Chalong Police Superintendent, replies:**

In this specific case we do not have enough information to know if these were real police

officers or not.

The first thing you should do in this kind of situation is ask to see the 'officers' official identification. It does not matter what department they claim they are from, it is your civil right to ask them to present the card. If they are real officers and sincere in their intentions they will show it to you.

Also ask them why they want access to your property and if they have a court issued search warrant to do so. Asking to see the search warrant is also one of your rights.

If they do not want to tell you why they need to enter your house or do not have a court issued search warrant immediately call the police.

Police normally have a search warrant when they are taking action in a case, though there are some circumstances where the police do not need one, such as when a suspect has escaped into a house.

Another time the police do not need a search warrant is when

### Motorbike insurance

Is there a government sponsored insurance scheme for motorbikes. Can a foreigner join? What happens if someone dies while on their insured motorbike?

**Joy  
Kamala**

**Paitoon Sillapavisut, senior manager of the Road Accident Victim Protection (RVP) Co Ltd Phuket replies:**

Yes, it is RVP Co Ltd, which was set up in 1997 following a new law that required all motorists to carry compulsory insurance.

Foreigners are treated equally under the scheme. Although a private company, operating under a government concession, the RVP is generally known by foreigners simply as the "government insurance office".

In the event of an accident resulting in the death of the rider, passenger or plaintiff, RVP will pay 200,000 baht. However, the amount decreases to 35,000 baht if the rider is deemed to have caused the accident. We will also pay 15,000 baht to cover medical costs.

Send us your queries and we'll ask the right people to respond to them.  
Submit your issue at  
[www.PuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers](http://www.PuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers)

they have received a report that a house is being used for drug related purposes.

In drug related cases, where it is deemed an emergency, police officers are able to access a house along with Narcotics Control Board authorities without a search warrant.

Fake police scams happen across the nation. If you would like to give us information about the two men, or if you fear for your safety, please contact us.

You can come in and see us to report the incident.

The phone number for the Chalong Police Station is 076-381247.



# 'Life & Drive' aims for B2bn

By Chaiyot Yongcharoenchai

IN LIGHT of the island's booming economy, the Phuket Real Estate Association (P-REA) anticipates a successful outcome with the Phuket Life & Drive 2012, the island's premiere real estate and automotive exhibition.

Scheduled to be held from March 28 to April 2, to be held at the Exhibition and Convention Hall of the HomeWorks complex opposite of Central Festival Phuket, the event draws property developers and automobile dealers into the same fair.

Even though it will be held at about the same time that the high profile Bangkok Motor Show will take place, the event's organizers, P-REA are expecting Phuket's event to be just as "big and good" as such fairs in the capital.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, P-REA President Tanan Tanphaibul said this event will be good for the real estate and automobile markets in Phuket.

"The fair will comprise real estate developers, automobile dealers, [suppliers of] home decoration accessories, car decoration accessories, financial institutes, construction materials, and other relevant businesses which will be good for the market in our province. Our market has slowed down [in growth] over the past few years," said Mr Tanan.

There will be 36 real estate developer booths leased out at prices ranging from 800,000 baht up to 10 million baht. Honda, Ford, and Isuzu car dealership already confirmed to attend the fair, he noted.

"We believe this event will generate no less than one billion baht

from the sale of real estate. We will offer some hard-to-resist promotions including 50% discount for down payments and more surprise promotions," Mr Tanan teased.

"Vertical living seems to be the trend this year. Since land in Phuket is expensive, developers are increasingly developing condominiums more than houses," he added.

"Another factor is more foreigners coming to work and live in Phuket. Many foreigners buy a condominium in Phuket for their long-term stay, or for investment. Since the economic crisis in Europe is still bad, our new target groups are Russians, Australians, and Chinese," he said.

The bar is just as high for automobile sales.

Vice-president of P-REA



**PREPARED TO SELL:** Executive organizers and 'pretties' pose at a press conference last week to promote the upcoming auto-prop show.

Montawee Hongyok said, "I believe vehicle sales will perform just as well as houses and condominiums."

"So we've set our sales target also to be 1bn baht. The type of cars that will be exhibited at the event range from economic to luxury. Trucks have become one of the most popular types of vehicle after the flood crisis in central Thailand. We will offer some tempting promotions to lure more buyers to buy cars from our event."

"Other than the sales, people can come to this event to enjoy Phuket's inaugural Miss Sexy Wash 2012 beauty pageant. I believe it will be one of the highlights of our event," he added.

Another interesting feature of the event is there will be information made available about loans for foreigners seeking to purchase Thai real estate or cars, but can't afford to pay in whole, up front..

Pattanan Pisutwimon, P-REA secretary, said, "We are dealing with UOB (United Overseas Bank) to offer loans to foreigners who want to purchase property in Phuket."

Normally, foreigners are not eligible for loans in Thailand, but we will make it happen here. Interested foreigners can come to our event and check the bank's conditions before making any decisions."

## LED systems to dim costs

BUSINESSES and private homes looking to reduce overheads and increase marketing and profit potential can benefit by tapping into the latest LED powered solutions.

Osram-Traxon (Thailand), have partnered with SAPL-CAL Solutions and Boonsoong Technology Co Ltd to showcase its latest products at the Phuket Life and Drive Show, scheduled for March 28 to April 2 at the Homeworks complex opposite of Central Festival Phuket.

Indeed, the latest energy saving LED light management systems about to hit the Phuket market look to offer substantial energy savings.

"These innovative products will be able to save building owners and individual homeowners an average of 50 to 80% on their energy bills if properly applied and utilized," said Chaluckkamol Fuengchan, Managing Director of Boonsoong Technology's Phuket office.

Using movement and light sensors, light management systems can save energy by dimming lights when the respective room, corridor, or passageway is not utilized, she said.

"Rooms and buildings can also be preset at a desired lighting output for the respective room or building even when the room is occupied."

"For example, a 100 Watt lamp will draw 100 Watts of power when lit up. With an Osram light management system, the respective 100 Watt lamp can be set to output 70 or 80 Watts instead, thereby saving 20% to 30%," she explained.

"At 50%, the total savings can be quite substantial," she added.

Traxon's creative lighting applications, its exciting range of LED color changing arrays, and dynamic white LED lights – including the creative mirror tiles for home and hospitality applications – will also be on display.

Another interesting display to look out for is the Dynamic White Lighting series of liners and wall washers, which illuminates only the full spectrum of White Light (warm white to cool white) and also the spectacular RGBW series of color changing lights.

"Home owners who want to add some hi-tech display features to spice up their stylish homes

should not miss the display," Miss Chaluckkamol said.

In addition to interior lighting displays, the latest development in digital media will also be unveiled to the Phuket market.

LEDtronics digital billboards are a modern replacement for conventional, static billboards in the out-of-home media industry, explained Anthony Teo, Director of SAPL-CAL Solutions.

Together with technology partner Daktronics Inc, LEDtronics provides one of the best digital LED screen offerings in the region.

"LEDtronics digital display solutions are essential tools to deliver target advertising messages for your front door customers."

"Besides, customers often use digital billboards to deliver corporate communications, enhance company's reputation and their brand names," he said.

Featuring easy installation and maintenance, high-quality video content and outstanding product quality, LEDtronics LED systems provide an overall hassle-free ownership experience for the life of the product.

Boonsoon Technology will support sales of LEDtronics LED screens for Thai markets south of Bangkok, including Phuket.

For more details, call 083 6999222.

– Steven Layne

### P-REA expects B30bn in 2012



**Tanan Tanphaibul of P-REA.**

BANGKOK-based developers will be plowing as much as 30 billion baht into the local economy this year, the head of Phuket Real Estate Association (P-REA) has announced.

P-REA President Tanan Tanphaibul said that the market for middle range houses and condominiums is luring many investors to Phuket, where new demand continues to emerge.

"As long as tourism is on the up, the real estate business and economy will prosper since tourist groups bring capital and generate [property] demand."

"Russians are one particular group who are starting to buy their own homes and deciding to make investments in Phuket."

"Overall, we expect projects from Bangkok investors to be valued no less than 20 to 30 billion baht, which would equate to growth of 100 to 200% when compared to last year."

"The market for 28 to 30 square-meter condos priced under a million baht has particularly boomed in Phuket due to the high price of land, which on the low end goes for 15 to 20mn baht per rai," he said.

– Warisa Temram

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# Chinese gov eyes light rail

By Warisa Temram

A STATE enterprise from the People's Republic of China is the latest party to express interest in investing in Phuket's light-rail project.

An administration and engineering team from Mashucon Co Ltd announced the news last week in a meeting with Phuket Governor Tri Augaradacha at Provincial Hall.

Executive Chairman Nopphon Tansakul told the governor that his team came on behalf of the Shanghai Association of International & Technological Cooperation, a Chinese state enterprise based in Shanghai.

"The Chinese government is interested in Phuket's light-rail project. Our company has been assigned to meet the Phuket Governor and to relay that we [Mashucon company on behalf of the Chinese government] are ready to support the project, whether in terms of financial investment, technology or personnel," Mr Nopphon said.

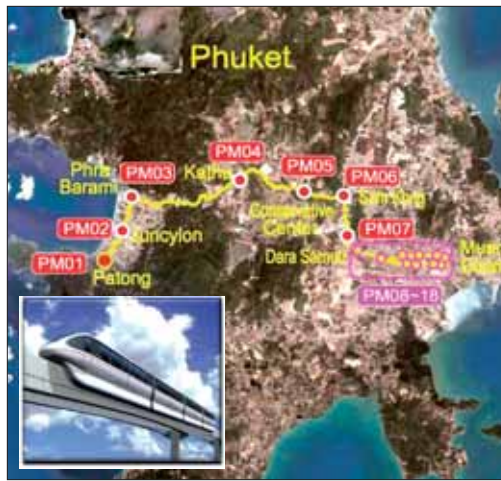
"We will conduct new surveys and designs for the entire project. Shanghai is

prepared to offer its full support if Phuket approves of us proceeding with the light-rail project," he said.

"The results of the study conducted several years ago is outdated, and the technology has since changed," he added.

"For a [new] detailed study, we expect to use a budget of US\$3 million, or about 100mn baht, and we expect the entire project to take about five years to complete.

"Since the Chinese and Thai governments have close relations, the Chinese government is prepared and delighted to invest in mass transit and infrastructure



A modern train (inset) between Phuket Town and Patong is under consideration.

[projects] in Thailand, including Phuket's light rail," he stressed.

The Mashucon Managing Director, Suwichien Pongnailert told the governor that under their proposal two companies under the Shanghai Association of International Economic & Technological Cooperation will lead the investment.

Although he did not name the companies, Mr Suwichien did reveal that they included a multinational company from Canada and another company from Beijing.

As for the type of technology and electric train, he said that a swift and modern train similar to those used in Bangkok would be ideal for Phuket.

"The train can incorporate both elevated and underground designs in order to not disturb Phuket's beautiful environment," he said.

Gov Tri said, "About 13 to 14 companies, mostly from China and Korea, have made proposals to develop the light rail in Phuket. Each of the companies have high investment potential, so choosing the company is the next step.

"Phuket province will give its final approval of the project at a Cabinet meeting scheduled to take place in Phuket on March 19-20.

"The project needs to be a modern mass-transit system in order to solve Phuket's traffic congestion problems and provide one more transport option to residents and tourists.

Phuket province previously hired consultants to conduct a study, which resulted in the outlined seven routes. Two of these are most urgent, including the Phuket Airport to Chalong Circle and the Phuket Town to Patong routes, he said.

"Since the budget would be at least 10 billion baht, the province needs the private sector to invest in it," Gov Tri said.

## Dodgy land deals top list of consumer complaints

LAND deals gone awry and property developers not building according to contract have topped the list of complaints filed at the Phuket Consumer Protection Office so far this year.

The news came earlier this week as Phuket Vice Governor Somkiet Sangkaosutthirak chaired a meeting to review the 29 complaints filed at the Phuket Office of the Consumer Protection Board (OCPB) since October 1 last year.

"Eighteen of the 29 complaints have been resolved, with consumers receiving more than 800,000 baht in compensation," Vice Governor Somkiet told the press.

Most of the cases involved land, real estate and consumer products, said V/Gov Somkiet.

"Most of the complaints were mediated," he said, adding that the remaining 11 complaints



Bad property deals were among the complaints reviewed by officials.

were still under review.

Three of the complaints have been forwarded to the Consumer Protection Board main office in Bangkok for further action.

In comparison, The Phuket OCPB received 60 complaints

during the previous "fiscal year", from October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011.

"Most of those related to land and properties disputes, too" said V/Gov Somkiet.

The OCP Phuket successfully

mediated 45 complaints in 2010-2011, while 13 remain under review.

In total, the office successfully managed to secure more than 2.7 million baht being paid out to customers they believed were treated unfairly during the period.

V/Gov Somkiet called on the Phuket OCPB to hold public meetings more often in order to help reduce the number of complaints.

"We are more than happy to allow media to publish this issue in order to let other people see that it is not right to break the law and that the Office of Consumer Protection Board takes all complaints seriously," he said.

"Many business owners were sued because they did not follow the rules and regulations enforced by the Office of Consumer Protection Board," he added.

- Warisa Temram

## Booming despite blasts

THE recent bombings in Bangkok will not have significant negative impacts on the island's tourism industry, the Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) has announced.

Phuket can expect to have strong tourist arrival figures from both Europe and Asia throughout 2012, PTA President Jirayus Somboon told the *Gazette*.

Sustained and aggressive destination marketing has been reinforced by recent roadshows in India and Taiwan, while campaigns are planned for Japan, the Philippines and Germany, he said.

The recent bombings by Iranian nationals in Bangkok could have a small short-term psychological effect on tourist confidence in Phuket, but the long-term outlook is positive, he said.

The perpetrators were after specific targets and not members of the general population or tourists. People understand that it could happen anywhere, he explained.

Nevertheless, authorities have stepped up security in key areas including popular tourist destinations and Phuket Airport, he assured.

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\*Source= Department of Internal Trade as of February 22, 2012

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# An update on international download speeds in Phuket

TIME for an update on how Phuket's doing for real world, measured international internet speeds. I'm not talking about the advertised 10 megabits or 100 megabits-per-second lines that only exist in marketing drivel and a few internet service provider's fantasies. I'm talking about speeds that you and I are measuring, in the wild, right here, every day.

The short headline: we're doing well, but you can waste a lot of money if you aren't careful.

The crowdsourced internet speed site, [PhuketInternetSpeed.com](http://PhuketInternetSpeed.com), is unique in all of Asia, I believe. Hundreds of people all over the island have signed up, and take a minute or so to measure and post their international internet download speeds. We all use the same test, to the same location, so the results are more-or-less replicable. The graph you see on this page is indicative of the 3,000 observations that were posted between November 1, 2011 and February 19, 2012.

I say "indicative" because there are a few gotchas, which I'll describe below.

First, I downloaded the database. You can download the entire database, too, any time – just click on the link that says Download. There are more than 25,000 recorded observations.

Then, I removed items that were obviously not intended for this analysis – mostly measured download speeds to Bangkok, conducted by people who are using the ISP's speed test sites and other sites hosted by a company called OOKLA. As I've explained before any test you run that uses the OOKLA speed test engine is really just going to Bangkok, even if you think it's going to London or Oslo or Madrid.

I also took out a fair number of tests conducted from places other than Phuket. It's interesting to see how people in Bangkok and other upcountry locations are doing with the same internet service providers, but they aren't included in these figures.

I also removed the "0" posts – ones that indicate the service



wasn't working at the time. We're still seeing sporadic outages, but most of them are local (for example, a telephone pole gets whacked by a car). The widespread outages involve wireless services, and they're not common.

Then I tallied up the average download speeds reported for the most popular internet service packages, with one exception. I didn't include any reports for 3BB. Why? Because 3BB has gone to great pains to make its speed test results in our tests faster than their typical international speeds.

If you look at the data, here's what you'll see:

The first two speeds reported are wireless. AIS's "3G" HSPA system continues to deliver the fastest 3G international download speeds on the island, at about 1,000 Kbps. TrueMove-H shows disappointing results, around 800 Kbps. Why disappointing? The technology TrueMove uses, called HSPA+, is capable of running much faster than AIS's HSPA. Unfortunately, True isn't working hard enough (or spending enough money) to open up its international data lines. Yet another case of bigger and better technology getting knee-capped by inadequate infrastructure.

There are two more wireless services offered in Phuket: DTAC HSPA+ and CAT's new HSPA+. We've had very few reported speeds from DTAC and CAT connections, but the few we've seen have been very good. Both TrueMove and DTAC use the CAT towers and equipment, so it's likely that more data points will make DTAC and CAT look more like TrueMove, and less like AIS.

CAT's old EV-DO wireless system is still kicking at around 600 Kbps (not on the graph). There are lots of old EV-DO customers on the island, but you can't buy it any more. CAT's much more interested in selling you a new 3G+ account.

The next two speeds are new to my published reports. Island



**NEED FOR SPEED:** Recent results prove that paying more does not always get you more. Photo: Frank Monnerjahn

Technology's reputation for reliability is quite good though their international download speeds, averaging 900 Kbps, aren't anything to write home about. Rawai Cable, at 400 Kbps, is the slowest land line in this report. We don't have enough data from Patong's PACable to draw a comparison, but I believe both use CAT as their internet supplier.

The TOT numbers reinforce what I recently wrote about TOT's apparent throttling of all of its international data lines at the same speed. That Live Wire column explained why it isn't worth paying extra for expensive TOT fiber optic lines if you're using the internet primarily for international access. In fact, TOT still seems to be throttling all of its lines at the same speed.

More than any other ISP, TOT has come up with a plethora of packages, promotions and prices. At this moment, as best I can tell, they don't offer a 4 Mbps or 8 Mbps or 10 Mbps package – all of which have been discontinued – but they do offer 6, 7, 9, 12, and 15 Mbps packages. Apparently consumers are being switched from one package to the next without being notified.

In our island-wide tests, there's very little difference among the TOT ADSL packages: all of them deliver about 1,200 Mbps on international downloads. The wireless/wired AirMax Winet package is doing quite well, at 1,400 Kbps, if you're trying to get a connection inside the areas where it's available.

TOT is now advertising a High Speed 2 package rated at 7 Mbps for 390 baht per month. Our speed tests show it's running about 800 Kbps, which isn't bad at all for the price. Of course, if the package proves popular, TOT may start throttling the cheapie package. But if they're throttling all of the other packages at the same rate, maybe they'll just let the 7 Mbps package get swept up

by the same broom.

The biggest disappointment continues to be TOT's Fiber Optic line. Back in May, we were seeing download speeds in the 10,000 and above range. Now it's down to 1,200 Kbps average international download, and there's very little difference between the 10Mbps/1Mbps package (at 1,490 baht per month), the 20 Mbps/2Mbps package (at 2,420 baht per month), and the "Corporate" versions of both of those packages (5,290 baht and up). It's worth emphasizing that the speeds to Bangkok are very fast, from what I've seen. But if most of your work is with international sites, there's very little difference between a 2,420 baht Fiber 2U line and a 390 baht one.

True's 10 Mbps ADSL line continues to offer good speeds, 1,500 Kbps on average, at a decent price. True's Ultra DOCSIS – the service that's delivered over coax cables, like TV, is holding its own at about 1,200 Kbps, but it isn't available everywhere.

If you aren't yet reporting your

internet speeds, join us! The only way we can all keep tabs on the internet situation in Phuket is if everybody – yes, even those of you with 390 baht/month lines – take a few minutes every day to check and post your speed. It's easy. Sign up at [PhuketInternetSpeed.com](http://PhuketInternetSpeed.com), and if you have any questions, email me at [Woody@KhunWoody.com](mailto:Woody@KhunWoody.com).

*Seth Bareiss holds computer sessions on every-other Wednesday afternoon, from 1 to 3pm. If you have a Windows problem that needs to be solved, drop by one of Seth's free afternoon sessions, or come to one of our free Sunday morning round tables at Sandwich Shoppe Chalong. Details in the Events Calendar. 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](mailto:Woody@KhunWoody.com), follow him on Twitter @PhuketLiveWire, or "like" his page at [facebook.com/SandwichShoppes](https://www.facebook.com/SandwichShoppes).*

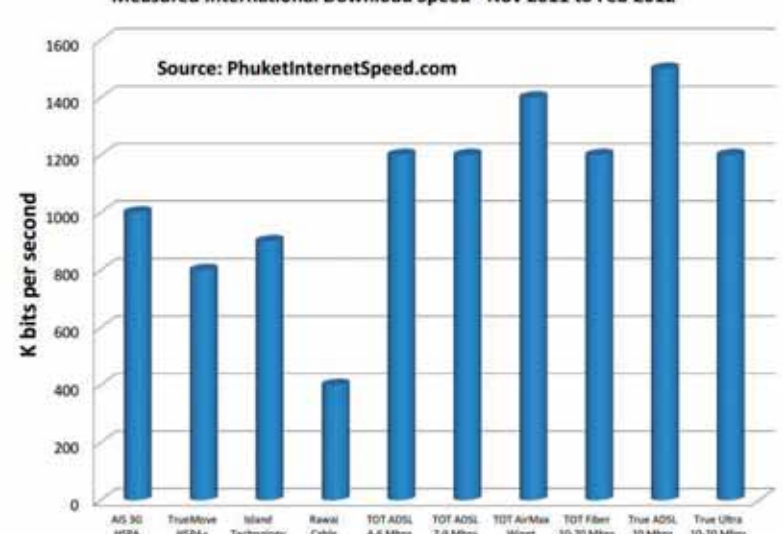


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**Measured International Download Speed - Nov 2011 to Feb 2012**



**A cross-section of average international download speeds since November 1, 2011. Note that 1 Mbps = approximately 1,000 Kbps, so for example TOT Fiber packages run about 1.1 Mbps.**





**SUMMED UP:** An axiom is defined as a mathematical statement that is accepted as being true without a mathematical proof. Photo: Tony Hall

# Axiom legal financing segregated portfolio

A LITTLE while back my article about litigation funding in general was published and at the time I was kind of sitting on the fence about the asset class.

One of my main hang-ups had been with the fact that generally the access to it that I had seen up to that point had been via structured notes, which had timing issues for a lot of my clients. As a response to my article I was pointed to a great fund within this space, and since then I have had a very positive response to it from just about everyone I have shown it to.

The Axiom fund provides loans to law firms trying non-frivolous lawsuits such as divorce, etc. As with the types of notes I

had looked at before, all the cases are insured and there is also insurance taken out against the law firm should it fail. Thus, the protection is extremely high. The main difference is that there is no percentage split of the winnings from the cases, but this is balanced by them charging a slightly higher interest rate to the law firms.

The cases must be almost guaranteed to be settled, otherwise the insurance company will not underwrite the policy. The fund also has an average of about 1,500 loans out at one time, which means their portfolio of loans is highly diversified. Because the term of each loan is usually less than 12 months, this ensures basically the entire portfolio turns over ev-

ery year and the rate at which the loans are repaid leads to extremely consistent returns for the fund. The standard deviation of returns is less than half a percent. This is even more remarkable given that the fund has averaged almost 12% per annum in its short existence (it is just over two years old).

The best part about this fund is that it is non-correlated with the financial markets and the world economy. I personally believe a 10% holding in just any portfolio provides an excellent buffer against falling stock markets or rising interest rates. I would not go too heavy into this fund as it has a short track record and is still a single fund manager, but I do believe there is not a risk profile out there for which this fund is not appropriate (with the exception of the cash under the

mattress crowd).

The fund is available with a minimum investment of £12,500 through an offshore portfolio bond, and is very liquid. It deals monthly with a 30-day notice period. While it is run out of the UK and is based in pounds sterling, there are also USD and EUR tranches available. In a market such as we are currently in where bank deposits are paying virtually nothing in interest, a small allocation in this fund can give a nice little extra bit of return to your portfolio without taking an excessive amount of risk.

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

## Retirement Years

By David Mayes

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# The art of life

Alastair Carthew tackles former French international rugby player Gérard Bertrand about how his career in sport and now wine have pressed on his success.



**JAZZY RESIDENCE:** Gerard Bertrand's Château l'Hospitalet where he hosts an annual jazz festival as a musical complement to celebrate his successful winery and as an expression of his wine philosophy.



**LEADER OF THE PACK:** Gerard's has played rugby at the highest level and has the same level of ambition for his wines.

By Alastair Carthew

A FRENCHMAN who enjoys wine and rugby is nothing unusual, but a former international player launching his own award winning wines on Phuket is certainly worth our attention. Alastair Carthew speaks exclusively to Gérard Bertrand who was recently represented on the island to promote his labels and discuss the Mediterranean *art de vivre* or art of life.

Gérard Bertrand was born into wine and rugby and has excelled at both. Capped twice for France against Italy and Russia as a strapping loose forward, he also led the Paris-based Stade Français team in the 1993-1994 season and played for Narbonne, the French commune in which he was raised as a child for several years.

Gérard's family were vintners in the Corbières region of Southern France, which also happens to be the heart of the country's rugby and he explains how his love of rugby has determined his ideas on wine.

"Rugby has influenced my wine philosophy through the senses of celebration and sharing, as well as the team spirit," Gérard said. "There is a real synergy between rugby and wine, especially in the South of France because the values are very close, especially the conviviality, art of life and social ties," he added.

His rugby heroes? Jean Pierre Rives, a fellow loose forward and the legendary Serge Blanco, arguably the best fullback to play the game who played 93 times for France.

But how does a rugby player make the transition from the bottom of a scrum

and crunching tackles, to the delicate art of winemaking?

"For me wine was not a change of profession as I was raised in this world next to my father, with whom I made my first harvest at the age of 10. Besides, my father told me that year, 'You are lucky. At 60 years old you will have 50 years of experience'," he recalls.

Gérard has grown his wine business into six wine estates totalling 880 acres of vines on about 2,000 acres of land that range from the Mediterranean Sea to hills high up in the Pyrenees Mountains bordering France and Spain.

Fresh from winning the 2011 European Winery of the Year awarded by the prestigious Wine Enthusiast Magazine, Gérard is bringing his experience to Phuket with a

range of white and red wines. Thailand, along with other Asian countries such as Japan and China, is part of a Gérard Bertrand Wines roll out across the region.

Gérard is also famous for his annual jazz festivals at his Château l'Hospitalet winery, a hospitality and tourism complex that combines a hotel, restaurant, lounge, wine tasting cellar, art house and business convention center, into one.

In keeping with the jazz theme, Gérard Bertrand Wines recently celebrated their arrival on Phuket at Bliss Beach Club with a live jazz performance by The Jazz Friends from Bangkok's Oriental Hotel. Mediterranean cuisine, and, of course, a selection of wines from Gérard's collection has helped ensure Phuket's own relationship with wine and rugby will long continue.



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## New Pasta restaurant penned by Twinpalms

PHUKET'S Italian culinary experience gets a new addition next month when Pasta by Twinpalms opens its doors just in time for Songkran.

Located between Bake and Flame in Cherng Thalay, this new pasta bar will add an intimate and interactive dining dimension for patrons to enjoy a closeup view of their selected dishes being prepared at the chef's station at the end of a 16-seat oval bar.

A modern white marble bar counter and brushed stainless steel decor will complement a cordial atmosphere with the playing of traditional Italian folk songs to add a dash of old world charm.

The menu features more than a dozen noodle varieties including spaghetti and ravioli, and nearly 20 sauces.



**A PENNE FOR YOUR THOUGHTS:** Pasta gets a Twinpalms twist when they open their new restaurant next month in Cherng Thalay.

Pasta is the latest addition to Phuket's emerging culinary scene along the road approaching Bangtao Bay where Twinpalms first brought its influence into this hotspot of dining area by opening

their bakery [Bake], followed by the launch of their garden rotisserie [Flame] next door.

For more information contact Sales@twinpalms-phuket.com.



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# Got those Les Paul blues

By Neil Quail and Marc Mulloy

AS THIS newspaper hits the stands the 7<sup>th</sup> Phuket International Blues Rock Festival is primed and ready to rock at their new venue in Laguna, Phuket.

The two-day festival takes months of tireless preparation, by organizer Andy Andersen and his team, to get dozens of musicians and their instruments to the gig on time.

Take for example the last minute issue of Irish female rocker Gráinne Duffy's guitar – a Gibson Les Paul – which she was told needed its own seat if it were to travel in the cabin all the way from her home in Ireland.

*Gazette* features editor Neil Quail, also from that emerald isle, contacted Gráinne this week to find out what happened.

"I tried to bring my guitar to Phuket, but unfortunately the airline does not allow carry on instruments unless you buy a seat which was too expensive. I used to use a Strat for my live gigs but a few years ago I was given a gift of a beautiful Gibson Les Paul for Christmas and I fell in love with it – the sound, the sustain, the feel and resonance – everything about it reminds me of Peter Green and I have never looked back since." Gráinne told Neil.

"If I had not got a Les Paul in Phuket it would have been a little harder for me to get my feel across. Although I still love to play a Strat I think it just might have felt a little different on another type of guitar but thankfully I am very lucky that one has been made available for me to play so thank you! I'm looking forward to playing for all the festival goers

in Phuket!" she added.

The guitar she is borrowing had similar problems in getting to Phuket from France as recounted by *Gazette* desk editor and co-MC of the event Marc Mulloy.

"We bought the guitar in France in August for my son Paul and needed a special dispensation from the airline to bring it onboard. When we heard that Gráinne needed a Les Paul for her set we did not hesitate in lending it, given that we are also Irish and that we understand why she feels a Les Paul is different to other guitars. This guitar is already lucky, having only ever been played by Paul since new, it has enabled him to become an accomplished musician. Having someone of Gráinne's caliber playing it will only add to its luck and value – a sort of baptism."

Sixteen-year-old Paul Mulloy will himself be making his debut at the festival with local blues outfit "Rockin' Angels" on Friday night. Band leader, Rockin' Pat, who runs the "Rockin' Angels Blues Café" in Phuket Town told the *Gazette* "I always try to encourage young musicians when I can, especially if they love to play the blues. This year we have two very talented Phuket youngsters on stage with us and they add some good, fiery energy to the set."

Gráinne Duffy will make her own Phuket debut just before New Orleans headliner Chris Thomas King takes to the stage on Saturday night. King has sold more records and appeared in more successful movies than any other blues artist this century and will also be passing on his knowledge to youngsters at a special workshop at British In-

ternational School (BIS) on Monday February 27.

With 12 acts from 10 different countries making this year's festival the biggest and best to date, and with all musicians and instruments in place it's now up to the people of Phuket to support the event by turning up in great numbers.

Meanwhile, the musicians have already prepared their own 'great numbers' for a weekend of fantastic music which will also be broadcast around the world by festival presenter 91.5FM.

This charity event and the BIS workshop are both sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*.

For more information visit [W:phuketbluesfestival.com](http://W:phuketbluesfestival.com). The festival schedule is at the bottom left of this page.



UNPLUGGED: Grainne Duffy, seen here with her beloved Les Paul.



HELLO ANGELS: Rockin' Pat (left) and his Angels have been rehearsing hard for this weekend. Photo: Marc Mulloy

**THE 2012 PHUKET INTERNATIONAL BLUES ROCK FESTIVAL**  
February 24-25 @ Laguna Phuket Resort

**Thursday February 23**

3pm: Acoustic performances in the lobbies of The Laguna Beach Resort, The Dusit, The Angsana and The Best Western Allamanda hotels  
10pm: Festival Warm-up show at Rock City, Patong

**Friday February 24**

3pm: Acoustic performances in the lobbies of The Laguna Beach Resort, The Dusit Thani, The Angsana and The Best Western Allamanda hotels  
5pm: Laguna - Main Gates Open – games, food & drink  
6:15pm: Official Opening- Welcome  
6:15pm: Jack Derwin (Australia)  
7pm: Moscowfish (Canada)  
7:45pm: Rockin' Angels with Mojo Perry (Thailand/USA)  
8:30pm: TOKEN – A Tribute to Santana (Thailand)  
9:30pm: Sky High (Sweden) 11pm: AkashA (Malaysia)

**Saturday February 25**

3pm: Acoustic performances in the lobbies of The Laguna Beach Resort, The Dusit, The Angsana and The Best Western Allamanda hotels  
5pm: Laguna - Main Gates Open – games, food & drink  
6pm: Welcome 6:15pm: Stuart Bush Band (Australia/Thailand)  
7:15pm: Colin Hill Band with Jimmy Fame & PJae Stanley (Thailand)  
8:15pm: Grainne Duffy Band (Ireland) 9:15pm: John Meyer's Blues Express (Australia)  
10:45pm: Chris Thomas King (USA)

**Saturday February 26**

9pm: Festival Wrap-up party @ BLISS Beach Club, Bangtao Beach



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# Whose line is it, Steve?

In the run up to The Phuket Punchline Comedy Club's February 29 'Whose Line is it Anyway?' show, the *Gazette* asks each of the comedians about themselves. As this edition of the *Phuket Gazette* leads into the event, we feature the remaining performers, Stephen Frost and Steve Steen.

By Neil Quail

**Phuket Gazette:** Where and when were you born?

**Stephen Frost:** Leeds, Yorkshire in 1955.

**Steve Steen:** I was born at home, but I don't remember too much about it, I was pretty young. Born in the fifties or in a crossfire hurricane.

**PG:** Any amusing tales from your childhood and/or school days?

**SF:** In my school nativity play when I was five years old, I was offered the part of Joseph, but I turned it down because I wanted to be one of the inn-keepers because they shout, "no room at the inn". So I got the part of inn-keeper number two. When Joseph asked "can we stay the night?", I said "yes come in, how many nights are you staying for?" Big laughs all round.

**SS:** My first school was run by nuns who looked like penguins and my grammar school by monks who looked like nuns. The art teacher at grammar school used an air gun to shoot pennies balanced on a table at the back of the class while we tried to draw pretty pictures. Even now, I flinch when I doodle.

**PG:** Did you attend University or some other higher education establishment?

**SF:** No university for me. Straight from school to drama school in London for three years. Shakespeare, Chekov and drinking.

**SS:** I went to Oxford, but it

rained a lot that day, so I went to Cambridge. People asked me what I read there? I tell them beer pump labels. But it's not what qualifications you have that open doors in life, but how you turn the knob.

**PG:** How, when, where, why did you become a comedian/comedy performer?

**SF:** When I was born, my mother looked at the doctor, who was holding me and said, "stop joking where's the baby?"

**SS:** I went to a school that was so cruel that the only way to survive was to laugh. In 1970 I went to the Jimi Hendrix Isle of Wight festival and I was selling bottles of his sweat with a street value of 60 quid. At the police interview, the police asked if I was having a laugh and I thought, "Now there's an idea."

**PG:** Did you/do you have any comedy heroes? If so, what do you like about them?

**SF:** Tommy Cooper. He would get laughs as soon as he came on before he said anything. Also Steve Steen, Andy Smart and Ian Coppinger, who are in the show with me.

**SS:** Galton and Simpson, Dick Clement and Ian la Frenais, Neil Simon, Trey Parker, Matt Stone, Jim Sweeney, and many others too. They are the people who write the scripts for comedians, comedy performers and actors to screw up or get right.

**PG:** Which current comedian makes you laugh and why?

**SF:** A comedian called Stephen



The joke question is: "What's the difference between Tom Cruise and a tuk-tuk?" Send your punchline to [info@phuketcomedy.com](mailto:info@phuketcomedy.com) for a chance to win great prizes and to get your answer read out at the show.

Frost. He's a bit like Tommy Cooper except he's still alive, just.

**SS:** Greg Proops. He's funny, intelligent, fast as lightning, funny, has a big heart, scathing, funny, educational and ..oh yeah, he makes me laugh my ass off too!

**PG:** Have you been to Thailand before? If so, when, where and what did you like and dislike about it?

**SF:** Yes, we have been to Thailand many times over the years doing the show in Bangkok, but I have never been to Phuket. I love coming to Thailand. The variety of food is incredible, the atmosphere and of course the people. I am two-meters-tall so they make me look even taller. Dislikes?

**SS:** Yes I have, we have been to Bangkok many times, love the people, love the temples, love the

food of course, love the massages, but still waiting for a happy ending – to this anecdote, I mean.

**PG:** Have you performed in Thailand before? What was it like?

**SF:** The gigs were great and very enthusiastically received.

**SS:** In Bangkok and it was great.

**PG:** Is there a difference between performing to an audience of expats and an audience from your home country?

**SF:** Yes, the expats tend to be more excited and easy going, which we like.

**SS:** Yes, the main difference is the return fare. A lot cheaper in my home country.

**PG:** Outside of your homeland, where is the best place you have performed?



Steve Steen

## Get your ears Pierced ears at Lanta

NEIL Pierce, a name synonymous with the Soulful House scene in London, has been added to the list of DJs who will hit the decks at Thailand's premiere funky house music event on March 7 to 9 at Mango House Bar + Restaurant in Lanta Old Town in Krabi.

DJ Pierce started the production duo Fanatix with DJ Aaron Ross in 2003. Since then, the pair has consistently pushed out quality Soulful House music in both the booth and in the studio.

Just some of the amazing artists the Fanatix have worked with over the years form a mixture of talent from across the globe such as Blaze, Kimara Lovelace, KOT, Kenny Bobien, Roy Ayers and Stephanie Cooke, as well as home-grown talent such as Terri Walker, Kele le Roc, Jamiroquai, Alex Mills, Don-E and Sunburst Band.

Neil is joined by a lineup of international and local DJs playing each day for 12 hours straight.

Back by popular demand, London Ministry of Sound regulars, 2

Good Souls, will be supported by Colin "Funk it Up" Edwards, who will host a new afternoon house music session at the festival.

Also appearing at this year's festival is Canada's best resident beach DJ Tommy T, DJ Taz and DJ Q from the seriously funky-up Phuket House Mafia and the discofied vibes of Thailand's DJ Nutrip.

The ABSOLUT Mango House Festival 2012, a popular event at the island's annual cultural extravaganza, the Lanta Lanta Festival, is a free event that starts each afternoon at 3pm with the "Sushi Lounge Party" hosted by DJ Colin Edwards. Colin is internationally known for his voice and immensely popular Funk It Up radio syndication show.

Colin will be joined by DJ Nutrip and celebrity Japanese chef Massa, for a saucy afternoon of sweet, sexy house music and fresh and sensuous sushi.

The ABSOLUT Mango House Festival 2012 is dedicated to "Funking up Asia" by promoting



FANATIX: DJ Neil Pierce.

real house music events featuring world-class, international and regional DJs.

The *Phuket Gazette* is a sponsor of the Absolut Mango House festival.

For more information visit [manghousesessions.com](http://manghousesessions.com)

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# Go with the flow



**SHEER BEAUTY:** This free-flowing style is destined to become a staple for every fashion-forward female this year.

By Abby McMillan

ONE of the many perks of dressing in a sheer fabric, like silk chiffon, is the versatility of the material.

This free-flowing style is destined to become a staple for every fashion-forward female this year, as it can be dressed up or down depending on your wants and taste. Don a short version as a cover-up at the beach, wear it as a perfect sun dress while lunching with the girls or opt for a longer version to catch the breeze perfectly during a classy occasion. The look is luxurious, but never rigid perfect for island life.

The lightweight, airy fabrics keep you cool without having to bare it all and are truly the essence of the look's versatility.

The sheeriness of this trend works with your body and adds extra allure. These slinky fabrics drape beautifully over the female form, highlighting your curves while gently smoothing over any insecurities. The flowing style is flattering for any figure and leaves much to the imagination.



**SUNSHINE CHIFFON:** Asymmetrical elegance.

These elegant frocks also make shopping a cinch. The instant likability means less time spent hunting through the racks and more time looking and feeling fabulous. Don't be afraid of sleeves or long hemlines anymore. This breathable material makes multiple silhouettes possible, even in the tropics. The style looks great paired with sequins and heels, layered with strands of beads or simply left on its own.

Go with classic black for a formal night on the town or a pretty floral shade to brighten up any afternoon. No matter the occasion or temperature, these gorgeous garments will make you feel as comfortable as you look.

Go against the grain with a chunky necklace or eclectic belt to contrast the soft lines, or play upon the feminine frills with fresh

flowers in an up-do. These dresses are the perfect canvas for a bold piece of jewelry, fun hat or statement handbag. This trend is a must-have at any age and will do wonders for any wardrobe.



**LAYERS OF LUXURY:** Slinky fabrics drape beautifully over the female form. Natural crystal necklace (inset).

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# Battle of the Eco-Warriors

## Books

By James Eckardt

T.C. BOYLE is the hardest working man in the literary business. Like the late Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, he writes seven days a week, and it shows.

He has written 13 novels and nine collections of short stories. His first two novels – *Water Music* and *Budding Prospects* – are about the 18<sup>th</sup> century African explorations of Mungo Park and contemporary marijuana growers in northern California. They rank among the two funniest novels ever written in the English language.

His subsequent novels are biographies of famous figures like John Harvey Kellogg, Frank Lloyd Wright and Alfred Kinsey or ecological doomsday tracts about the clash of man and nature. They lack the wild humor of his early novels, but are graced with Boyle's limpid, onrushing, extravagant literary style. Whatever he writes is a good read.

Like many of his novels, his newest takes place in Santa Barbara, California. Specifically, most of the action of *When the Killing's Done* (Viking, New York, 2011, 369pp) takes place in the northern Channel Islands, Anacapa and Santa Cruz, called the Galapagos of North America.

The novel opens with a young married couple, Till and Beverly Boyd, on a weekend fishing trip to Anacapa in their newly refurbished cabin cruiser. The year is 1946. Tilden is a veteran of the Pacific War and along for the trip is Warren, Tilden's ex-Marine brother. The boat sinks in a storm and Boyle's description of Beverly's fight against the elements is brilliant and harrowing.

At the time, Beverly was pregnant with her daughter, who would later marry a Japanese American fisherman and have a daughter of her own, Alma Boyd Takesue. She would grow up to become a National Park Service biologist with a mission to eradicate the rats that have overrun Anacapa to the detriment of native species of birds. In this she is fiercely opposed by the ecological warriors

of the Friends for the Protection of Animals (FPA), led by Dave LaJoy, semi-retired owner of four home-entertainment stores and new convert to ecological purity. An irascible misanthrope, here he is walking down a Santa Barbara street after making a big public scene at his habitual breakfast restaurant:

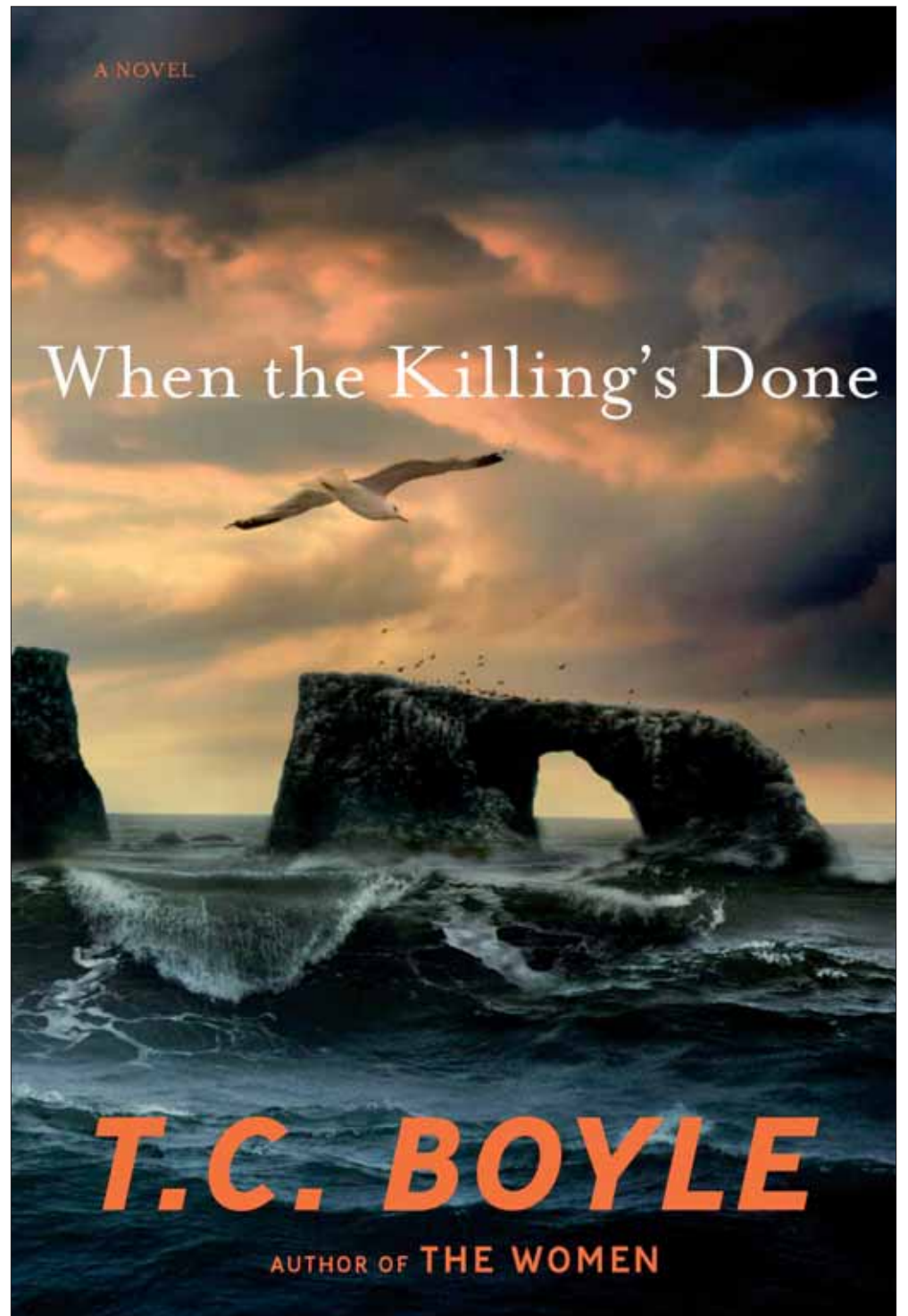
"He's walking now, striding along in his business-as-usual gait, forty-two years old and as fit as the gym, Dr Reiser's Lotensin and blood thinners can make him, ignoring the cars lined up at the light with their wipers clapping and the exhaust coiling out of their tailpipes in the last petrochemical gasp of the black stuff pooled up under layers of shale in Saudi Arabia and Nigeria and Venezuela, the death of the earth, the death of everything, smelling crushed worm, rotting leaf and the wet acidic failure of the newspapers stuck to the sidewalk where the Mexicans tossed them short of the house stoops and storefronts in the grim, desperate hour before dawn."

You can see how this style will do well to describe the upcoming battles over the next stage of the National Parks campaign: ridding the island of Santa Cruz's feral pigs. In protest, Dave LaJoy plots of his own infestation of raccoons and rattlesnakes.

Oddly enough, the biologist and the protest leader are alike in that they find their only moments of peace amid the solitary beauty of the islands. They share this with their lovers, Alma with Tim Sickafoose, a fellow biologist, and Dave LaJoy with Anise Reed, a Joan Baez-type folksinger who spent four and a half of her early teenage years with her mother Rita, a fellow musician and singer, on an isolated sheep farm on Santa Cruz.

They all love the islands and will fight over them until five lives are lost. In the end, Alma, abandoned by her lover Tim, brings her newborn daughter in celebration to Santa Cruz Island just as Rita is returning to her old sheep ranch to scatter the ashes of her own daughter. Through ancient Indians, Spanish seafarers, Italian vintners, American sheepherders, shipwrecked rats, feral hogs, the Channel Islands abide forever. The novel ends:

"The grass stirs. The moon sinks into the water. Night on Santa Cruz Island, night immemorial."



GALAPAGOS OF NORTH AMERICA: Santa Cruz Island becomes a central location for the novel.

## And the winner is...



**Lead Actors:** Jean Dujardin, Berenice Bejo, John Goodman, James Cromwell

**Director:** Michel Hazanavicius  
**Genre:** Musical Drama / Foreign  
**Phuket release:** February 23

AS THIS issue of the *Phuket Gazette* goes to print *The Artist* has been nominated for 10 Academy Awards, which will be announced on February 26.

At its Cannes Film Festival premier, Jean Dujardin won the Best Actor Award and lavish amounts of praise. The film is set in Hollywood between 1927 and 1932 and focuses on a declining film star and a rising actress, as silent cinema falls out of fashion and is replaced by "the talkies".

The film has also been nominated for twelve BAFTAs, and ten César Awards. At the 69<sup>th</sup> Golden Globe Awards the film was nominated in six categories, more than any other film nominated, and won three Golden Globes including Best Film: Musical or Comedy, Best Actor in a Musical or Comedy for Jean Dujardin and Best Original Score for Ludovic Bource. *The Artist* is the first French film to win a Best Film

Golden Globe and Dujardin is the first French actor to win the Best Actor Golden Globe since Gérard Depardieu, who won it in 1991.

This silent film is an absolute marvel – charming, witty, surprising, moving, clever and beautiful.

The cinematography is ravishing in luminous black and white. The musical score is both subtle and dramatic, when called for, and the screenplay toys with the conventions of the silent era, paying homage to some of the greatest films of the first two or three decades of cinema history.

The acting is flawless and *The Artist* deserves a wide audience and all sorts of awards. If there was an Oscar for best animal performance, the dog in *The Artist* should receive a lifetime achievement award for its role alone.

A film definitely not to be missed and a film to watch again and again.

– *Phuket Gazette*

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# Jirawan Sirimas

THAI boxing, ballroom dancing and Buddhism may not at first seem to have much in common, but for dance teacher Jirawan Sirimas, who was also a teenage boxing champion, there is a very strong link.

"For me the three disciplines work in the same way. You need focus and have the willpower to succeed, and when you do, they give you such a high," Jirawan explained.

Jirawan, who grew up in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, was drawn to Buddhism at an early age. Dancing and boxing was a way of raising money for the temple her family attended.

"I started boxing at age 11 and was given the *nom de guerre* of 'Sopha Srinakorn'. The second name [Srinakorn] was given to show allegiance to my boxing camp," she recalled.

Groomed to fight and fight she did, either as highlights to temple fairs or in proper boxing matches. At age 16, she arrived on Phuket to fight against a local hopeful.

"I dare say, it was the first ever women's boxing match in Phuket. It took place near the Pearl Hotel in town and there were lots of foreigners watching, who stuffed wads of money in my shorts as a way of 'egging' me on and I did win that match. You see, I never lost. I had superb footwork, fatal with my knees and one high kick to the neck could knock

## THAI gallery

By Nanthapa Pengkasem

my opponent out," Jirawan said.

She was indeed both formidable and fearsome. Her name was known throughout the Southern provinces as the girl boxing prodigy. However, it is obvious now that she is not so proud of her achievements.

"Thai boxing is such a brutal sport and I still find it hard to believe that I practiced it in the name of religion. When I turned 35, I came down with unexplainable pains in my stomach and knees. It must be karma. I have hurt many people, now the wheel has turned on me," she reflected.

Jirawan gave up boxing when she turned 18 while studying at a college in Yala. She later taught physical education (PE) at the Prince of Songkhla University where she designed courses that combined dance and exercise routines, the content of which was later used as a model for PE teacher training courses in Thailand.

Her love of dance rekindled, Jirawan left the world of academia and turned to her first love. She studied a variety of styles such as jazz

and ballet, but fell in love with ballroom. Jirawan sought and trained with many international champions here and abroad, and even had a stint in Missouri, US, training at a renowned dance studio there.

Back home in Thailand, she started to win many prizes and was later appointed dance adjudicator by the UK Dance Council. In 2007, she opened 'The Art of Dance' studio at the Courtyard on Chao Fah Road, where she teaches ballroom dancing to adults and schoolchildren.

A perfectionist at heart, Jirawan reveals that her profession is one born of love, not profit.

"We don't make a lot of money here because I want to teach dance from basics. It takes longer and most people don't have the patience. The students who end up with me are those who really love and appreciate dance as an art form," she said.

The 50-year-old Jirawan is single and intends to stay so. Apart from teaching dance, her time is spent working for religious causes. Her boxing gloves are hung up for good, but she still looks after local Buddhist communities, and being devout to her beliefs, she meditates, prays, and make merits regularly.

"It must be something to do with my past life that draws me to Buddhism. I cannot escape. It's in my system, my karma," Jirawan said sincerely.



### 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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**On Saturday, February 25...**

## **Birdman will jump from 13,500 feet and land on Surin Beach**



"Come to the edge, Life said.  
They said: We are afraid.  
Come to the edge, Life said.  
They came. It pushed them...  
and they flew."

- Guillaume Apollinaire 1870-1918

## **And stunt pilots will deliver shock and awe from the skies**



Pitts Special S2B



Extra 300

**Birdman?** Phuket resident Jari Kuosma, from Finland. (See [bird-man.com](http://bird-man.com))

**Stunt pilots?** Markus Walther in Pitts / Les Vorosmarthy in Extra 300

• Air show @ 5pm • Birdman Jump @ about 6pm for sunset landing

Presented by:



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Event subject to weather and final clearance from aviation authorities



**Surin Beach**



## WHAT'S ON in Phuket

### February 24, March 2 and 10.

**Navrang Mahal Curry Fridays**  
We present Curry Fridays at Navrang Mahal India Restaurant from 7 to 11pm in Karon Sea Sands Resort & Spa. Here is your chance to enjoy an authentic and lavish Indian Curry Buffet on Friday only 449 baht nett! Draught Beer by the glass: just 50 baht nett. Special discount on beverages. Reservations at 076-286464 ext 4, sm@karonseasand.com or visit karonseasand.com.

### February 24 to 25. Phuket International Blues Rock Festival

The annual Phuket International Blues Rock Festival is back for the 7<sup>th</sup> time – now in its new home: Laguna Phuket, Asia's finest resort destination! Presented by 91.5FM, this year's headliner, *Chris Thomas* King of New Orleans, has sold more records and appeared in more successful movies than any other blues artist this century. Twelve acts from 10 different countries will make this year's Festival the biggest and best to date! This event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*. From 6 pm to midnight at Laguna Phuket. Contact Andy Andersen at 086-6822639, phuketmusic@yahoo.com or visit phuketbluesfestival.com.

### February 25 and March 10. Saturday Brunch

Saturday brunch from noon to 3pm at Two Chefs Kata Center! Every Saturday we are setting up our brunch buffet, filled to the limits with home made delights. In

## March 5. Cowboy night @ Two Chefs!

Now it is time for a great Cowboy night from 6pm to 1am at Two chefs Kata beach.

We are setting up a great buffet with loads of inspiration from all of the old Clint Eastwood movies we have seen. There will be pork tenderloin, ribs, chili, fajitas, nachos, tacos smoked salmon, Mexican spring rolls and much, much more. Of course, our talented house band will be there to entertain you all night long. All this for only 595 baht – yes, that's right, only 595 baht (295 baht for kids). Reservation at 076-284155, kata@twochefs.com or visit twochefs.com.



our smoke house, we smoke all of our fish and meats by ourselves, and in the bakery we bake all our 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, and if you add an extra 300 baht you can choose to drink what you want from our free flow alternatives. Reservation at 076-330065, katacenter@twochefs.com or visit twochefs.com.

### February 25. Phuket White Sand/ Blue Sky Air Show

The show will feature breathtaking aerobatics over Surin Beach by Veteran stunt pilots *Les*

*Vorosmarthy*, in his Extra 300, and *Markus Walther* at the stick of his Pitts Special S2B. Another stunt flyer, Birdman Jari Kuosma, will not be using an airplane at all, other than to get up to 13,500 feet where he will jump out and fly at speeds up to 220 km per hour in nothing but a wingsuit. He will land on the beach and embrace his beloved fiancé Nina, who he will then marry in a private ceremony at another location in Phuket later that day. This is an event not to be missed. Free of charge, the stunt flying starts at 4:30pm, with the jump scheduled for about 5:30 to 6pm in order to achieve a sunset landing on the beach. The show is presented by Phuket Airpark, the Phuket Flying Club and Birdman Wingsuits, and supported by Aero Pro, the *Phuket Gazette* and PGTV. As with all aerial events, this one is subject to weather and final clearance by aviation authorities. Contact Pat James, Phuket Airpark at 085-2580006, pat@aeropromgr.com or visit phuketflying.com.

### February 25. Salsa Night

With the overwhelming success of our Salsa Evenings to date, we are delighted to invite you to another Salsa Event at Royal Phuket Marina. Dance the Cha-cha, Bachata, Samba & Rumba –

LIVE with the sounds from our house DJ *Mascaro* on the Boardwalk outside of Les Angeles restaurant. Entrance: Free. Dress: Colorful. Contact Anna at 084-0517455 or Didier at 084-306 2016 and Murat at 081-7973364, muratc@royalphuketmarina.com or visit royalphuketmarina.com.

### February 27. Up Close & Personal Workshop with Chris Thomas-King

Chris Thomas-King has sold more records and appeared in more successful movies than any other blues artist this century. There is a reason for it! As an actor, *King* has co-starred in several films, including two musical films, *Ray* and *O Brother Where Art Thou?* Don't miss this opportunity to get up close and personal with a top actor and a major industry profes-

sional From 3 to 5pm at British International School. Everyone is welcome to attend and young musicians will have the chance to learn and perform with a legend on stage in the Bis Auditorium. Tickets available now: 600 baht. This event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*. Contact Tim Pearson at 076-335555, info@bisphuket.ac.th or visit bisphuket.ac.th.

### February 29. Skippers Pub Quiz Nights at Royal Phuket Marina

Join our Wednesday Quiz Nights here at SKIPPERS starting from 7:30 to 10pm. Here is a couple of teasers to get you in the mood. 1) In which sport do rules state that the water must be a minimum of 1m deep? 2) Who directed Hugo, Taxi Driver and Raging Bull? 3) What is officially called the study of rocks? Reservation at 076-271583, nungningskippers@hotmail.com.

### February 29. Phuket Punchline Comedy Club

The Phuket Punchline Comedy Club returns with their biggest show yet, the live stage show of the original British TV hit, 'Whose Line is it Anyway?' with four of the show's stars: *Andy Smart*, *Stephen Frost* (as seen with *Mr. Bean*), *Steve Steen* and *Ian Copping*. For strangers to 'Whose Line is it Anyway?', four performers pit their wits against the audience by playing out scenarios in a style and setting of their choice. The whole show is totally improvised with the audience deciding what the performers say and sing about! This will be a total sell-out, so please book early! The *Phuket Gazette* is proud to be a long-term sponsor of the Phuket Punchline Comedy Club. From 8 to 11 pm at Holiday Inn Resort, Patong Beach. Contact Boom at 089-6469278, info@phuketcomedy.com or visit phuketcomedy.com.

## Phuket Afternoon Computer Clinic

Is Windows driving you NUTS? Looking for a good internet connection? Need to know how and where to get your PC repaired, or your confounding questions answered? Drop by the new Afternoon Computer Clinics, hosted by Woody Leonhard and Seth Bareiss. Bring your computer. Bring your questions. Bring your sense of humor and let's see if we can solve your PC problems. Second and fourth Wednesday of every month. Sponsored by Woody's Sandwich Shoppes and the *Phuket Gazette*.

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**THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN:** Headline stars and organisers of this weekend's Phuket International Blues Rock Festival at Laguna Phuket pictured during a welcome dinner at Bodega Grill, Angsana Laguna Phuket (front, left to right): musicians Jeff Mills and Chris Thomas King, Grainne Duffy and Paul Sherry; (back left to right): Clas Yngstrom of the Sky High band, organisers Vic Curran, Nattha Bootin and Andy Andersen, and Robin Wilson of Laguna Phuket. Photo: Dan Miles



**AWAY GAME:** Kata Beach Resort and Spa recently welcomed Mr Steen Dahrup, Head of the National Team Department of the Danish Football Association. (from left to right) Mr Andrew Swatdipakdi, GM Kata Beach Resort and Spa; Maria Fos, Guest Relations Officer, Kata Beach Resort and Spa; Mr Steen Dahrup, Head of the National Team Department of the Danish Football Association.



**HOME FROM HOME:** Alan Cooke MBE was presented a painting of Lords Cricket ground to hang in his own ACG here in Phuket. Photo: Dean Noble



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VSET MEANS EXTRAORDINARY: Vset restaurant, ajoined to Kan Eang @ pier in Chalong, held its grand opening this week with a sumtuuous affair laid on by the Pachantabutr family. Khun Wallee (right) made all her guests feel especially welcome at the event. Photos: Marc Mulloy



SUPER SIBLINGS: K. Wallee's children Mann and May at their family's latest restaurant.



  
  
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There is a single connection between all the quiz answers. Can you get it before the last question?

- Who was the first man to swim the English Channel?
- What city, famous for its 'black hole' is the Capital of West Bengal, and the third largest in India?
- The second closest planet to the sun is what?
- Who was the first professional footballer to be knighted?
- Au is the chemical symbol for what?
- A dry red wine produced in the Bordeaux region of France is frequently known as a what?
- Leonard Rossiter and Joan Collins advertised what drink in the 1970s?
- What car manufacturer produces the Shogun?
- This British tree is used to make hockey sticks, oars, paddles, rudders, billiard cues, cricket stumps, polo sticks and policemen's truncheons?
- What is the connection?

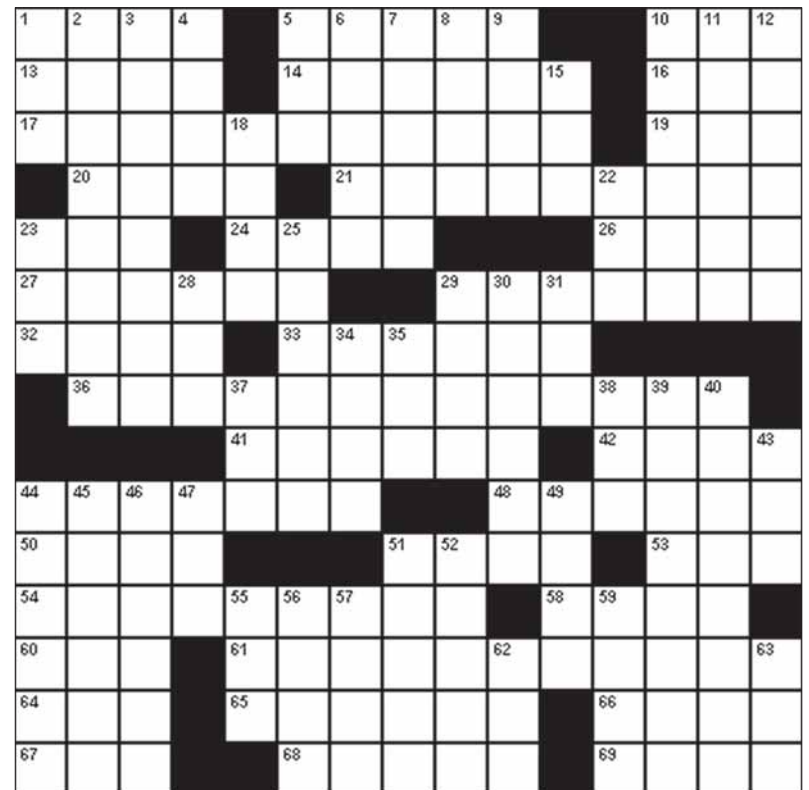
Quiz answers on page 41

#### Across

- Goya's "The Duchess of —"
- Academy award
- Attorney's org.
- Narrow inlets
- Lit by the sunset
- A collection of articles
- Uncertainty
- Hit sign
- Conductor Klemperer
- Ribbon worm
- Cheer for Manolete
- Draft picks
- Chip in
- Breed of sheep
- Washed
- Diamonds, e.g.
- Armored headpiece
- State in the NE United States
- Immigration of Jews to Israel
- Workout count
- Tressed
- Frank
- "My fault!"
- Burden
- According to
- Having equality of measure
- Gas burner or Sicilian volcano
- Fall behind
- Fainthearted
- Afore
- Prize
- Toward the mouth
- Cereal grass
- Artist Rousseau
- Actress Daly

#### Down

- "Exodus" hero
- Floor covering
- One-celled organisms
- I'd hate to break up —
- Giant Mel
- Hog
- Quotes
- Grad
- Travel on
- Acquiescence
- Rebuke
- Did penance



- Thrice, in prescriptions
- Horse color
- 19<sup>th</sup> letter of the Greek alphabet
- Mantric syllables
- Place
- T.G.I.F. part
- Blue hue
- Baloney
- Bruce — was a famous kung fu movie star
- Biting
- Bashful
- Blue

- It's past due
- Group of renters
- Inhabiting caves
- Madrid Mrs.
- Hot water tank
- Series of prayers
- Climax
- Belief system
- Brain wave
- Compare
- Earth tone
- Farm female
- New Age musician John
- Appraise, charge per unit
- Horse's gait
- U.K. record label
- HST's successor

Provided by BestCrosswords.com  
Puzzle solutions on page 41

#### PISCES (February 20-March 20):



An intense week is predicted for those born under the sign of Pisces. It would be wise to maintain a low profile in the world of work and romantic affairs will be subject to heated emotions. If your birthday is due in the week ahead, there should be better luck with money in the coming year. Most auspicious days for romance are Tuesday and Wednesday. The number nine can be fortunate.

#### ARIES (March 21-April 20):



Arians who are unsure whether to make a serious change in their working lives receive guidance at the end of February. Romance is not straightforward for everyone. Those involved with an earth sign are on the same wavelength, but a relationship with a water sign is affected by interference from a third party. A friend's tendency to expect you to foot the bill begins to irritate. Number one is lucky.

#### TAURUS (April 21-May 21):



The stars indicate that certain restrictions will be lifted this week. Taureans who have been held back are forecast to find ways to move forward. Where work is concerned, this could mean accepting

an offer that you were forced to reject earlier this month. Intrigue is indicated to spice up your romantic life, with emphasis on another earth sign spilling a secret. Taureans' lucky number is three.

#### GEMINI (May 22-June 21):



Geminis can expect to embrace progress at work this week. Another air sign who you thought had dropped out of the picture is now ready to give support. Where romance is concerned, a fire sign can relate to your independent streak, but an earth sign will want more commitment. Money matters are mixed; the stars advise that transactions may be troublesome midweek. The number eight can bring good fortune this week.

#### CANCER (June 22-July 23):



Practical matters are given the support of auspicious astral conditions until the end of month. An ongoing domestic issue that you have been sweeping under the mat can now be dealt with – expect an earth sign to see your point of view more readily. Romance brings more contentment as the month of March begins, with focus on mutual attraction with a fire sign. Cancerians' lucky number this week is four.



#### LEO (July 24-August 22):



Leos are advised to start the week as they mean to go on – with a firm attitude. The temptation to give in too easily will be strong on Monday or Tuesday, but staying true to your beliefs is recommended. Where love is concerned, picking up the pieces of a relationship that went wrong is well-starred. Those already committed are advised to enjoy more social life with their partner. Your lucky number this week is seven.

#### VIRGO (August 23-September 23):



Many of those born under the sign of Virgo could be preoccupied by health issues around the end of February. Another earth sign family member or close friend can give helpful advice and the stars suggest that you should listen to what they have to say. In the realm of romance, feelings for an air sign linger, but there are hints that this person's interest lies elsewhere. Number eight brings good fortune.

#### LIBRA (September 24-October 23):



Librans are forecast to feel refreshed during the days ahead and ready to put more energy into their working lives. A water sign is ready to ask a question that could result in an offer you've been waiting for. Tuesday and Wednesday are the best days for making serious decisions. Romantic relationships are mostly well-starred, but other air signs' opinions could clash with yours. Number two looks lucky for Librans.

#### SCORPIO (October 24-November 22):



Those born under the sign of Scorpio could see some strange reactions from people this week. There are signs that your prickly demeanor will provoke negativity and the stars recommend taking time out to contemplate why you are feeling this way. Finances improve and there are hints that a forgotten investment will come to light. Wear the color lotus pink to encourage a quieter mood. Scorpions' lucky number this week is six.

#### SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21):



Your suspicions that another fire sign friend has something on their mind could be confirmed. Bringing this matter out

into the open may be difficult, but clearing the air will ensure that the relationship can be put back on solid ground. In the world of work, the stars advise striking while the iron is hot. Tuesday and Wednesday are auspicious days for finances. Number five comes alive for Sagittarians.

#### CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20):



The mood to move is likely to strike you at the end of February. Whether this relates to a trip away or relocation, a benevolent astral atmosphere should mean satisfaction is guaranteed. Personal relationships are subject to unsettled astral conditions – your motives could be misunderstood this week. A water sign is particularly likely to get hold of the wrong end of the stick. Number four stands out for Capricorns.

#### AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19):



Events are set to click into place for those born under the sign of Aquarius. Others are predicted to be more cooperative, with emphasis on another air sign meeting you more than halfway around the end of February. This is the ideal time to confess your true feelings to someone you've had your eye on for a while. Sunday and Monday are the hottest days for romance. Aquarians' number is six.



# PROPERTY Gazette

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

# Bangla Mall set to open its doors



**SHOPPER'S DREAM:** The Bangla Mall will feature many of the usual outlets found elsewhere in Phuket as well as a plethora of souvenir shops.

By Steven Layne

TOURISTS and residents out for a stroll on the island's infamous pedestrian street, Soi Bangla, will soon be privy to yet one more considerable shopping venue, with the Bangla Mall set to open its doors next month.

Official launch plans were announced by the project's developer Phuket Creation Co Ltd last Friday at a press conference at the Kee Resort, just a short

stroll from the center of Bangla and the site of the project, which is currently undergoing its final touches.

The 300 million baht, outdoor-indoor mini-mall will officially open its doors to the public on March 18, announced Phuket Creation President Sompong Doapisad.

"We weren't initially planning to open the mall so soon but since all of the units sold out well ahead of our expectations, we've moved the opening date forward," he said.

The project will feature a total of 102 units ranging from 20 to 250 square meters, situated on two stories and a basement, with total built up area of 5,800 sqm.

Mr Sompong explained that the units comprise 24 regular shops, 18 "mini plazas", eight corner shops and 52 kiosks.

Some of the major tenants include a Phuket FantaSea souvenir shop; a 7-Eleven, a Bangkok Bank branch; a KFC; a Boots pharmacy and a Bata shoe store.

Another highly anticipated tenant is the Bangkok Burger Company. This will be the country's second branch following the success of the inaugural Thong Lor branch in the capital.

There will also be a mobile phone and IT device booth zone, similar to the ones currently found in Central Festival and Jungceylon, and as one would expect, many of the tenants will be selling souvenirs to the multitudes of tourists expected.

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# Getting back to school



ALL THIS AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS: Kids enjoy the Phuket lifestyle too. Photo: Dominic Rivard

## Property Watch

By Bill Barnett

IT IS an unseasonably rainy day on the island, as thunder sounds off somewhere in the distance. I glance down at the dogs, laying in front of the computer. Boredom could start to take on a nasty edge if the weather doesn't break soon.

What's that movie about dogs that turn into savage wolves and

then turn on their owners? It doesn't quite add up for our odd squad of a golden retriever and two could-be poodles, but you never know.

Living on the edge, perhaps it's better to take a step back from the precipice. No Thelma and Louise here. Or Acapulco cliff diving. Time to reflect and make sense of this whole crazy property thing.

Despite a constant stream of online dribble about the end of days for Phuket Inc., one always has to take a reality check. Stick your head

into the nearest body of water, be slapped straight or else lay off the keyboard when drinking.

Clearly Phuket is no tourism flash in the pan or one-trick pony in terms of diversity. I cringe every time someone uses the word 'lifestyle'. It brings back memories of a grammar school teacher taking her fingernail on the chalkboard and creating an unworldly whine that made you want to stick your head in the nearest hole.

I don't think chalkboards exist anymore. The only thing more annoying that can compare to this is Lady Gaga singing. Get my drift?

Anyway, what is it that motivates people to move to this island in the south of Thailand to live, and buy real estate? In the rough trade of consulting we love those business buzzy words so sounding intelligent we can pigeonhole this as "demand generators". In simple terms you could say it's all about the "why".

Lately a steady stream of prospective island immigrants drop emails, come by the office, call and in most cases say they want

to move to Phuket for the lifestyle (sorry, I can't think of a better word). Easy access, quality of life, golf, yachting and one thing that is said most often international schools.

Over the past decade, first British International School (formerly known as Dulwich), then QSI, Montessori and later Phuket International Academy all emerged as high-growth educational institutions. We also now have Headstart, Darasamuth, Kajonkiet and others.

You can clear your throats, start pontificating about the high prices or find shortcomings, but those who come from the outside world find the education opportunities here to be impressive. You think Phuket has high prices? Start comparing them to Singapore or Hong Kong.

Some point out free public education is fine, say, on the South Island of New Zealand. My suggestion here is that if you want to sit around for half the year in near-Antarctic weather talking to a herd of sheep more power to you.

One of the Phuket's key draw cards remains the link between international schools, nice homes and yes here we go again: lifestyle. Despite the gyrations of a world gone crazy, subprime, those nutty shirt guys in Bangkok and bigger bangs in hot spots around the globe, people are still moving here to raise their families.

It's real, it's sustained and the numbers continue

to climb.

One of the more interesting models we've seen, though, is Phuket International Academy or shall we say Thanyapura. Despite some confusing branding issues, hats off to Klaus Hebban and crew for a truly visionary offering.

In my day job of consulting throughout Asia, the number of times this institution and concept is brought up is gathering increasing momentum. Traveling to other emerging destinations in the region and even in Thailand they also see the relevance of this concept and are actively looking how to develop it, be it in China, Indonesia, the Philippines and even on Thailand's Eastern Seaboard.

Phuket is the poster child of success in this particular arena.

Competition will rise and hopefully with full houses at our existing schools, we will see even more institutions come to Phuket. Tourism is not a one-trick pony to drive the economy here, education remains a vital and real force of our continued success.

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

## In brief...

### Six hotel groups invest into search engine

IN AN effort to keep revenue streams out of the hands of OTA's (online travel agents), six major hotel chains have invested in a new hotel search engine called Room Key.

Joining in on the consortium are InterContinental, Hyatt, Marriott, Wyndham, Hilton and Choice.

Technology for the system came via a third party acquisition of 'helicopter'.

Room Key DNA is said to be aimed at ease of booking, speed and simplicity.

Google continues to merge into peripheral spaces, and certainly this sets the hotel groups on a possible collision course with the mighty search icon.

### Thailand's SALA group expanding to 7 resorts

UPSCALE Thai resort chain SALA will open three new small boutique exclusive resorts within the next year as part of a brand expansion.

The three new properties are the SALA Rattanakosin Bangkok, SALA Ayutthaya and SALA Lanna in Chiang Mai.

Late last year the group purchased the beachfront Muang Kulaypan Resort in Chaweng Beach, which will be upgraded and renamed in 2014.

Currently SALA operate resorts in Phuket, Koh Samui and Khao Yai.

Speaking to Brian Moodie who is Vice President of Operations the brand is splitting up two product ranges with their full service resort and smaller more personal retreats.

In addition to the operators portfolio the group also own the Six Senses Samui.

### Americans signed up for APEC travel cards

AT LAST Barack Obama has signed an initiative for the US to participate in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Travel Cards Act.

In most international airports in the region the APEC card allows special access to fast track immigration lines. The program also allows for expending visa interviews.

APEC's Travel Card program aimed at business travelers was initiated in 1997 and is now used by 18 out of 21 countries which are members.

The US Customs and Border Protection agency (under the Department of Homeland Security) is tasked to issue cards.

— Bill Barnett

## Laguna

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<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div> <b>3 Laguna Vista</b>    <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 beds 3 baths</li> <li>• maid's quarters • private pool</li> <li>• Laguna Resident's Privilege Card</li> </ul> </div> <div style="text-align: right;"> <b>THB 23.5 M</b> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div> <b>4 Laguna Village Townhomes III</b>    <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 beds 4 baths</li> <li>• lagoon view • private pool</li> <li>• Laguna Resident's Privilege Card</li> </ul> </div> <div style="text-align: right;"> <b>THB 26 M</b> </div> </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div> <b>5 Dusit Thani Pool Villas</b>    <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 beds 2 baths</li> <li>• ocean frontage • rooftop pool</li> </ul> </div> <div style="text-align: right;"> <b>\$1,600,000</b> </div> </div>	

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# New residential market demand is generated by wealthy Asians

A property boon on Phuket is being experienced with affluent Asian 'tourists' leading the way, according to property firm Knight Frank.

By MarcMulloy

DEMAND in Phuket's residential and property markets is growing among wealthy Asian "tourists", leading property consultancy Knight Frank Thailand has reported.

Knight Frank's latest research was conducted in light of the Airport Authority of Thailand reporting that Phuket International Airport had welcomed 20% more passengers in 2011.

Statistics showed that 4.2 million arrivals had been counted at the airport last year, compared to only 3.5mn in the previous year, with most of the new arrivals being Chinese, Koreans and Russians.

Speaking on this trend, Nattha Kahapana, Director of Knight Frank Phuket said that Phuket seems to be becoming more and more of a "legendary resort destination" in the Asia Pacific.

"Many hotels were fully booked by Korean and Chinese travelers over the Lunar New Year period. The year of the Dragon [this year] will be the year of Asian tourists, especially those from Korea, China and Singapore," Mr Nattha said.

Also, we will see many more Indian tourists coming to Phuket. For the Indian market, wedding groups are one market

to look out for," he said.

Meanwhile, he said that "honeymooners" remain the dominant Korean tourist market for Phuket.

Indonesia is another high-potential tourist-source market with huge opportunities for Phuket, as they tend to enjoy Thai cuisine, shopping, golfing and other relaxing activities, Mr Nattha noted.

Knight Frank Thailand's research suggests that the wave of new tourists coming to Phuket are generating much of the increased property demand.

Wealthy Asians are now a strong buying force for both condominiums and villas in Phuket, Mr Nattha said.

During January, there were 187 new villa units among three projects, bringing the total number of units on the market to 1,972, he said.

Of the new villas, only 13 were targeting the luxury segment (built in the 'Millionaire's Mile' in Kamala), while the other 174 units largely targeted the middle income segment, and thus are more affordable to Asians, he said.

Coconut Island showed particular promise with 26 of 32 new villa units there, ranging from 2 to 6 million baht, reportedly being sold off plan.



EASTERN PROMISE: Rich Asians are Phuket bound. Photo: Thomas Chapman

Contributing to the market success there, Mr Nattha said that the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (OrBorJor) had made passage to the island safer and more convenient for residents and tourists by building a new 170 by 3-meter concrete pier.

"We will see the launching of many luxury villa projects all across the island this year. For instance, Laguna's 'The Odyssey' project, which is of mixed-use including retail, villa and condominium units. Another huge project, with about 134 villa units, is situated at Ao Por on Phuket's East Coast.

The island's luxury condominium mar-

ket is also growing quickly. During January this year, the Eden Oasis completed its second phase which includes 11 units. The 2-bedroom units are priced between 4.9 to 8mn baht a unit.

Meanwhile, 783 condominium units targeting locals in Kathu and Phuket Town were also launched in January.

Mr Nattha concluded that this year's new condominium supply will target wealthy Asians with prices ranging between 3 to 8mn baht per unit, whereas villas will target European, Australian and Scandinavians who can afford prices in excess of 20mn baht per unit.



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# Brimming with bromeliads



A YOUNG BROMELIAD: The family resemblance is clear, but the pineapple is the only one that is edible. Photo: SFAJane



AECHMEA FASCIATA: Favored by Victorians. Photo by Paul & Aline Burland



MOST people in Europe encounter their first *bromeliad*, without ever realizing its collective name as a fruit that tastes deliciously different, and can be eaten fresh or canned. But the pineapple is only one member, and indeed the only edible member, of a family of plants that comprises more than 3,000 varieties.

Among bromeliads grown solely for their good looks, the *aechmea* is perhaps the best known; it has been cultivated as a house plant in temperate climates for at least 150 years. Unsurprising, when one considers its dramatic appearance and its capacity to survive in low light conditions.

What makes the *aechmea* so distinctive is both its foliage and its floral arrangement. The spathe-shaped leaves, grey-green and cross-banded with silver, form a neat, water-tight rosette, allowing a reservoir of rain-water to accumulate at the center. *Fasciata*, the most widely grown cultivar, has these characteristic leaves and from the central cup sprouts a cluster of rosy-pink bracts in which nestle pale blue flowers that change to deep rose. No wonder the Victorians loved its exotic appeal – a plant like none other in the Old World.

Nowadays, there are the inevitable hybrids. Foster's Favorite, smaller in scope, has bright red, lacquered leaves about a foot long, "Royal Wine" has an open rosette of green leathery leaves that are burgundy red beneath. It has drooping clusters of orange and blue flowers. However, in the tropics, these cultivars are mainly grown outdoor, and primarily for their foliage. Thus they can be found in good garden centers, suspended in small pots with little soil beyond a handful of coconut fiber or bark. They are becoming more popular as adornments on trellises or tree branches, much in the way that orchids are employed.

In fact, bromeliads have

plenty in common with orchids: both are mainly epiphytic, and both come from the tropical rainforest, where they grow in the forks of trees and even on rocky outcrops beneath the canopy. Both are among the most widely patterned and colored plants in the world and both survive, precariously, by collecting detritus such as bird droppings that fall from trees and by absorbing the organic matter contained in rain.

It has been estimated that as many as 170,000 bromeliads of various kinds may inhabit one hectare of tropical woodland. Furthermore, their tiny reservoirs are home to species of tree frog, salamanders, and even, in Jamaica, to a species of small crab. A whole micro-universe.

There are many varieties in addition to the *aechmea* and its relatives. The largest, *puya Raimondi*, may grow to four meters with a flower spike up to ten meters. At the other end of the scale is Spanish moss (*tillandsia*) which hangs profusely from trees and cables in the American South. Other widely cultivated general include *bilbergia* and *neoregelia*. They may be worth considering next time.



Spanish moss grows well on Phuket. Photo: Maja Dumat



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Advertising, full color	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓				
Events Flyer – every week !	✓											
'What's On' page x 1	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓				
Website Events Calendar, every week until event closed out !					✓	✓	✓					
PGTV – Daily spot – 30 sec					✓ <sup>(1)</sup>	✓ <sup>(1)</sup>					✓ <sup>(2) (3)</sup>	
PGTV – Post event – 1 min of News footage					✓ <sup>(1)</sup>	✓ <sup>(1)</sup>					✓ <sup>(2) (3)</sup>	
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\* THAI; Emirates; United; China Airlines; Air France; Delta; Lufthansa; Singapore Airlines; Cathay Pacific; Dragonair and Vietnam Airlines.

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<sup>(2)</sup> in a half hour show running 3 times / day

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## Phuket Gazette

Contact K. Jane, Events Manager:  
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## Properties For Sale

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46sq wah, furnished, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 aircons, carpark. Only 3.5 million baht. Tel: 081-787 7675.

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### PATONG TOWER 3-BED CONDO

3-bed, large luxury condo with ultimate sea views. Foreign freehold, stunning interior sold with all fixtures & furniture. 18 million baht. Tel: +44-121-288 4474, 082-813 3824 (English). Email: showbus1@msn.com For further details, please see our website at [www.patongapartmentcondo.com](http://www.patongapartmentcondo.com)

### 2.5 MB PHUKET COUNTRY CLUB

Beautiful 1 bedroom, 60sqm, furnished, freehold rental. 10,000 baht per month. Minimum 1 year. Shorter periods can discuss. Tel: 085-795 4741. Email: oleandaman@gmail.com

### LARGE SEAVIEW PROPERTY

for sale. Location at Layan. Tel: 081-787 4383.

### NICE CONDO BYPASS

Opposite Big C, 55sqm, 1 bedroom, fully furnished. Price: 3.8 million baht. Tel: 081-614 5372. Email: surasaksakul@hotmail.com

### PATONG SEAVIEW TOWNHOUSE

4-storey townhouse, approx 270sqm, opposite The Unity in northern Patong. Top quality, easy walking distance to beach. Chanote "freehold." 6.3MB negotiable. Tel: 081-960940 (English). For further details, please see our website at <http://khunwoody.com/patong-townhouse-for-sale.htm>

### HOUSE IN KATA

5 mins to beach, large modern 3-storey house, furnished, 3 beds, 2 full baths, aircon, spacious living room, garage with laundry and overhead storage, security door/windows, large covered patios. Company transfer available. 5.5 million baht. Tel: 081-131 5751. Email: seadog5000@yahoo.com

### 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.

### THE ART OF TROPICAL LIVING



Pool villa on 700sqm land, with option for the neighboring plot + 740sqm. Villa located in a small exclusive, quite development in Rawai. A spacious living and dining room, 3 large bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, European kitchen, maid's quarters, a guesthouse, a double-size garage, 12m pool, sala, jacuzzi. Built to highest standard. Full basement. Chanote title. Price: 17 million baht. Contact Yupin on 081-817 4805 (Eng & German). Email: residler@gmail.com

### NAI HARN LUXURY CONDO



2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 111sqm. From 4.5 million baht. Must see. For further details, please see our website at [www.amphiseabreeze.com](http://www.amphiseabreeze.com) Tel: 084-993 7308.

### LAND NEAR MISSION HILLS



Pa Khlok. 2 rai 32sq wah, 60m wide. Chanote. Located on Tha Ruea-Pa Khlok-Muang Mai Rd. 11 km from Heroines' Monument. Price: 7.8 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118. Email: honda.1437@hotmail.com

### PATONG TOWER CONDO

Modern, fully furnished, 65sqm, 1 bedroom, freehold, great rental returns. 6.5 million baht. Tel: 081-088 8099. Email: finobkk@yahoo.com

### CHALONG 2-BEDROOM HOUSE

New detached house for sale. 2 bedrooms, en suites. Large walled garden. Price: 2.2 million baht. Contact Jai. Tel: 089-817 4864. Contact Jai.

### 30 RAI IN TOWN

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

### LUXURY POOL VILLA

3 bedroom pool villas available for sale, 5 minutes from Layan Beach, just outside Laguna. Finance and rental returns available. Free furniture packages included. Tel: 081-891 1826 (English), 081-891 2926 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-238940. Email: keving@loxinfo.co.th For further details, please see our website at [www.baanboosakorn.com](http://www.baanboosakorn.com)

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

### LAND AT CHERNG TALAY

390sq wah, nice flat land, quiet area, Chanote. In Pasak Soi 5 near Laguna Home. Price: 6 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118, 086-709 2933.

### PRIVATE SALE OF HALF ARAI

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

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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

### BEST LUXURY VILLA



In Nai Harn. Great location close to beach. 3 stunning bedrooms. All with indoor/outdoor bathrooms. This villa has the lot: pool, jacuzzi, ducted aircon, high ceilings. Best quality furniture and fittings, European kitchen, laundry, electric gate. The list is endless. 16.5 million baht. Can't find better. Tel: 082-281 3422. Email: cjasr\_import@yahoo.com.au

### LAND PLOT FOR SALE

Starting 6 million baht per rai. Location at Layan. Tel: 081-787 4383.

### 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

### CHEAP LAND FOR SALE

Close to Phuket International Airport. 4 rai, Chanote title. 3.8 million baht per rai. Tel: 081-868 7676. Email: phuketann@gmail.com

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Near Phuket Airport. Tel: 089-724 4703. Email: maria@whiter.sg

### NAI HARN

Top sea view, fully developed, 1,250sqm, 40 meters above sea level, Chanote additional available, Construction permits. 12 million baht. Tel: 087-298 0200. Email: rwberger00@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website at [www.phuket-seaview-land.com](http://www.phuket-seaview-land.com)

### NICE PLOT FOR SALE



Near Layan Hill Estate. (Manik-Bang Tao area). Ready to build housing/pool villas. Chanote title. Price: 7.2 million baht. Neg. Contact owner on 080-520 2989. Email: talayjan@yahoo.com

### HOUSE IN PATONG



Newly built 40sqwah, near Sea Pearl project, Patong. 2 stories, 3 beds, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 aircons, kitchen with hood, refrigerator, dining room, living room, hot water, cable TV and internet. Tel: 089-469 1813.

### NICE AND SPACIOUS HOUSE



In Heritage project, Kathu. 2 floors, fully furnished, 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 1 maid room. 234sq wah. 18 million baht. Tel: 081-892 0190 (Warit), 089-646 4823 (Rattana). Email: prayoon\_jp@hotmail.com

### TOWNHOUSE IN PATONG



On Nanai Road. 2 stories, 112.5sqm, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, bathtub, built-in cabinets, kitchen, aircon and car park. 1km to Patong beach, near Bangla Road and Jungceylon. Price 5.5 million baht or nearest offer. No agents! Tel: 087-270 9093.

### RAWAI - SEA VIEW VILLA

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### PATONG SEAVIEW TOWNHOUSE

4-storey townhouse, approx 270sqm, opposite The Unity in northern Patong. Top quality, easy walking distance to beach. Chanote "freehold." 6.3MB negotiable. Tel: 081-960940 (English). For further details, please see our website at <http://khunwoody.com/patong-townhouse-for-sale.htm>

### AO POR APARTMENT

2 beds, 2 baths, large balcony with beautiful sea views. Few mins to Ao Por pier and marina. Close to Mission Hills Golf Club. Fully furnished. 5.4 million baht ono. Contact Dave. Tel: 076-317705, 790-1960382 (English), 779-921 2558 (English). Email: davehogg1@ntlworld.com

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Newly built 40sq wah, near Sea Pearl project, Patong. 2 stories, 3 beds, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 aircons, kitchen with hood, refrigerator, dining room, living room, hot water, cable TV and internet. Tel: 089-469 1813.

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### HOUSE FOR RENT IN KATHU

3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 aircons, kitchen, small garden, cable TV, internet. 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-739 3220.

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2 storey house 3 bed, 3 bath near Panwa Bay. Tel: 081-892 4311. For further details, please see our website at <http://panwagreen.weebly.com>

### THAI VILLA AND POOL

Nai Harn, long term, mid-March. 40,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-270 5126. Email: mervyn.crocker@yahoo.com

### BANG TAO VILLAS FOR RENT

Pool villas, 1, 2, 4 bedrooms, fully furnished, sat TV, ADSL. Tel: 085-674 6786.

### APARTMENT IN PATONG

Swimming pool, fully furnished. Promotion rate from March. Tel: 081-894 4730 (English & Thai), 081-892 5983 (Thai). Fax: 076-292149. Email: nanaivillaphuket@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at [www.nanai villa.com](http://www.nanai villa.com)

### KAMALA BEACH

New houses, apartment for rent. 2 to 4 bedrooms, furnished, cable, WiFi, cleaning lady. All included 15,000-30,000 baht per month. Very quiet and safe. Tel: 083-645 3546.

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### BANG TAO VILLAS FOR RENT

Pool villas, 1, 2, 4 bedrooms, fully furnished, sat TV, ADSL. Tel: 085-674 6786.

### LUXURY POOL VILLA FOR RENT

A new 3-bedroom pool villa available for rent, long or short term, fully or partly furnished. 5 minutes from Layan Beach, just outside Laguna. Tel: 081-891 1826 (English), 081-891 2926 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-238940. Email: kevinq@loxinfo.co.th For further details, please see our website at [www.baanboosakom.com](http://www.baanboosakom.com)

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### KAMALA BEACH

New houses, apartment for rent. 2-4 bedrooms, furnished, cable, WiFi, cleaning lady. All included 15,000-30,000 baht per month. Very quiet and safe. Tel: 083-645 3546.

### POOL VILLAS RAWAI FOR RENT

3 and 4 bedroom villas, short and long term. Tel: 087-893 8747.

### VACATION RENT KATA, NAI HARN

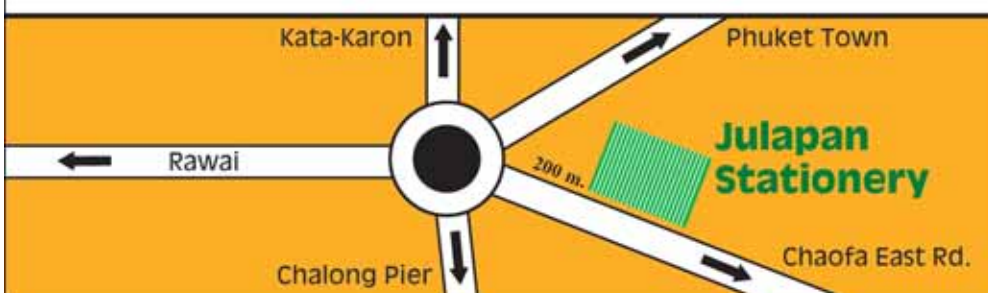
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**ACCOUNTANT  
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Need accountant that can Multitask. Must have good understanding of P&L and Balance sheet reconciliation - ERP Software Data Entry (Data Express) and Report Running. BS in Accounting from accredited Thai, UV required. Must be able to read, write and speak English fluently. Contact: jintana@phuketfishboat.com  
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Front Desk Supervisor at Khao Sok (16 bungalows). Seeking female Thai national, fluent English, computer skills, team attitude who enjoys a remote natural location. Starting salary from 13,000 baht, depending on experience. Tel: 081-417 0546. Email: ourjunglehouse1985@gmail.com

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### (1) Assistant Accountant (Ref No. P01/11)

Prepare monthly account, AP, GL and bank reconciliations, liaise with Revenue Department on tax matters, review accounting documents and make appropriate accounting entries.

- ▲ Degree holder in accounting with 3 years' accounting/auditing experience
- ▲ Construction accounting experience will be a definite advantage
- ▲ Excellent command of spoken and written Thai with good spoken and written English
- ▲ Well versed with Microsoft office applications

### (2) Accountant (Ref No. P02/11)

Prepare monthly account, financial statements and reports, handle tax matters, check and verify accounting entries and other ad-hoc accounting duties.

- ▲ Degree holder in accounting with 5 years' accounting/auditing experience
- ▲ Construction accounting experience will be a definite advantage
- ▲ Excellent command of spoken and written Thai with good spoken and written English
- ▲ Well versed with Microsoft office applications and accounting software

### (3) Document Control Officer (Ref No. P03/11)

Responsible for documentation administration and records management of the project, manage and supervise the organization of a significant project document control system and software.

- ▲ Tertiary qualified with solid experience related to administration and records
- ▲ Good computer literacy, some programming experience is an advantage
- ▲ Detail-minded and with fluency in both written and spoken Thai and English

### (4) Legal and Company Secretarial Officer (Ref No. P04/11)

Assist Legal Department and Company Secretarial Department on enforcement of corporate compliance issues, assist in simple translation work and ensuring proper and timely delivery and sign off on important documents from headquarters.

- ▲ Degree holder in Law with at least 3 years' relevant experience
- ▲ Experience in handling company secretarial documents and legal documents
- ▲ Experience in handling translation between English and Thai
- ▲ Excellent command of spoken and written Thai with good spoken and written English

### (5) Planning Officer (Ref No. P05/11)

Assist in preparation of planning submissions and building permits' documentation, prepare strategic programmes like design, procurement and construction schedules, review site progress reports, monitor and review development schedule trends and reporting delays, and recommend corrective action.

- ▲ Degree holder in Civil Engineering with at least 5 years' relevant experience
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### SOLUTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLES

#### Crossword puzzle:



#### Impossibly Possible Quiz answers:

1. Captain Matthew Webb
  2. Calcutta
  3. Venus
  4. Stanley Matthews
  5. Gold
  6. Claret
  7. Cinzano Bianco
  8. Mitsubishi
  9. The Ash
  10. Sporting Trophies
- William Webb Ellis Trophy (rugby), Calcutta Cup (rugby), Venus Rosewater Dish (tennis), The Stanley Cup (ice hockey), The Gold Cup (horse racing), The Claret Jug (golf), The Cinzano Trophy (cars), Mitsubishi Motors Trophy (cars), The Ashes (cricket).







## International Sport

## FA Cup adds to the pressure

By Dean Noble

SUNDERLAND booked their FA Cup quarter-final berth last Sunday with a 2-0 drubbing of Arsenal, who earlier in the week had also suffered a 4-0 thrashing at the feet of AC Milan in the Champions League, leaving the Gunners' season in tatters and their trophy cabinet bare for a seventh consecutive year.

After a dismal display at the San Siro and their heaviest ever European defeat, manager Arsene Wenger called upon his squad to deliver for the FA Cup. They did, but to the wrong address.

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's own goal from a Sebastian Larsson strike was indicative of Arsenal's luckless season so far.

Chelsea's manager Andre Villas-Boas will relate to the pressure his Arsenal counterpart must be feeling after his charges could only draw against Championship contenders Birmingham City 1-1 at Stamford Bridge.

Birmingham took a well de-

served 0-1 advantage into the break with a David Murphy goal and a brilliant penalty save by Colin Doyle, who pushed Juan Mata's effort onto the post.

Requiring a convincing second half performance, Villas-Boas replaced Fernando Torres with Didier Drogba, and Chelsea pushed for an equalizer that was eventually provided by a well placed header from Daniel Sturridge.

Chelsea pressed for a winner in the final 30 minutes, but squandered chances by Mata and Raul Meireles ensured a second bite of the cherry will be needed.

Brighton's cup dream ended with a 6-1 hammering by Liverpool at Anfield after a shock 1-0 victory over Newcastle United in the fourth round.

Martin Skrtel's fifth minute headed goal was canceled out by a superb long range effort from Seagull's Kazenga LuaLua into the bottom left of Pepe Reina's goal.

Brighton's Liam Bridcutt was credited with Liverpool's second

as the ball rebounded off him into his own net and from there on the dream disintegrated into a nightmare.

Reds' Andy Carroll calmly netted a Stewart Downing cut-back to make it 3-1. Bridcutt's personal misery worsened as he got a second own goal thanks to a keeping error by Peter Brezovan.

Matters deteriorated further for Brighton as defender Lewis Dunk inexplicably turned in a Luis Suarez cross whilst under no pressure from the opposition.

Suarez then missed a penalty after Dirk Kuyt was fouled, however he made up for the failure in the 84th minute heading in the sixth goal.

Stevenage earned a money-spinning replay at White Hart Lane on March 7, drawing with Spurs 0-0 after a battling home performance.

Spurs almost had a winner, however the goal was disallowed with Scott Parker judged off-side.

Birmingham and Chelsea will replay on March 6, with the quarter-finals scheduled for March 17.



**FIRING BLANKS:** Gunners manager Arsene Wenger reacts to his side's 2-0 defeat at The Stadium Of Light. PHOTO: AFP/ANDREW YATES

## Welsh are favorites

WALES take on England this weekend as favorites to take the triple crown and secure only their second victory at Twickenham in the past 26 years following their clinical display in Cardiff against Scotland.

Welsh captain Sam Warburton and lock Alun Wyn Jones will be available to coach Warren Gatland, however Matthew Rees and Huw Bennett both have calf injuries, allowing hooker Ken Owens to gain his debut.

In a devastating 14-minute period, Wales ran in three tries with winger Alex Cuthbert touching down for the first on his home debut. Leigh Halfpenny grabbed a brace and converted all three scores. Halfpenny added a penalty to seal the Welsh win 27-13.

England's interim head coach Stuart Lancaster admitted he has some tough choices to make before kick-off with 20-year-old Manu Tuilagi back to form and out-side half Toby Flood and lock Courtney Lawes also in contention for a place adding to the dilemma. With back-to-back wins so far, Lancaster is keen to get a good performance out of his squad.



**RED FORCE:** Ross Rennie tackled at the Millennium stadium. PHOTO: AFP/ANDREW YATES

"Having that group of players back has given me something to think about. From our point of view it's a great position to be in to have competition for places."

Scotland, without a victory or try score in their last four tests, and a fresh French side visiting following the debacle at the Parc des Princes last weekend, will need to address many areas of their play, particularly their ill-discipline.

France will be looking for their third con-

secutive win at Murrayfield with the same team selection that should have faced Ireland, with a debut for Yoann Maestri and tournament starts for Dimitri Szarzewski and Jean-Baptiste Poux in the front row.

Declan Kidney also named the same lineup that was due to play in Paris, for their clash with Italy, and only one change following the defeat to Wales. Keith Earls will replace Fergus McFadden in the outside center role.

— *Phuket Gazette*

RBS SIX NATIONS TABLE			
WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2012 13:00 UK			
TEAM	P	PD	PTS
1 Wales	2	16	4
2 England	2	11	4
3 France	1	18	2
4 Ireland	1	-2	0
5 Scotland	2	-21	0
6 Italy	2	-22	0

RBS SIX NATIONS FIXTURES			
	Saturday 25 February 2012		
IRELAND	VS	ITALY	
	20:30 Aviva Stadium		
	Saturday 25 February 2012		
ENGLAND	VS	WALES	
	23:00 Twickenham		
	Sunday 25 February 2012		
SCOTLAND	VS	FRANCE	
	22:00 Murrayfield		
	Sunday 4 March 2012		
FRANCE	VS	IRELAND	
	22:00 Stade de France		

## SPORTS briefs...

**FI:** Mercedes unveiled their new vehicle, the W03 for this season in Barcelona hoping it will boost the team's fortunes.

Michael Schumacher, seven-time world champion described it as "very responsive", and team chief Ross Brawn stated the vehicle "was an elegant interpretation of the current regulations".

The delay in launching the car meant Mercedes gave up three days of track testing to extend its development phase and concentrated on tyre testing with a modified version of last year's car.

**BOXING:** Dereck Chisora lost on points when most expected WBC champion Vitali Klitschko to end the fight before a decision was required after Chisora slapped him at the fight's weigh-in.

Zimbabwean-born Chisora infuriated the Ukrainian further by spitting at Vitali's brother during the introductions at their bout in Munich.

The fighting didn't end with the final bell and in the post-match press conference, Chisora hurled insults then a few more punches.

He now faces a British Boxing Board of Control hearing.

**CRICKET:** Ricky Ponting has announced he does not expect to play any further part in Australia's one day international (ODI) set-up following his exclusion from the team after his recent poor showing in the shortened format of the game.

Ponting is looking to extend his test career with a probable retirement, if selected, after the Ashes series in England next year.

Meanwhile England gained revenge over Pakistan following their recent test series whitewash, winning all four ODI games in their clean sweep in Dubai.

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# Thanachart close in on Portrait FC

By Neil Quail

THE Adult Futsal League (AFL) season nine presented by Thanachart Bank entered week five at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club (TSLC) last Thursday with a full compliment of games played in both divisions.

Jitjongrut took on a struggling Honda in the evening's first Premier Division fixture, well aware that the game was a good opportunity for them to climb up the table with a likely win. Attacking Honda's backline ruthlessly, Jitjongrut found the net four times to wear down the opposition's resistance, who produced but one consolation goal. Jitjongrut v Honda: 4-1.

In Division One, SGS played Island Boys with both teams aiming for a win to get their season rolling. Island Boys were first out of the traps when they took the lead midway through the first half and that slender advantage looked as though it would endure into the break, but a quick break from SGS a minute before half-time brought the teams level. A sec-





REVVED UP: Chevrolet, in action here against Thanyapura, got their season motoring with a 3-1 win over Ultraman. Photo: TSLC

ond-half stand-off lasted for 10 minutes until SGS erupted into the lead with two goals in quick succession. SGS closed the shop doors and fended off the Island Boys attempts to loot a response. With six minutes remaining, Island Boys snatched a goal to encourage SGS out of their defensive stance and as a result were able to score a fourth goal

on the counter-attack to secure the points while their opponents hunted for an equalizer. Island Boys v SGS: 2-4.

The Premier Division fixtures concluded with Thalang Tigers up against title contenders Thanachart Bank. In a close match between two typically fast attacking teams, both created plenty of chances but found their respective goalkeepers

 			
PREMIER DIVISION TABLE			
TEAM	GP	DIFFERENCE	POINTS
1 PORTRAIT FC	4	15	12
2 THANACHART BANK	3	1	6
3 JITJONGRUT FC	3	1	6
4 THALANG TIGERS	4	-2	3
5 HONDA	4	-15	0

FIRST DIVISION TABLE			
TEAM	GP	DIFFERENCE	POINTS
1 THANYAPURA SLC	4	17	12
2 ULTRAMAN	4	2	7
3 SGS	4	-2	6
4 CHEVROLET	4	-1	3
5 ISLAND BOYS	4	-16	1

AFL LEAGUE TABLES: Portrait FC and Thanyapura SLC may have insurmountable leads in their respective divisions.

in scintillating form. However, five goals were posted with Thalang Tigers scoring twice and Thanachart Bank scoring three to win and maintain pressure on the league leaders, Portrait FC.

Ultraman and Chevrolet played out Division One's last game that only sparked into life three minutes before the break when Chevrolet scored from a free kick. That lead

vanished in a flash with a double quick response from Ultraman to give them a 2-1 lead at half-time. Ultraman extended their lead in the 24<sup>th</sup> minute as Chevrolet fought for a reprieve, but no more goals would come for either team. Ultraman v Chevrolet: 3-1.

For more information E: [football@thanyapura.co.th](mailto:football@thanyapura.co.th).



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## All to play for in FPL



WAR ELEPHANTS: Thailand's FPL U11 team being given a pep talk before Sunday's match at Headstart International School.

A DOUBLE-HEADER of locations featured in the Fair Play League (FPL) for the first time last weekend when the U14 and U11 Divisions played at British International School and Headstart International School respectively.

In the first fixture, Brazil took on an undefeated France team. But a 4-2 result in favor of the Thai Samba Kings, thanks to some well-organized defending and opportunistic finishing, ended the French winning streak.

Another shock result came at the expense of league leaders Argentina who went down 4-2 to an improving Thailand. In the Deutsch derby, Germany Green team shrugged off two consecutive losses to emerge victorious over Germany White by another scoreline of 4-2.

The second set of matches were more one sided as players fatigued from the heat. Argentina's day

didn't improve losing 5-1 to an impressive Brazil. France, stung by their earlier loss, compounded Germany White's misery with a 8-2 victory, while Germany Green reclaimed the league's top spot after a hard-fought 4-2 win over Thailand. With three games remaining and only five points separating the top five teams, the U14 FPL title is still in open season.

Playing under the shade at Headstart's new artificial pitch, the U11 Division kicked off with Brazil continuing in their fine vein of form by keeping another clean sheet and claiming a 4-0 victory over France. Germany Green stay hot on the heels of Brazil following their win against Germany White 5-1 and Argentina managed to claim their second win of the season with a comfortable 9-1 win over bottom placed Thailand.

For more information contact [bss@thanyapura.co.th](mailto:bss@thanyapura.co.th).



# Shakers and Rugantino in the mix for PSSSL



**Phuket Super Six League**

Pos	Team	P	GD	Pts
1	Shakers FC	2	14	6
2	Ristorante Rugantino	2	11	6
3	Pita Bar Phuketeers	2	11	4
4	Phuket Serenity Villas	2	4	3
5	The Lounge	1	1	3
6	Morning Star	1	0	1
7	Aladdin	0	0	0
8	Nanai Boys	1	-7	0
9	Babynoname	2	-17	0
10	Eden FC	2	-17	0

PSSSL TABLE: A full look at how the Super Six League is developing.



MOVERS: Shakers FC sitting pretty atop the PSSSL table.

**ITALIAN JOB:** Alberto Mancuso (right) is hoping to direct his Rugantino team to success in the first Phuket Super Six League.



By Neil Quail

ROUND two of the Phuket Super Six League (PSSSL) produced more evenly contested matches last week at Football Island, but the goal count continues to rise.

The first fixture saw league leaders Pita Bar Phuketeers and the experienced Morning Star, in their first league outing, play a guarded game that ended with honors divided. After a goalless first half, the Phuketeers found themselves in front after a Morning Star own

goal. But midway through the half, a Ratko Privatno shot was deflected home by Karl Ward to ensure the points were shared. Morning Star v Pita Bar Phuketeers 1 – 1.

The evening's second game was also one of energy versus experience when fourth placed Phuket Serenity Villas (PSV) faced Alberto Mancuso's Ristorante Rugantino. PSV's Sascha Wondruschka powered his team into an early lead with a brutal strike that inspired a second half 5-2 advantage. However,

it was the PSV team who were left all at sea after a dogged fight-back from Rugantino. Having levelled the scores at 5-5 in the last 10 minutes, Rugantino showed the PSV young guns no mercy to rip the win and the points from their grasp in the dying minutes. Phuket Serenity Villas v Ristorante Rugantino: 5 – 6.

Babynoname continue to prop up the table following a second defeat, this week by the Billy Chima managed Lounge outfit. A tentative early start from both

teams soon gave way to The Lounge gaining the upper hand with goals from Kyrre Amundsen, Hand Egil Hjortdahl and Kyle Parsons. Babynoname's frequent pressure was rewarded with three goals, but never amounted to a serious challenge as The Lounge ran out 9-3 winners. Babynoname v The Lounge: 3 – 9.

League leaders Shakers FC were almost temped into complacency when they played Eden FC in the evening's final match. A heavy defeat in their first league match

seemed to have encouraged the Eden players and they were intent on making life difficult for Shakers. Unfortunately, their efforts proved fruitless in front of goal and Shakers expelled Eden with a 7-0 drubbing that included a hat trick by the talented Axel Jehangir Stevens. Shakers FC v Eden FC: 7 – 0

Shakers FC and Rugantino now top the table with two wins and six points each. For more information visit [PhuketFootball.com](http://PhuketFootball.com)

## Golf Guru

THE media hype around the USPGA tour this week wasn't enough to get Phil Mickelson into the winner's circle two weeks in a row.

Riviera Country Club, Pacific Palisades, California was the venue for the Northern Trust Open, formally known as the Los Angeles Open, less than a block away from Sunset Boulevard. The Riviera C.C. is a tough golf course with fast greens and the sixth hole in particular, even has a bunker in the middle of the green. The club is steeped in history. Established in 1927, the entire country club and golf course cost US\$243,827.63 to build, one of the most expensive up to that point. Today, a similar design and location would cost over a hundred million dollars.

Players left in the mix this week were Phil Mickelson, Bill Hass and Keegan Bradley all finishing on 7-under-par which took them to a play off. Bill Hass last year's winner of the Fedex Cup is the son of Jay Hass, former PGA Tour member, whose trade mark golf swing is epitomized by a delay at the top of his back swing before striking the ball. This seems to have rubbed off on his son's golf swing, giving Bill a very smooth action. For golfers in general, this pause at the top of the back swing is not a bad thing to try every now and again to help them with their swing's tempo and rhythm – give it a try on the range one day. Bill managed to birdie the

second hole in the playoff to win. Well done Bill. He looks like a good contender for the 'Majors' this year and could well be vying for a place in the Ryder Cup team.

Congratulations to Jbe' Kruger on winning in India which was slightly over shadowed by Peter Whiteford who was disqualified in the last round for playing his ball from the wrong place. Even on television you could hear him ask "did the ball move"? But he still carried on and finished his round. Many will say this was a "trial by armchair" given that it was a viewer who called in to say what happened. However, this situation is avoidable using the two ball rule and checking when back in the club house instead of signing your card and then finding out later you infringed on the rules of golf.

Local golf course news: Last week I played Mission Hills Golf Resort and Spa which spills out on to the East coast of Phuket with some lovely sea views. What a treat. I hadn't played there in over a year, so I was pleasantly surprised to see the condition of the golf course has improved considerably. The fairways are a little firm, but it looks like they are spending money over there to get this course into the condition it deserves to be in.

Martin Platts – Director of The Golf Guru. E: [martin@thegolfguru.com](mailto:martin@thegolfguru.com).



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# MCC deliver Phuket a cricket masterclass

By Damien Evans

CRICKET'S bible, the Wisden Almanac, may not record the result of Marylebone Cricket Club's (MCC) match against the Phuket Cricket Group (PCG) select XI, but February 16 will long live in the memory of those that were at the ACG that day.

Despite arriving the previous night from the cold conditions in Old Blighty, the MCC team showed no signs of jet-lag and immediately turned up the heat on the PCG.

It should be noted that with an active membership of more than 5,000 players, it's not unusual for an MCC touring squad to begin a match having never played together as a team, as was the case for the team that landed on Phuket.

The occasion itself was not lost on Phuket's sporting fraternity with an impressive support turnout for a school day. Packed with ACG patrons, the viewing gallery heaved in expectation of an exciting match. All that the crowd missed was fish and chips with champagne – the standard fare of Lords itself.

Having won the toss, PCG invited MCC to bat first and could only watch admirably as the visitors dynamically drove, professionally paddled, cleverly cut, expertly edged and beautifully battered the best Phuket could bowl at them. After 20 overs, MCC had hiked their run rate to almost 10 per over, giving them a total of 193 for 5 wickets.

MCC lost opener Will Rist (11) to a superb diving catch in front of first slip by PCG keeper Dean Noble in the fifth over. Fellow opener Rich Brown (31), who in fact played in Phuket's Island Furniture League several years ago, but now plays his cricket for Templepatrick in North-

ern Ireland, was run out by Neil Quail after he slipped and fell attempting a second run in the ninth over with the score on 76.

A valuable contribution from Arif Mahmood (31) ended when he top-edged a ball from Sameer Khan to Seemant Raju at cover, who entertained the crowd with a juggling act before securing the catch.

With only 89 runs on the board at the halfway mark, PCG could have been forgiven for thinking they had contained the mighty MCC, but the arrival and eventual 88-run partnership between Joe Shuttle (31 not out) and Alun Thomas (61 from 28 balls) put paid to any delusions of success the local boys may have formed.

Thomas, in particular, was mercurial. Timing, power and technique were in perfect symmetry, as he collected five 6s and four 4s, with his first 6 remarkably coming off nothing more than a forward defensive shot. The young Welshman's quiet demeanor had worried his coach and captain earlier that morning, but his performance at the ACG certainly instilled confidence amongst his team for the rest of their tour.

However, credit must go to young Val Guiraud, who kept his chin up in facing such a formidable opponent and with the very last ball of the innings beat Thomas for pace and accuracy to take a memorable and deserved scalp. Pick of the bowlers for Phuket were Guiraud (2 for 31) and Khan (2 for 32).

Undoubtedly, the chase was going to be difficult for PCG and on seeing the pace of MCC's opening attack; the task became that of damage limitation.

Despite this, PCG went on the offensive determined to put on a show for their supporters. Vice captain and opener Bill Stahmer (3)



MCC XI: (From left) I. Ramage (umpire), J. Shuttle, A. Thomas, R. Brown, W. Frewen (manager), R. Purnell, D. Heyes, W. Rist, B. Smith, A. Mahmood, S. Corbett, T. Rash, W. Hodson (captain), G. Griffiths and P. Goodwin.



PCG XI: (From left, standing) A. Van Blerk, S. Raju, N. Culpan, D. Noble, R. Desmond, B. Stahmer, (kneeling) M. Sadarangani, N. Quail, V. Guiraud and S. Lu.

was the first to go, clean bowled attempting to find the lake. From there the threads unraveled with PCG losing a wicket every over from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> over.

The only batsman to reach double figures during this period was Quail (18) which included a towering six onto the clubhouse roof, the first time this feat has been achieved, sending the patrons running for cover while an unimpressed Alan Cooke looked on.

At the 10 over mark, Phuket were eight wickets down for only 44 runs and batting out the full 20 overs was looking highly unlikely. But like a scene from any *Rocky* movie, PCG picked themselves up, replaced the gumshield and stood toe-to-toe with the MCC for the final rounds, or overs in this case.

Manesh Sadarangani (16) with support from Neil Culpan (9) and Dean Noble (5 not out) not only



PULL: Joe Shuttle gives PCG wicketkeeper Dean Noble a rest.



FOR MY NEXT TRICK: Seemant Raju impresses the crowd.



THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT: The Alun Thomas show in full flow.

slugged it out, but got in a few decent shots until their efforts finally came to an end after 19.3 overs with the score on 77.

The MCC bowlers shared the spoils. Patrick Goodwin, Scott Corbett, Bradley Smith and Gareth Griffiths each picking up a brace.

Man of the Match was of course Alun Thomas.

*The Phuket Gazette is the local media sponsor of the ACG*

## Laguna isolated by Island win

ANOTHER upset sent shockwaves through the Island Furniture cricket league when Laguna CC's unbeaten record was lost to Island CC (ICC) at the ACG last Sunday.

Following the previous week's result of Patong unexpectedly losing to the Village, Laguna could have cemented their tag as league favorites with a win over ICC, but instead are now relegated to mid-table with 13 points, albeit with a game in hand.

ICC's victory has boosted their title hopes and league position which sees them in second place on 17 points. The ebullient Village side currently top the league on 18 points and also have a game in hand.

Patong sit in third spot on 16 points, but as with ICC they have played one more game than both the Village and Laguna, who have yet to meet in the league – certainly a match to relish.

A 33 from captain Stuart Reading and a 31 not out from Andrew Cole were the highlights of Laguna's batting. However, Ali Khan's 58 not out for ICC, along with the efforts of Sandeep Sharma (45) and Virender Kumar (25), were enough to chase down Laguna's score of 155 in just 27.4 overs for the loss of only five wickets.

On Sunday, Thanyapura Tigers take on Liquid Lounge Lizards.

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The Festival is a Charity Event, profits donated to Patong Rotary Club, providing educational support for Phuket's underprivileged children.

**Phuket Gazette**

**IMAGE asia**





# Rally round Phuket

By Neil Quail

FOLLOWING the very successful Grumpy Old Men's Club (GOMS) rally and car treasure hunt last year, the organizers this year have invited a number of Phuket's foremost business, social and community organizations to join a great family day out and raise funds for their organization's ongoing projects.

The now-renamed Phuket Invitational Car Rally, to be held on March 11, will be joined by members from the British Business Association Phuket (BBAP), International Business Association Phuket (IBAP), The Lions Club of Patong Beach, Australian Chamber of Commerce Thailand (AustCham) and the Tourist Police Volunteers. Other supporting organizations are welcome to join.

The 145-kilometer route, starting and finishing at Chalong Pier, is designed to take entrants to some of the more remote areas of Phuket, but all on tarmac roads. It is not a race but a social event that will test the navigational, timekeeping and driving skills of the teams.

To ensure entrants stay strictly on route, photographic evidence of places or buildings passed is required by the officials, so a camera or mobile phone with a camera is a must.

"Only 50 vehicles will be allowed to enter, so it's first come, first served and important to get your entry in early. This year we are



MINIMOUSE: Rally organizer John Devenport and Saksri Kerdphol of AutoExpress are looking forward to a fun day out around the island.

delighted to welcome back sponsors Kan Eang @ Pier, VSET and DaVinci Restaurants together with new sponsors The Flying Hanuman and AutoExpress.com who are taking the lead as Title Sponsor," said Peter Smith, one of the organizers.

We welcome entries from members of all participating organizations and their families. Application forms which can be downloaded from PhuketInvitational.com should be handed in at Chalong Pier Beer Garden, together with

the fee of 2,000 baht. Forms are also available at Chalong Pier Beer Garden," he added.

A team is one vehicle with Driver and Navigator plus any guests and or family. The cost is 2,000 baht per car, which includes food at lunch stop and finish, t-shirts for the driver and the navigator. Entry for Guests (over 12 years old) are 250 baht each and children (12 and under) are free of charge, and food is included.

Additional commemorative t-shirts will be available at check-in.

"Want to join and have a great day out, find parts of Phuket you never knew existed and enjoy some new and interesting activities along the way? Just go to the website, check the information and download the Application Form and return it with your entry fee," said Peter.

The Phuket Gazette is a sponsor of the PICR. For information contact John Devenport. T: 087-2658845. E: johndevenport@hotmail.com.



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