

Phuket Gazette



Racing Model

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INSIDE TODAY

25 Baht

July 14 - 20, 2012 | **PhuketGazette.Net** | In partnership with **The Nation**

■ 'WE WANT TOURISTS TO BE CONFIDENT IN THEIR SAFETY WHEN THEY VISIT PHUKET' — CAPT KRITSADA

Near drowning victim saved in chopper rescue

■ A snorkeler was found face-down in the water off Koh Racha Yai, unconscious but still alive.

By **Kritsada Mueanhawong**

JUST ONE day after Royal Thai Navy opened a helipad at Koh Racha Yai, the facility was used to airlift an unconscious Chinese tourist back to the main island for emergency medical treatment.

The Third Naval Area Command received an emergency call on July 7 that a Chinese tourist was found floating unconscious in the waters of Ao La, a popular snorkeling destination off the east coast of Koh Racha Yai.

The tourist, Mrs Jin Giuping, was found face down and unconscious by her husband, Mr Zhenshuguang.

"The couple went snorkeling at Koh Racha Yai with a tour company. While they were snorkeling, Mr Zhenshuguang noticed that his wife had been face down in the water for a long time. He informed the tour guide, who discovered that she was unconscious," explained Capt Kritsada Rattanasupa of the Navy's Phuket Internal Security Operations Command.

The tour guide immediately began to administer first aid to Mrs Jin Giuping as their boat headed back to Koh Racha Yai.

"Once they got in contact with the Third Na-

val Area Command for help, we dispatched a helicopter to bring her back to Phuket," he said.

With the brand new helipad and almost immediate availability of a helicopter, Navy staff were fortunately prepared to rush the critically-injured tourist back to the Phuket, he said.

"We built the heliport on the island to assist with disasters at sea, as well as for tourists needing to be sent back to Phuket in emergency cases just like this one," said Capt Kritsada.

After arriving on Phuket, Mrs Jin Giuping was immediately transferred to the intensive care unit (ICU) at Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town.

According to Vachira Phuket Hospital Director Doctor Jetsada Jongpaiboonpattana, Mrs Jin Giuping is slowly recovering, but is still under close observation in the ICU.

"Mrs Jin Giuping is conscious, but she has to remain in ICU. She is getting better, but still can't remember much of the incident and is unable to clearly speak," a staff member from Vachira Phuket Hospital said.

As the *Gazette* went to print Mrs Jin Guing was still in the ICU.



The Navy opened the helipad on Koh Racha Yai to assist in rescue missions and rush critically-injured tourists back to Phuket. Photo: Third Naval Area Command PR

Phuket teen strangled in rape and robbery attack

CHALONG Police investigating the strangling murder of a 17-year-old girl in her home Tuesday suspect the attack was carried out by a neighbor who knew she was home alone.

Chalong Police were notified at about 5:30pm by relatives of the victim, 17-year-old Sunisa "Som" Saiyoy, who was found lying face-down on a bed in the family's detached home in a housing estate off

Nakok Road in Chalong.

Som was wearing a green sarong, black bra and white t-shirt, which appeared to have been pulled up by her attacker. An initial examination led police to list the apparent cause of death as strangulation, though a bloodstained hammer was discovered on the bed next to her.

There were signs of forced entry to the aluminum window...

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This Week



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Arkon the artist. One of Phuket's most famous chefs. **Page 21**



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Police: Teen murdered in attempted rape, robbery

from page 1

of her bedroom, one of three in the single-storey home, which was fully enclosed by a gated wall.

On the floor of the home, police found more bloodstains and a pair of red shorts.

Phuket Ruamjai Kupai rescue workers took the victim's body to Vachira Phuket Hospital for an autopsy.

Khaneung Saiyoy, the 61-year-old father of the deceased, told the *Gazette* that his daughter was home alone that day because she had taken a term off from school due to anxiety and chronic headaches.

Som had been joining her parents at work, selling fruit at Phuket Vocational College in Phuket Town. However, Tuesday morning she had complained of a headache and asked to stay home and sleep.

Mr Khaneung said he and his wife locked the home and front gate securely before leaving.

Later that day, a young relative went to deliver food to the ailing girl, but his calls to her went unanswered.

After opening the door and discovering Som on the bed, the cousin called Som's parents and then notified Chalong Police.

Anong Intarasuk, Som's mother, said that as she was



Police had the sad duty of interviewing Som's parents following the terrible attack at their home. Photo: Krisada Meuanhawong

leaving that day she did not suspect anything was amiss.

However, she told the *Gazette* that over dinner the night before Som said to her: "Mother, please don't die before me, because if you die before me I don't know who I could live with."

Som had shown signs of depression and spoke frequently of death since her 17th birthday on July 4, she added.

Police believe Som's killer lived in the area and must have known she was home alone.

From the physical evidence at the scene police believe he forcibly entered the home with the intent of raping his victim, but stopped the assault when he realized she was menstruating.

Police believe that he then likely decided to kill her to cover up his crime, then ransacked the home in search of valuables.

Officers dusted the scene for fingerprints, which were clearly visible at the point of entry.

— *Phuket Gazette and Nationgroup news pool.*

Navy supports rescue drill exercise

THE Royal Thai Navy conducted training drills on July 10 to improve coordination among emergency response units.

Vice Admiral Taratorn Kajitsuwan, Commander of the Third Naval Area, said that the exercise had involved local as well as regional units.

"Taking part in the drill were police, public health officials and hospital staff, including those from other Andaman coast provinces in our area of responsibility," he said.

The exercise ran three different scenarios.

The first scenario practiced casualty evacuation by naval helicopter, with simulated casualties airlifted from Racha Yai island to Cape Panwa.

The second was based on the



HTMS Mannok: one of two landing craft that took part in the exercise. Photo: Lt Cmdr Applehans

scenario that a cargo vessel had collided with a cruise liner, resulting in a multi-agency rescue effort.

The final scenario was an evacuation drill of people from Cape Panwa, intended to demonstrate the capabilities of two large navy landing craft: HTMS Wangnai and HTMS Mannok.

— *Chutharat Plerin*

Youth in ICU after gang shooting attack

VACHIRA Phuket Hospital confirmed to the *Gazette* on Jul 11 that the young man who was shot twice in the head on July 7 is still unconscious at the hospital's neuro-surgical unit.

"He has been unconscious since his arrival at the hospital," said a member of staff.

Nattawut "R" Boonprakob, a 22-year-old resident of Wichit sub-district, was taken to hospital following a shooting attack that occurred in front of the Rattana Mansion apartment block on Chana Jaroen Road in Phuket Town at 3pm.

Lt Col Sermphan Sirikong said, "We questioned his friends, who said that they joined him earlier that day for karaoke at Ocean Plaza



22-year-old Mr Nattawut clings to life in ICU at Vachira Phuket Hospital. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

shopping mall. They were sitting on a sofa, waiting in line, when another group of youths arrived."

The cause is unclear, but the two groups had an immediate, mutual disliking. Nattawut and friends followed the other group

to a karaoke room, where a fight ensued. After the fight, both groups left the area, said Col Sermphan.

The violence had not ended, however. Nattawut and four friends were on motorbikes and preparing to leave the parking area in front of the Big One convenience store, next to Rattana Mansion, when three men drove up on a Honda Wave. One of the three drew a gun and opened fire, hitting Nattawut twice in the base of the skull.

No witnesses at the scene were able to remember the vehicle details, but after reviewing the CCTV images, police believe they know the identity of the assailants.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*



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Phuket's top-cop denies 'media blackout' in effect

AFTER officers in two different police districts told *Gazette* reporters that a "media blackout" was in effect in the province, Phuket's top cop on July 5 denied that such is the case.

The misunderstanding may have been the result of excuses made up by uncooperative officers who don't want to do their jobs, he said.

According to police officers in both Chalong and Thalang districts, Royal Thai Police Headquarters had issued a directive that they were not allowed to release information to the media.

"We apologize that we are unable to

reveal any information. It's not that we are unwilling to cooperate; we are doing this in response to a new policy issued by the Royal Thai Police that stipulates we are not allowed to give information to anyone," one Chalong Police officer told a *Gazette* reporter in a recorded conversation.

A similar denial, also recorded, was given by an officer in Thalang.

The *Gazette* spoke with Phuket Provincial Police Commander Chonasit Wattanavrangkul in an attempt to verify that a new policy was in effect.

"It is not true. The Royal Thai Police has no new policy forbidding police to

release information to the media or the general public. I think the officers who said that might be too lazy, or did not want to answer your questions," Maj Gen Chonasit said.

"All media, or any member of the public, has the right to access public information. Everyone has the right to know. If any police officers are unwilling to give you answers [using this excuse], you can say that they already have permission to give them [the answers], granted by Phuket Provincial Police Commander Chonasit Wattanavrangkul."

— *Phuket Gazette*



'No media blackout': Phuket Provincial Police Commander Chonasit Wattanavrangkul.



Mayor Pian Keesin is looking for a third term as Patong Mayor.

Patong mayor election on the horizon

RESIDENTS of Patong will go to the polls on or before September 9 to elect a new municipal council and mayor.

"Although a date has yet to be set for the election, the Patong council must be dissolved by July 26, which is the last day of the current municipal term," said Phuket Election Commission Director Kittipong Thiengkunakrit.

"According to election law, Patong must hold its election within 45 days of the term expiring," Mr Kittipong explained.

Mr Kittipong confirmed that Mayor Pian can run for re-election.

"There is no limit to the number of terms," Mr Kittipong said.

"As soon as the chief of the Patong Election Commission sends us the selected election date, we will consider it for approval," Mr Kittipong added.

As this edition went to press the *Gazette* was unable to contact Mayor Pian, but was told by his personal secretary that he has no intention of resigning his position in order to force an early election.

The election, when it does take place, will mandate a ban on alcohol sales starting at 6pm the day before the election and running until midnight of the day of the polling.

— *Chutharat Plerin*

NACC probes plunder of forests

By Atchaa Khamlo

A TEAM of National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) officers stopped in Phuket this week as part of a nationwide inspection tour aimed at putting an end to widespread encroachment on state forest reserves.

Kajadpai Burutpat, president of a NACC subcommittee investigating forest encroachment nationwide, said after a meeting at Provincial Hall with Phuket Land Office and Forest Department officers that official corruption leading to encroachment on state forest preserves was a nationwide problem.

"Different areas have different problems, so we have to take a wide view before setting up measures to solve the problem," he said.

Part of the tour involves meeting local officials to hear about the problems they face and encouraging them to live up to their responsibilities, he said.

"We study the problems faced by local officers in each area and make suggestions on how to deal with them. As government officers, we should work with honesty and integrity, having the courage to ensure justice for the benefit of the country and its people," he said.

"We've [already] been to Chiang Mai, Tak, Nakhon Ratchasima and Prachinburi, all of which have major problems of encroachment on state forest land," said Mr Kajadpai, a former deputy chief of the National Security Council.

The people who encroach on forest reserves include a wide



Kajadpai Burutpat (inset) says deforestation is to blame for much of the country's flooding Photos: Gazette file and Atchaa Khamlo (inset)

spectrum of the population, from hilltribe people clearing land for farming to wealthy investors using the land to build resorts.

The collective result has been the ongoing destruction of 'hundreds of thousands' of rai of Thailand's protected forest land, which is also the main cause of flooding in the country, he said.

What the subcommittee's initial review of cases in Phuket revealed will come as little surprise to those who have followed the encroachment issue on the island over the past decade: that land grabs are

typically committed on tracts for which land-use documents, typically *SorPorKor* or *SorKor 1* papers, have been issued by the government – legally or otherwise.

"From our meeting today, we found that most problems result when boundaries between state land and private landholdings are poorly delineated, but the process of issuing land title deeds continues nonetheless," said Mr Kajadpai.

As a result, the Royal Forest Department often discovers that *SorKor 1* papers have been issued and, in some cases, resorts al-

ready built on land under its protection, he said.

SorKor 1 documents, which are government-issued papers recognizing historical land use by a private party, can in most circumstances be upgraded to full *Chanote* title deeds.

One way to end the abuse would be to establish a special committee to guarantee beyond any doubt that plots for which *SorKor 1* papers are held do not encroach upon protected forest before they are upgraded to full *Chanote* status, he said.

"If possible, local officers should go out and inspect the site in question to ensure there are no discrepancies," he said.

Panumet Dam-on, chief of the Royal Forest Department's conservation unit, told the meeting that whenever he tried to use the rule of law to protect forest reserves, he was hit with complaints and lawsuits filed by investors.

Skyrocketing land prices, with the prime plots now selling for as much as 200 million baht per rai, had fueled the encroachment problem in Phuket, he said.

Believing that existing laws provide a fertile channel for corruption, the NACC might recommend new regulations to stem the abuse, or even a complete overhaul of existing forest protection laws, the panelists said.

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Foreign tour guides to take heat after visit from Honorary adviser

THE honorary adviser to the Senate's Standing Committee on Tourism on Monday took a stand against foreign tour guides operating on the island.

At a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall, Honorary adviser Phanomphon Thammachartniyom said the committee had been working for 10 years to solve the problem of Russians, Chinese and Koreans working as tour guides, but had gained little ground.

A tour guide is one of the professions specifically set aside by the Ministry of Labor for Thai citizens, therefore a field illegal for foreigners to hold positions in.

"We have discussed the matter with Russian, Korean and Chinese tour operators, but it seems they don't want to employ Thai guides. Even though our guides are highly qualified, the operators still say they are not good enough," Mr Phanomphon said.

Despite his confidence in the quality of Thai tour guides, Mr Phanomphon pointed out that existing tour guide training courses were not enough.

"Though Phuket's universities



Honorary adviser Phanomphon Thammachartniyom.

have produced more than 300 guides, many courses are only two or three weeks long. With only two weeks training many Thais became 'sitting guides' while foreigners conducted the tours," he said.

Phuket Tourist Police, Capt Siramate Thanapansiri said that a previous Tourist Police investigation failed to find foreigners working as guides in Phuket. This was echoed by an official from the Phuket Revenue Office, who despite receiving complaints was unable to identify any illegal foreign tour guides.

However, Mr Phanomphon said it was impossible that officials were unable to find any of foreign guides.

"If you spend three days at some of the popular tourist venues, such as Wat Chalong and Laem Promthep, you would find a hundred of them," he said.

Responding to a request at the meeting from Phuket Vice Governor Sommai Prijasilpa, Capt Siramate said he would inspect locations where the accusations of illegal foreign tour guides arose and report his findings in 30 days.

Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) Vice President Sarayuth Mallam said, "We don't think that by enforcing the law it will affect tourism. The law is the law; they must follow our laws. The important thing is that our officers must not accept money from them [tour operators]."

Concluding the meeting V/Gov Somma said, "We will put in place short and long term measures to solve this issue. In the meantime we need to invite tour companies from Russia, Korea and China to attend discussions."

— Atchaa Khamlo

Calamity

THEPKRASATTRI Road, Phuket's main north-south artery, likely has more vehicular accidents than any other road on the island — and almost certainly the most fatalities.

One section of the road, the curve near the Tha Reua Shrine in Srisoonthorn, has been the site of numerous accidents in recent months.

The Gazette's Orawin Narabal and Thawit Bilabdullar report.

THE latest calamity at the Tah Reua Curve on Thepkrasattri Road happened at about the same time most accidents occur there - in the dead of night.

Before dawn on Saturday, June 30, three young Kusoldharm Foundation workers were badly injured when their rescue pickup crashed while responding to a police request for assistance with a drunk accident victim.

The chain of events began at about 3:30am, when Thalang Police received a report of a motorbike accident at the notorious Tha Reua Curve, on Thepkrasattri Road northbound, at 3:30am.

Chonthicha Chaikul, the 24-year-old owner of a beauty salon near the Tha Reua Shrine on Thepkrasattri Road southbound, told the Gazette:

"Witnesses told me the drunk man's motorcycle hit an electric pole on the opposite side of the road. A few cars traveling close behind him had to stop suddenly, causing a chain reaction of collisions. After the accident, the man abandoned his bike and ran away, trying to hide from the police. The police kept chasing him, so he ran across to the other [southbound] side of the road."

It was at this late hour that Ms Chonticha, who was watching television, heard the sounds of a commotion outside. Going out to her balcony, she saw police chasing the man.

"The drunken man tried to call people in the area for help; he was really drunk and definitely didn't want to be arrested," she said.

None of the local residents opened their doors for the man.

"Finally police were able to take him into custody and put him in the police pickup, but he continued to resist and tried to get out of the car," she said.

"Police then called for the help from Kusoldharm Rescue Foundation. About 20 minutes later, I saw the Kusoldharm truck driving at high speed in the opposite [northbound] lane. When the driver saw people and police on

the other side of the road, he slammed on his brakes. He lost control of the truck, which swerved up over the median strip, flipped, and finally landed in the southbound lane," she said.

The injured rescue workers, all attached to the Kusoldharm Foundation Mai Khao Unit, were identified as: driver Raywat Niyomna, 24; Chaiwat Lanonpaew, 29, and Montree Phonpakdee, 22, who was on one of his first rescue missions at the time.

All three were taken to Mission Hospital Phuket, then transferred to Bangkok Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town. Mr Montree had to undergo facial surgery and was still a patient at the hospital two days later, as was Mr Chaiwat, who required surgery for an injured shoulder.



The crashed Kusoldharm rescue vehicle.

Another veteran Kusoldharm rescue worker who arrived at the scene later said it was unlikely any of the injured men had been wearing safety belts, as it was not a

standard practice in the rescue organization.

Thalang Police later identified the drunken motorbike accident victim as 27-year-old Pramote Tirattanaprathom, who was eventually sent to Thalang Hospital, then transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital the following day.

As this edition went to press, he had yet to be charged with any crime. Thalang Police said they told the man's relatives to wait until he was sufficiently healed from the incident before bringing him to the station for charging.

LOCAL REACTION

Ms Chonticha considers herself lucky, as her home has yet to be hit by a vehicle at the accident-plagued curve. Some of her neighbors have not been so fortunate.

On May 26, a man crashed his black Isuzu Hilander pickup through the guard rail and into the kitchen of one of her neighbor's homes at 2:30am. The homeowner, who declined to give his name, told the Gazette that the

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on Phuket's fatal road



Despite the presence of the highly ornate shrine and numerous warning signs, drivers still fail to negotiate the curve and serious accidents still happen there "about every two weeks", local residents say. Photo: Stephen Fein

accident was the "last straw"; even though there were no injuries, he said he intended to abandon the property because so many accidents happen there.

Not all of the carnage in the area is a direct result of the curve, however. Just two days after the Hilander crash, a man presumed to have been drunk was struck dead by a truck in the same area.

Witnesses told the *Gazette* that the man was first seen trying to slow down drivers down on the northbound lanes of Thepkasattri Road, between the shrine and the Yee Teng U-turn, the first turning south of the Heroines' Monument.

The man motioned drivers to stop, then climbed up onto the hoods of cars, one witness said. Angry, one motorist sped off, prompting the man to step off onto the median strip and then out into the southbound lanes, where he was run over and killed instantly by a fast-moving truck.

Yet another tragedy occurred in the area last weekend, when 15-year-old Kajonkietsuksa School student Wanchai Saeksan died of brain trauma after his motorbike crashed into the sidewalk of the northbound lane, catapulting him into a utility pole. He died at Vachira Phuket Hospital a few hours later.

EVER PRESENT DANGER

Local residents are used to the sounds of sirens and the flashing of emergency lights, but the thing they fear most is that their dwelling could be the next obstacle in the path of an out-of-control pickup, six-wheel truck – or something even bigger.

"I am afraid that some day a car might hit my house, since it is located in such a high-risk area. Almost all of the accidents that happened around here are the result of speeding or drunk driving; they usually happen late at night. It's not very well lit here, and people might have problems with visibil-

ity, especially in the rainy season. I would say there is a serious accident here every other week at this time of year," said Ms Chonticha.

"One of my former neighbors moved away after her family members were injured by a car that plowed into their house three or four years ago," she added.

Somya Duangkerd, the 36-year-old owner of a pool equipment shop next to Tha Reua Shrine, told the *Gazette* that there are often rush-hour accidents in the area, but most of them are just minor "fender benders."

The more serious accidents tend to happen late at night and are usually the result of drivers speeding, drunk-driving, falling asleep at the wheel – or some combination thereof, he said.

"I am afraid that some day a

vehicle might drive into my shop. I am very lucky, however; I have been living here for two years and nothing has happened yet," he said.

Mr Somya said he was satisfied with efforts by authorities to try and minimize the likelihood of yet another disaster, especially their installation of a heavy-duty guard rail that was erected following an official complaint by local residents to the Department of Highways about two years ago.

"The Highways Department installed the guard rail at the start of the curve; it extends all the way to Tha Reua Shrine. This helps us a lot, having a barrier to protect our homes," he said.

The guard rail has already deflected several vehicles away from local residents' homes, he added.

However, the same rail proved



Thalang Hospital staff treat two of the three Kusoldharm Foundation rescue workers injured when their rescue vehicle overturned on the curve on June 30. It was unlikely any of them were wearing a seatbelt at the time, a veteran rescue worker told the *Gazette*. Photo: Thawit Bilabdullar

no match for the fast-moving Isuzu pickup that slammed into it full force at 2:30am on May 26. A long section of the guard rail was

taken out in that accident.

For obvious reasons, local residents hope the missing section will be replaced as soon as possible.

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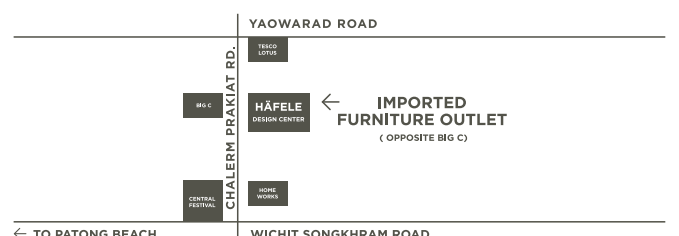
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Bridge work delayed after ferry sinking



The ferry was carrying materials for the construction of a new bridge. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

A PROJECT to build a bridge between the two islands of Koh Lanta Noi and Koh Lanta Yai took a soggy step backward on July 5, when a ferry waiting to unload its cargo of construction materials started taking on water and partially submerged.

The partial sinking occurred while the vessel was docked at the Sala Daan Pier on Koh Lanta Noi, in Krabi province.

It is believed that the ferry, docked at the pier since the previous day, partially sank as a result of heavy rain falling onto the cargo deck; this caused it to list and take on even more water.

One witness reported that the tide was rising quickly at the time and that water began to fill the ferry from the back. After that the ferry slowly started to sink.

"When the ferry sank, it had a truck, crane and foundation piles aboard. They planned to store everything near the landing area in preparation for the bridge construction work," he explained.

The estimated costs of the damage to the ferry and cargo have yet to be released.

Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

Krabi Office of Rural Roads Director Somkiet Trakulhun was unaware of the accident when contacted by the *Phuket Gazette*.

"I was not aware of the incident, but I believe the Prayoonwit Company can salvage the ferry without help from us. They are a big company and should have sufficient resources.

"The project is still in the initial foundation piling stages, but we now have to suspend work until further notice," he added.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Patong named 'safety zone'

Chutharat Plerin

AS PART of a "Phuket model" for increased public safety, Patong has been designated a "safety zone" by National Deputy Police Chief Pansiri Prapawat

Speaking at a meeting on July 4 that focused on establishing tourism safety measures for the island, Gen Pansiri said, "Phuket is one of the most attractive vacation places in Thailand. However, illegal taxis, jet-ski operators and other public safety issues all remain concerns."

Gen Pansiri explained that the central government planned to earn 2 trillion baht from tourism between 2011 and 2015, with one third of that expected to come from Phuket.

"There are four steps to the plan, which is designed to identify dangerous areas and secure them. The plan will also tackle the issue of illegal taxi drivers, jet-ski operators and others who are assaulting tourists," he said.

Once the "danger areas" have been identified all local police units



After the meeting on public and tourist safety, Gen Pansiri Prapawat inspected 'areas of concern' in Patong. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

– Provincial Police, local police, Tourist Police, Marine Police, Immigration Police – will need to cooperate and coordinate their efforts in fighting crime, Gen

Pansiri explained at the meeting.

Gen Pansiri made it clear that the use of CCTV and information technology systems would be an integral part of the plan, helping

authorities to identify risk areas.

"The last step of the plan – after we've identified the danger areas, implemented the necessary technology and coordinated our efforts – is to strictly enforce the law in accordance with the orders of Deputy Prime Minister Chalerm Yubamrung," said Gen Pansiri.

"The risk areas must be identified and plans established to resolve the underlying issues within 30 days," he said.

Later that afternoon, Gen Pansiri inspected Patong. He concluded that the private operators were "more" than willing to cooperate in establishing Patong as a "safety zone".

"However, the true indicator of whether or not Patong has achieved 'safe status' will be a statistical reduction in crime and an increase in the satisfaction of tourists," Gen Pansiri said.

"I know that the problems with illegal taxis and jet-ski operators cannot be solved over night. But I do believe that we will have the results we want within three months," he added.

Sea gypsies fear illegal land grab

INVESTIGATORS from the Office of the Ombudsman were on the island recently to study a complaint by the sea gypsy community in Rawai, who fear eviction from the land they have called home for decades after a title deed for the land was issued to a private party.

The investigators, led by Investigation Bureau 3 Director Tavin Inchamnong, briefed local officials of their findings at Phuket Provincial Hall on July 5.

"The sea gypsies living in Rawai claim to have lived there for a long time, but say they are being driven away by people who claim they are the legal owners of the land. They have therefore requested verification of the land papers as well as an investigation into how they were issued," said Mr Tavin.

During an inspection of the disputed area on July 4, investigators also heard complaints from the sea gypsies about problems with provision of public utility services, he added.

The community in 2010 pro-

tested when a nearby development caused their water well to dry up; they were also among the many groups that protested to PM Yingluck Shinawatra during her "mobile Cabinet meeting" to Phuket in March.

"The purpose of today's meeting is to provide officials from relevant departments the opportunity to respond to complaints by the sea gypsies. Their input will be weighed when we consider how to proceed with the complaint and explore possible solutions," he said.

The team is also investigating another complaint by residents of Koh Racha Yai, who want to know why their request for a deed for land on the island was denied when similar requests by outside investors were granted.

"Residents of Koh Racha Yai claim that they contacted the Provincial Land Office, but the officer refused to issue the [land ownership] document, citing Section 43 of Ministerial Regulations issued in 2001. When they learned that



The visit by Ombudsman's Office inspector Tavin Inchamnong indicates how seriously land issues are being taken. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

documents for the same land had been issued to a group of investors, they filed a complaint with our office," Mr Tavin explained.

"We know that a land officer has already issued ownership documents to investors and that 10 more investors are currently waiting for the office to issue

documents," said Mr Tavin.

"My team and I will work with the other organizations involved in this matter and investigate the case thoroughly," he said.

However, bad weather prevented the group from making a planned visit to the island.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

500 million for Phuket Historical Park

THE approval of the 500-million-baht Phuket Historical Park project was announced at Provincial Hall on Jul 10.

The project, to be built on 96 rai of land in Thalang Town, will be managed by Public Works and Town and Country Planning Office in Phuket, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and Ministry of Culture.

The current project design includes: a "living museum", 360-degree movie theater, "science world" zone, planetarium,



Artist impression of the figures to stand atop the B26mn statue.

learning center, activities area, dancing fountain, museum building and a public park.

A master plan, drafted by a committee chaired by Wong-

sakorn Noonchukhan, chief of Public Works and Town & Country Planning in Phuket, is due for completion within a month.

The total price for the park is estimated at 500 million baht.

However, an additional 26 million has been requested for construction of an iconic statue. The statue's most recent design has ten heroes and heroines, all standing proudly.

However, funding has yet to be approved by the Comptroller General's Department.

– Atchaa Khamlo

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ASEAN health meeting focus on common issues

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

SURIN Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), on July 6 warned that the rise in wealth throughout the member states will bring a wave of health issues to the region.

"The formation of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 will make some people richer. With their new lifestyle will come new health issues; non-communicable diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes," said Mr Surin.

Citing a report focusing on ASEAN countries, he said that 4 million people died from such "lifestyle" diseases each year.

"The causes may include lack of exercise, consuming too much alcohol or smoking too much. ASEAN must pay more attention to this issue, because the integration of the economies of each country may cause serious health problems," he warned.

"Consideration should be given to any free

trade marketing agreement that covers the import or export of alcohol, cigarettes or food," Mr Surin added.

The ASEAN Secretary-General's warning was delivered at the 11th ASEAN Health Ministers' Meeting (AHMM), which was held in Phuket over July 2-6.

Thai Public Health Minister Witthaya Buranasiri announced that it had been productive with a number of important issues discussed by the 10 ASEAN Public Health Ministers attending.

Held at the Mövenpick Hotel & Resort in Karon, the agenda focused on solving the main health problems and developing an ASEAN Public Health system.

Among the top items on the agenda were combating the rising incidence of HIV/AIDS and laying the foundation for a common public healthcare platform across ASEAN.

Although it was agreed that to include the ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and Korea), any memorandum to adopt a common ruling that



Health Minister Witthaya (left) believes Thailand will have a major role in the fight against disease. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

would allow foreign citizens to be treated free of charge in a fellow ASEAN country, would have to be ratified at the annual ASEAN Summit Meeting and the UN General Assembly.

The ministerial meeting also set targets to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

Secretary General advises Muslims to study languages

THE Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) gave a speech to Phuket's Muslim community leaders on July 4, to encourage them to prepare their communities for the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community in 2015.

Dr Surin made his speech, entitled "The Muslim path to the ASEAN Economic Community", at Muslim Wittaya Phuket School in Koh Kaew, to Imam Kortep Bilan and 765 people representing the committees from 51 mosques in Phuket.

"In order to enter the ASEAN Economic Community successfully, we need to get ready in terms of education - language particularly. We should study our neighboring countries' languages in order to develop as good and complete Muslims with promising career options.

"Every year more than 5,000 Muslim students graduate from more than 400 Muslim schools throughout Thailand. The committee of each school should prepare them to continue their higher education," Dr Surin said.

"I believe the six provinces along the Andaman coast will be directly affected by the ASEAN Economic Community," he said.

Dr Surin explained that he was not alone in expecting a greater circulation of trade, investment, products and tourism services.

"A certain amount of mobility of the ASEAN population is to be expected. Therefore, we should prepare and get ready for the change that is going to happen."

There are 10 countries in the ASEAN region with more than 600 million people, over 300 million of which are Muslim, Dr Surin added.



ASEAN Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan believes that more Thai Muslims must have a higher education to obtain good careers. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

In brief...

Aussie airlifted to Bangkok

AN AUSTRALIAN tourist was flown to Bangkok on July 6 after suffering a serious head injury when he fell from the back of a moving tuk-tuk in Patong the previous evening.

Zachary Noble fell after climbing out and standing on the back of the tuk-tuk.

At the scene, Mr Noble was found unconscious and bleeding from the face.

Police said that Mr Noble had yet to regain consciousness when he left Bangkok Hospital Phuket.

Man found dead in Saphan Hin

A MAN known only as "Prasit" was found dead in a pavillion in Phuket Town on July 6, just 50 meters from where people gathered for the 'Blue Flag' Fair.

Police and Kusoldharm Foundation workers found the barefoot body of the deceased man lying on the ground, against a bench support, clad in a shirt and trousers. There was a bottle of 40-degree proof whiskey nearby.

Police speculated that recent heavy rains and cold weather may have caused Mr Prasit to drink at a faster rate than normal in an effort to keep warm, thus resulting in his death.

Drugs seized just normal ya ice

REPORTS that a new kind of methamphetamine was recovered in a drug bust last week were false, according to arresting officers in Thalang.

Thalang Police Inspector Pisit Chunpet on July 7 confirmed that the drug was *ya ice* (crystal methamphetamine) with unusually large crystals.

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PADI divers prepare for massive coral reef cleanup

NINE dive boats and almost 20 PADI dive shops with the guidance of PADI Project AWARE have put aside their differences and on July 3, at the group's third meeting, announced the date for what they hope will be the largest coral reef cleanup in Phuket.

The project, part of the group's start-up "Go Eco Phuket", aims to set "cleanup records" this year as it brings hundreds of divers out to Koh Racha Yai and Koh Racha Noi on September 30.

In response to the skeptical questions of what difference coral reef cleanups really make, outside of raising public awareness and educating people of the importance of coral reefs, Michael Wallentin, a prominent member of the Phuket dive community, pointed out: "Every piece makes a difference. Maybe it only helps a fraction, but it helps."

Tony Andrews, Thailand's west coast PADI Project AWARE regional manager, offered to brief all members in the next meeting on the proper use of the "Dive Against Debris Data cards".

The information collected on the cards will be sent to marine biologists and officials based in Bangkok to present a better picture of what kind of debris is being found in the reef systems, so programs can be established to target specific issues.

Guenter Hormann, another prominent member of the dive community, made it clear that the dive companies needed to get as many people involved in the project as possible.

"We need to separate ourselves from the scum that is sometimes associated with Phuket. This is not about us making money; it's about cleaning up the reefs and making a difference," he said.

"It's fundamental to the project for everyone to come together at the end of the cleanup and arrive in Phuket as a single, united group. All the boats will be flying the same flags and banners," explained Mr Andrews.

Mr Wallentin plainly stated his goal: "Let's make Phuket the cleanest island in Southeast Asia."

— Isaac Stone Simonelli



Diver 'Josh' poses in front of a tangle of debris off Koh Racha Noi. PADI divers are uniting to stage Phuket's biggest coral reef cleanup. Photo: David Hall



Rescued from Bangla Road; next stop a sanctuary in Thalang.

Slow loris rescue

LAW enforcement officers on the evening of July 7 arrested two men in possession of three slow lorises, which they were using to entice tourists to pay to have photographs taken with them.

The officers of the Natural Resources and Environmental Crime Suppression Division (NED), made the arrest after spotting the men on Bangla Road.

The men, aged 20 and 30, were charged with illegal possession of protected species.

The slow lorises will be sent to the Environmental Conservation Unit at the Khao Phra Thaeo wildlife sanctuary in Thalang.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

NZ tourist faces B600k medical bill as insurance fails to pay out

FAMILY and friends of New Zealander Sean Kenzie, who suffered extensive injuries after being knocked off his motorbike in Patong, have launched a campaign to raise funds to pay his spiraling medical bills after the insurance company refused to pay the bill.

Mr Kenzie, 27, suffered a split liver, two punctured lungs and broken ribs when he was struck from behind by a minibus in Patong on June 30.

He has had surgery to reattach muscles and jaw, but now needs further surgery to fix his jaw.

His medical bill to date is NZ\$16,000 and rising. The surgery to correct his broken jaw will cost about NZ\$8,000 – a total of more than 600,000 baht, explained Sean's brother, Kane.

Sean was returning to his hotel room in Patong when the accident



Sean Kenzie struggles to raise funds for medical expenses. Photo: Facebook

happened. He was wearing a helmet, but doesn't remember any details of the incident.

"I checked into my hotel. I

hired a little scooter; had a look around. The next thing, I was in here," he told Channel 7 news from his hospital bed.

Amy Myles, Mr Kenzie's girlfriend, who arrived in Phuket the day after his accident said "Sean paid more money to get the highest cover he thought was available to him. He was under the understanding that he was covered for everything."

His mother Mrs Nadine Mouritsen told the *Gazette* she was stunned that the policy, issued by a major travel insurance company and sold through the travel agent, did not cover injuries sustained in motorbike accidents.

"I understand a contract is a contract, but how you word it is critical. I have never been to Thailand but everyone knows motorbike accidents are common in Thailand."

The *Gazette* notes that the slogan used by the travel insurance company is "...travel insurance you can trust..."

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Twenty years on residents of Koh Lanta Noi community still without electricity

MORE than 20 families of Baan Klong Jak on Koh Lanta Noi in Krabi have repeated their plea for their village to be provided mains supply electricity.

Although a new road to the village was cut through the jungle two years ago, the community still lacks electricity and depends on oil lamps for lighting.

"We have been asking for electricity for more than 20 years," said Wanna Lieamkaew.

"Every organization ignores us. At night, the children have to study by oil lamp light or candlelight," she said.

The residents said they filed complaints to the Koh Lanta Noi Tambon Administrative Organization (*OrBorTor*), but never received a response.

However, Bon Jamsai, President of the Koh Lanta Noi *OrBorTor*, told the *Gazette*, "We contacted the Krabi Provincial



The children still have to do their school homework by candlelight, says Baan Klong Jak resident Wanna Lieamkaew. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

Electricity Authority (PEA), but they said that installing power cables to supply each house in the community would cost more than 3 million baht.

"They said they are restricted to a budget of 50,000 baht per household," he explained.

With the Baan Klong Jak community comprising only 20

homes, the Krabi PEA can allocate a maximum budget of only 1mn baht to install power cables to the village.

"Therefore, the Koh Lanta Noi *OrBorTor* has to provide the rest of the money, which is why the help is so slow in coming," Mr Bon said.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

Charter ruling risks strife

AROUND THE nation

THE Constitution Court was on July 13 set to rule on whether or not the Government can proceed with its attempts to draft a new charter – with political strife feared regardless of which way it rules.

Early last week, 15 witnesses argued both for and against the writing of a new Constitution.

The ruling Pheu Thai Party is proposing that Article 291 of the current charter – approved by a public referendum in 2007 – be amended to allow the formation of a 99-member Constitution drafting committee.

That committee would then draft an entirely new charter, which would be put to a referendum.

The Pheu Thai Party claims the current Constitution is undemocratic, since it allows the Constitution Court to dissolve political parties, as happened to two of its predecessor parties: Thai Rak Thai and People's Power.

The current charter also mandates a half-appointed Upper House, also known as the Senate.

But government opposition who petitioned the Constitution Court to halt the process, claim the move is aimed at toppling Thailand's system of government: a constitutional democracy with HM the King as head of state.

Article 68 of the Constitution states: "No person shall exercise the rights and liberties prescribed in the Constitution to overthrow the democratic regime of government with the King as Head of State under this Constitution or to acquire the power to rule the



Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra will be attending the Asean-US Business Council in Cambodia on July 13 when the Constitution Court delivers its verdict in the charter amendment case. Photo: The Nation

country by any means which is not in accordance with the modes provided in this Constitution."

If the court rules the amendment process can continue, some observers expect street protests by groups likely to include the People's Alliance for Democracy, also known as the "yellow shirts".

On the other hand, if the court rules that the process is unconstitutional, the pro-government "red shirts" could take to the streets.

A more extreme scenario could see the Court order the dissolution of the Pheu Thai Party, which many analysts believe would

result in political violence returning to the streets of Bangkok.

Deputy Prime Minister Chalermsak Yooamrungsak told *The Nation* that he believed the Constitution Court would not rule against public feelings regarding the charter amendment, otherwise the country would be faced with political turmoil.

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra said she was not giving any thought to the dissolution of the Pheu Thai Party as a result of the court ruling. She would rather wait for the ruling and decide after that, she said.

She also said she had no plan to cancel a trip to Cambodia to attend a Asean-US Business Council meeting on Friday, the day the Court ruling was expected to be announced as this edition went to press.

"I have to stay focused on my duty. I have a mission to complete," said PM Yingluck, who was scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the proceedings.

She added, however, that she would be following the Court decision closely from Siem Reap, Cambodia, where the meeting is taking place.

Critics slam plan to deport pregnant migrant workers

OPPOSITION to a Labor Ministry proposal to deport migrant workers who are pregnant is growing, with New York-based Human Rights Watch calling for the plan to be scrapped.

On June 26, the ministry announced a plan to deport migrants found to be three-to-four months pregnant.

The ministry initiated the policy as a response to Thailand's inclusion, for the third consecutive year, in the United States' Tier 2 watchlist for countries with human-trafficking issues in its annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report.

Labor Minister Padermchai Sasomsap said the move would reduce the use of child labor in Thailand.

But rights groups and academics have slammed the plan as "misguided".

"The labor minister's plan has nothing to do with stopping human trafficking, but will cause further discrimination against women migrant workers," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"Prime Minister Yingluck should immediately direct the Labor Ministry to drop this unlawful and thoroughly bad idea."

"This law splits up families, forcing stable couples in Thailand to stay apart for at least six months," said Tatiya Likitwong, coordinator of the Foundation for Child Development.

"Then, if the children are left behind with relatives in their home countries, they grow up without proper resources and end up causing more problems in the future by either getting trafficked or working as traffickers," she explained.



Floodwalls surrounding Bang Pa-in Industrial Estate. Photo: The Nation

Ayutthaya floodwalls more done than not

THE construction of floodwalls around Bang Pa-in Industrial Estate in Ayutthaya, which was inundated last year, is making good progress. The 704 million baht project is already 60 per cent complete and should be finished two months ahead of schedule in January, the project manager said.

The imposing structure, 11 kilometers long and 6.4 meters high, was expected to cause worry

among nearby residents that floods will hit their areas even more heavily, but it could potentially save both Thai and foreign-owned facilities from massive flooding.

Piyawadee Kosalanant, the chief of operations at Bang Pa-in Industrial Estate Co, said no one from nearby residential areas had complained to her company, which manages the industrial park and leases sites in it.

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Bleat of the week

One memorable scene from the 1939 classic *The Wizard of Oz* is the moment when Toto pulls back the curtain to reveal that the “mighty and all-powerful Oz” is no more than an ordinary man who, by circumstances beyond his control, finds himself thrust into a position of power that he never sought or wanted.

This revelation may come as an unwanted plot twist by young viewers, but for some of us in the media the situation in which “the Wizard” finds himself holds some striking parallels to our own work.

Few industries have been more transformed by digital information, social networking and other advances in communication technology than the media. While blogs, readers’ forums and other new avenues of expression have changed the way information can be propagated, new levels of “information literacy” are needed to separate the digital wheat from the chaff.

Information consumers who fail to understand this are the first to be preyed upon by conspiracists, spammers, phishers, hackers, charlatans and other opportunists of similar ilk.

With all this in mind, representatives of the *Phuket Gazette* editorial team recently visited Provincial Hall for an official reminder of the importance of our respective roles in how Phuket is perceived abroad. Other media outlets were also invited.

To mark the occasion, the *Gazette* would like to state for the record our ongoing commitment both to Phuket and to a high standard of journalistic ethics.

No other English-language media organization is more heavily invested in Phuket. As a fully-licensed newspaper with a full-time staff of 54, we are proud of the positive role we have played in the island’s development since our establishment 20 years ago. We have prospered, but we feel we have also given back at least our fair share to the community in terms of sponsorship of almost all of the island’s important events, and in raising and donating significant sums of money for charitable causes.

In short, the *Gazette* has little to gain, and much to lose, by presenting inaccurate news, or by sensationalizing stories so as to attract readers at the expense of the island’s image.

Unlike blogs and other ‘new media’ in Thailand, the mainstream media here – newspapers, magazines and television – all require licensed editors who are qualified and who personally ‘sign on the dotted line’ to take responsibility for their ethics and practices. The *Gazette* is proud to confirm that not one of our editors has ever been called to task by any government office for a breach of ethics (or violation of law). And we are equally proud of our record in not shying away from crime or other high-risk stories, and of presenting the news as accurately as possible. When big stories happen and speed (glory) and accuracy (professionalism) enter the fray, we do not allow the former to trump the latter.

Unlike the aforementioned Wizard, we recognize the futility of trying to build impressions of moral superiority through grandiose assertions about our journalistic ethics. We prefer to let our record do the marketing in that regard.



Saving lives: speaking from experience

As an ex-Australian lifeguard of 30 years, that lived and swam at Patong Beach for three years, I think I can contribute some input.

I feel that Thai lifeguards are not experienced enough in beach management and varied surf conditions. From my observations they are not 100 per cent focused on beach and water management and some have “other” interests, such as jet-skis and beach chair rentals.

My suggestion is to part with a bit of the huge income Phuket receives from tourism and employ professional Australian or USA “surf” lifeguards who are experienced in beach management and rescue methods in big and very rough surf conditions.

One drowning per week is a disgraceful portrayal of a resort island more interested in profit than protecting lives. In-flight video about the dangers is commendable, but the solution has to be “beach based”.

My beach in Sydney is a good example of diligent lifeguarding “No lives lost in near on 100 years”. I know some have received training in Australia, but they are not professionals. Let the Thais rent the jet-skis and beach chairs and get professionals from Australia and the USA to protect the tourists, and Phuket’s bread and butter business.

Grant Young
Khao Lak

Chinese drowning hails haunting news

Re: *Gazette online, Chinese tourist drowns off Patong Beach, July 1*

Having Chinese or Korean tourists die in the sea is not good for Phuket tourism. Many people from those countries believe that the spirits of those who drown at sea are the most troubled ghosts, and the most dangerous to the living who venture into the sea.

Letters to the Editor

They remain lonely spirits below the water line who will pull down unwary swimmers for company.

Following the Tsunami of 2004, it took a high-level team of monks to conduct a ceremony before many Korean tourists felt comfortable going into the sea.

Ma Ke
Gazette forum

Thai care catches the public eye

Re: *Gazette online, Aussie claims beating by Thai youth gang in Phuket, June 7*

The claims of Peter William may or may not be real, but what I like about this story is the Thai guy who picked him up, gave him a shirt, and delivered him for medical attention. He took a risk in doing it. A good person, this Khun Chaikut.

PG Reader
Gazette forum

Reef rubbish keeps regenerating

Re: *Phuket Gazette, PADI divers prepare for Phuket’s biggest coral reef cleanup, July 5*

A noble cause, no doubt, and I have myself several times participated in reef cleanups.

Only problem is that the rubbish keeps coming, 365 days a year. This is not mostly from tourists, but from locals, fishermen and other local boat operators, who with no hesitation throw everything into the sea.

Michael
Gazette forum

Running the gauntlet

Re: *Gazette online, Phuket Airport director hails anti-cheat measures a success, July 1*

I arrived from Bangkok to Phuket a few weeks ago and there were actually a few taxi drivers at the baggage carousel hassling people.

We avoided them, then walked to the sliding glass exit doors of the baggage claim where there were 20 more blocking the way.

So we went to the other door to the right of that and a few of them ran over to us. We said no, went outside and avoided about six more en route to our car.

Phuket People
Gazette forum

What doesn’t work in London is going to work in Phuket?

Re: *Gazette online, Phuket Police chief calls for integrated, island-wide CCTV, July 2*

Shame he doesn’t talk to the Metropolitan Police in London who admit that the vast number of CCTV cameras there do not have a large impact on the prevention of crime – either as a deterrent or after the fact. CCTV played its part in the recent murder in Karon, but is no replacement for boots on the ground.

Mister Ree
Gazette forum

Above suspicion

Re: *Gazette online, Phuket police arrest Cherng Talay burglar, July 2*

Does Col Jirasak really believe that residents will inform the police when they are to be away?

If so, he is seriously deluded concerning the trust residents have in the police.

Cherngtalay Resident
Gazette forum

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Tackling troubles on paradise island

FIRST PERSON

WE ARE now working on our "Safety Zone" project, which is a part of the "Phuket Model" project. I have been tasked by the Phuket Provincial Police Commander, Chonasi Wattanavrangkul, to carry out government policy in order to achieve that goal. I'm happy to say that Deputy Police Chief Pansiri Prapawat has designated Patong a "Safety Zone".

I recently had the chance to meet and talk with members of the volunteer police and accompany them on a night patrol of Bangla Road.

I would like to thank the volunteer police for their services. It's a great thing to have them helping out because we often have to communicate with foreigners.

Tourist police and local police patrolling together will boost tourists' confidence in their safety. Tourists being confident that we are keeping them safe is important, because it allows them to enjoy their visit to Phuket.

We do our best to increase safety measures during peak times for crime. Generally, we don't receive reports of crimes taking place between 6am and noon.

Because of this, we don't start putting more officers out on the streets and setting up checkpoints until around noon. We then keep our numbers up until 6am the next day, especially if we are seeing a



Kathu Police Superintendent Col Churaphat Pochanaphan and his men certainly have a difficult task as they tackle crime in Patong. In post for less than a month, the 56-year-old officer was a superintendent at three other police stations before Phuket. Here he explains some of the positive changes being made to increase tourist safety.

high number of incidents.

The integrated CCTV system currently being worked on will be a significant aid for us once it is established and all the island's cameras are feeding live footage into a single server.

Despite our current efforts, some problems still exist, such as illegal taxis and jet-ski operators.

Currently, the Marine department is overseeing the effort to have all jet-ski operators registered and their machines insured.

From now on jet-ski operators are not allowed to negotiate damage fees directly with tourists. Both parties must come to Kathu police station to ensure that the negotiations are fair.

Jet-ski damage fees have been a problem for sometime, as jet-ski operators have been asking for too much compensation from tourists for damages, and sometimes tourists do not want to pay

for any damage done – this causes a lot of friction.

We are trying to get the jet-ski operators to understand that taking care of tourists will mean that the tourists will return to Phuket and help create sustainable tourism for the island.

We have also contacted hotels in Patong to provide information for tourists on how to use jet skis and where they can contact police, in Thai or English, should they encounter problems.

In the future, signs will be placed on the beach and at jet-ski parking spots to explain to tourists basic jet-ski use and safety.

However, it's not just local criminals that cause the issues in Patong. Understandably, tourists who come to Phuket are expecting to have fun, but often too many alcoholic drinks causes them to lose their self-control, which also is a catalyst for problems.



Koh Kaew intersection often has 'jam' to go with the breakfast rush hour.

Junction, what is your function?

THE more I travel around the island, I can't help but come to the conclusion that the city road planners and other interested groups haven't got it quite right when it comes to redesigning junctions (intersections if you wish) and other traffic trouble spots.

The placing of heavy tires on hill curves, while good intentioned, is an example of actually making things worse.

I also wonder about multi-billion baht projects to dig tunnels to Patong and sink underpasses at various choke-points.

As someone who commutes from Chalong to the Heroine's Monument area every work day, I have come to the conclusion that the plan to sink an underpass at the junction that joins Thepkasattri Road (the six-lane airport to Phuket road) and the Phuket Bypass (that heads to the Tesco Lotus junction), is a colossal waste of tax payers' money.

I base this assessment on nothing more than observation of the area during rush-hour. Every morning, I travel northwards along the bypass from the junction in

Island View

By Mark Dee

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

question to Thepkasattri Road.

The traffic foul up is never there! But, lo and behold straight after turning left onto Thepkasattri you hit the jam.

At rush-hour it runs for a kilometer past the food vendor stands with their double parked customers until the massive traffic light junction another 500 meters further on.

I am firmly of the opinion that it is this poorly thought-through junction of madness that is responsible for the traffic congestion in both directions.

How traffic analysts and consulting companies are missing this self-evident fact is beyond me.

I'm left pondering: who gets the contract?

And how many other "individuals" benefit from this ill-conceived underpass project?

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

Snail mail, holds on to its 'speedy' reputation

Mail delivery from the Kathu Post Office began to get slow several months ago, then became sporadic, and is now nearly non-existent with, at best, 20 per cent of our mail arriving in our box, usually a month or more late.

When we inquired at the post office, we were told that they were "short on staff" and "the new guy is in the process of sorting the mail".

Meanwhile, undelivered boxes and bundles of envelopes are stacked head high in the office and even more undelivered mail piles up in storage rooms out back.

My two questions are: When does the post office plan to start delivering mail as normal and will we ever get all the undelivered mail, some of which contains important documents?

Going Postal
Kathu

Kathu Post Office, Delivery Department Chief Prasat Wattanaves replies:



Packages wait to be sent out.

International mail comes through the Thai Post headquarters in Lak Si, Bangkok, which separates the mail by postcode, which must be written clearly. Even if the postcode is written clearly the "Moo" must be specified. Unlike Phuket Town and Patong, the Kathu subdistrict is still using the moo style address system.

The Kathu district postal system covers three subdistricts: Kathu, Patong and Kamala. Patong and Kamala subdistricts both have post offices to sort their own mail.

However, Kathu subdistrict's mail is sorted at the district post office, so if the sender did not specify a moo the mail could mistakenly be sent to the wrong place.

There are seven moo in Kathu subdistrict, and each moo can have the same house address number. So, if you do not write the moo number on the receiver's address, the mail could be delayed.

Another recent possibility for the delay is the wet weather. Our postmen use motorbikes to deliver the mail. There is no issue with the postmen getting wet, but we are concerned about the mail getting damaged, which has caused some delays.

In the past, we had some problems with new employees sorting mail. Those issues are done with and everything is now back up to speed. Only the rain is causing issues for us now.

The Kathu Post Office working hours are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm and Saturday 9am to noon.

Send us your queries and we'll ask the right people to respond to them.
Submit your issue at
www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

Who is supposed to cut the tree limbs to save the power lines?

Is it the Phuket Electrical Authority's responsibility to cut down and manage any overhanging tree branches or dead trees near their power lines?

In Soi Suksan one Rawai, the remaining limbs that have not been cut are just waiting for the next storm to fall.

Can they please be cut down before they fall down?

David Kirk
Rawai

Vichan Praenam, Assistant manager of the Phuket Provincial Electricity Authority (PPEA), replies:

Yes, it is our responsibility.

I will send the officers to cut them off within the week.

Normally, we patrol the area we are responsible for every three months to check for any branches or broken trees that might interfere the electric wires.

Because it is the rainy season it is likely that the strong winds, heavy rain and recent storms have made the situation worse and broken trees or limbs.

Sometimes our officers do not notice limbs, because there are so many trees in our area of responsibility.

I would like to thank you for informing us.

Next time you notice the problem, please let us know and I will send officers to take care of the situation.

We can be contacted by telephone at 076-211663 or 076-210427 Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm

Google extending online reach for local businesses

Celebrating its inaugural year and 100,000 new businesses online, Google Thailand's 'Thai Businesses Go Online' program (TBGO) has paved the way for the next stage in the evolution of an economically prosperous online ecosystem.

HIGHLIGHTING TBGO's success, the IT and Marketing megacorp's country office reported that it has attracted more than 100,000 participants nationwide in a year – far exceeding its initial target of getting 50,000 Thai businesses online.

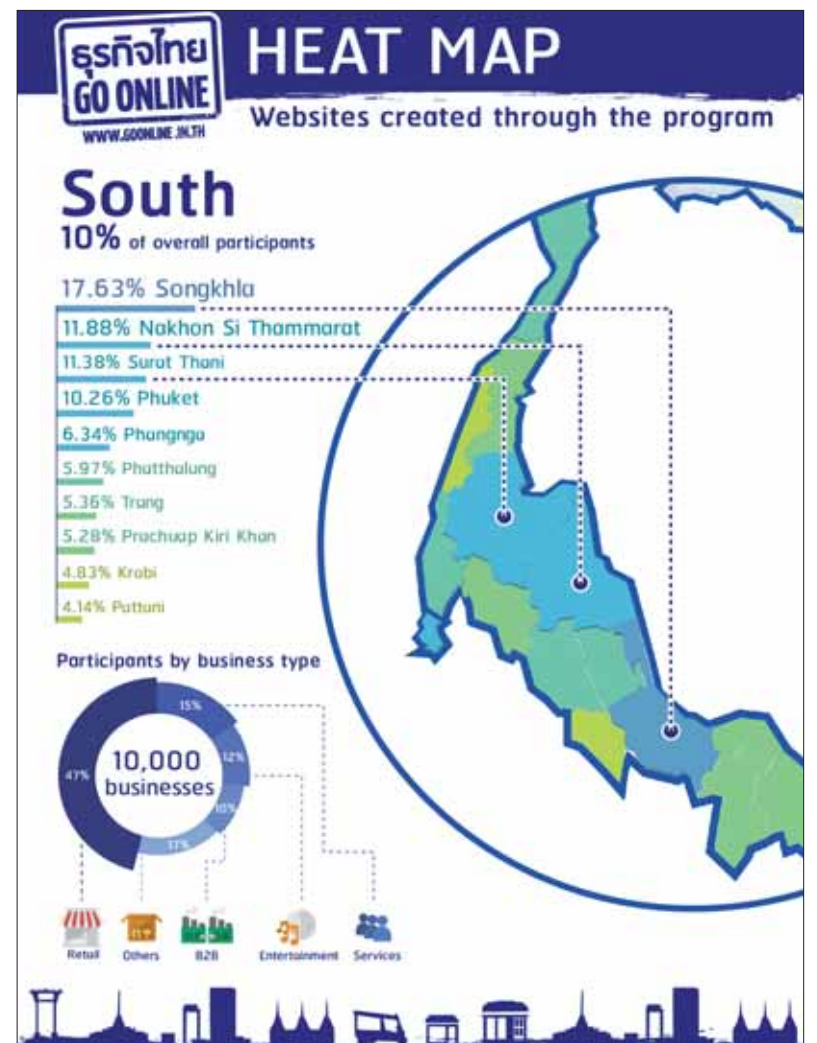
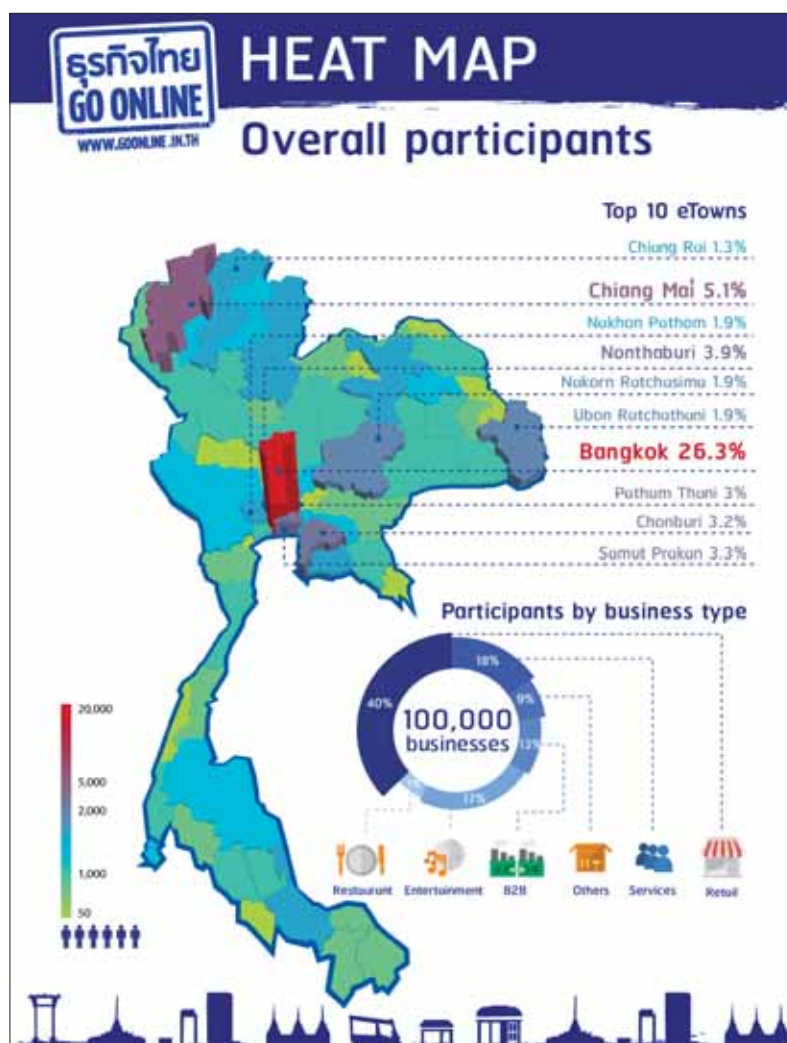
Pornthip Kongchun, program spokesperson and Head of Marketing for Google Thailand expressed her gratitude: "We are delighted to celebrate this milestone which would not have been possible without the significant effort invested by our partners – the Office of SME Promotion, eCommerce Association of Thailand, Dot Arai, Webiz, Thai Post and Kasikorn Bank.

Ms Pornthip went on to highlight that the top three participating regions are Central (Bangkok), North (Chiang Mai) and North-east-Isaan (Ubon Rachathani) Thailand.

"This shows the reach and increased opportunity that going online gives rural businesses, connecting any business with customers who may never step foot in their stores. We're committed to building a vibrant Thai online ecosystem and to partnering with Thai businesses through every step of their online evolution," she said.

Of the 100,000 businesses, about 10,000 or 10% were based in Thailand's South, with just over 10% of these (about 1,000) based in Phuket, which was ranked fourth in the region behind Songkhla, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Surat Thani.

Broken down by type of business, Phuket's participants were dominated by retail with 31.3%, followed by services (18.6%), travel-tourism (13.2%), entertainment (9.1%), Business-to-business or B2B services (8.2%), real estate (5.8%), Food and Beverage (4%), education (3.6%), health



BREAKING IT DOWN: Retail businesses dominated new web sites registered under the TBGO program on both a national and regional (right) scale.

(2.1%) and transport (2%).

This is compared to the entire Southern region as a whole with 47% being retail, followed by services (14.9%), entertainment (11.5%), B2B services (9.9%), tourism (7.4%), restaurant (3.6%), health (2.4%), real estate (2.2%) and offices (0.7%).

On a national scale it was retail, services, B2B services, entertainment, tourism and food/beverages representing the top five participating industries (see graphic above).

Despite the success of TBGO, there are still some

bumps in the road ahead.

According to a recent study by the Electronic Transaction Development Agency (ETDA), 66% of small businesses say the number one challenge they face is the lack of expertise in promoting their products and services online, even though taking the first step by creating a website has on average increased their income and their customer base.

To address such a challenge, Google was pleased to announce the launch of Google Trader, a new choice to help Thai businesses

connect with buyers in a vibrant local online marketplace.

The launch of Google Trader in Thailand this week is a complimentary addition to the TBGO program, giving Thai businesses a new choice as they continue their online evolution.

Google Trader helps buyers and sellers find each other on one simple platform, and being completely free to use, it also helps businesses promote themselves and gain access to greater economic opportunities.

Thailand is the first Asian

market to launch Google Trader, with the firm recognizing the potential of the online ecosystem and the opportunity ahead for Thailand to contribute to regional growth as ASEAN prepares for an integrated economic community in 2015.

Through the on-going activities of the TBGO program and Google Trader, Google is helping to build a vibrant Thai internet that can contribute to Thailand's continued economic growth and competitiveness while increasing quality Thai content online.

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OTOP Fair runs through Monday

THE seventh annual 'One Tambon One Product' (OTOP) Fair was launched at Saphan Hin public park in Phuket Town on Tuesday and will continue to run through the weekend, closing on Monday.

Leading up to the start, Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha said that the event is just one of many nationwide to improve OTO product standards and have producers reach more consumers.

Total provincial revenue from

OTOP sales, including those from SMEs and various souvenir shops, was 997 million baht last year.

"Between October 2011 and June 2012, we generated 539mn baht through OTO sales. With the help of the fair, we expect the total revenue to be 820mn baht by the [fiscal] year's end," said Gov Tri.

More than 140 booths will be displaying products in the "3- to 5-star range" at this year's fair, which is expected to generate 6mn baht in sales, said Kraiwut Chuaysatit, who

heads the Phuket Provincial Development Office.

Forty of the featured products will be from Phuket. There will also be a wide variety of stage entertainment during the fair.

Phuket was given 1.1mn baht in funding to hold the annual event. The budget also includes funding for two "road shows", during which Phuket OTO products will be featured at events in other provinces.

Global relocation firm moves in

To meet growing demand, ABS-Relocations, a globally-operating household and bulk item removal company opened a new office in Phuket

Market Penetration by Steven Layne

READY to relieve swelling demand for transnational household removal and moving services, ABS-Relocations Co Ltd celebrated the grand opening of their Southern regional branch on Thursday. Located opposite of Makro on Wicit Songkhram Road in Phuket Town, a block west of Central Festival, the new regional office is the firm's second branch in Thailand, following its establishment in Bangkok in 2009. The Phuket Gazette had a Q&A session with the firm's General Manager Pinrapee Pinsuk and Managing Director Per Lauritsen.

Phuket Gazette: What is special or different about your company and services?

ABS-Relocations: We offer door-to-door service. The problem that customers face with door-to-port service is all the extra hassle and stress that comes with organizing, logistics and paperwork. We take care of everything – packing, shipping, logistics and dealing with customs. Our main advantage is that we are backed with over 25 years of experience extending across the globe. Our clients can be assured from our high standard of service, leaving all the hassle, stress and obstacles for us to deal with.

PG: Do you cover all of the South? Which ports do you use for shipping?

ABS-R: We cover everywhere and anywhere in the world. The two entry-exit ports we utilize in Thailand are Laem Chabang in Chonburi and Laad Krabang in Samut Prakarn, Bangkok. The Deep Sea Port in Phuket is not really equipped



AT YOUR SERVICE: ABS-Relocations General Manager Pinrapee Pinsuk sits at her desk at the newly opened Phuket office. The firm's center of operations is in Eastern Bangkok.

and convenient to use for the large shipping liners we use. However, our customers don't need to worry about this, as we'll look after everything over land – from door-to-door.

PG: Anywhere in the world? Really?

ABS-R: The only place on the planet we haven't had customers for is Antarctica. However, we definitely are capable of providing service to this barren continent if we got a serious inquiry.

PG: Where is your main base(s)?

ABS-R: Our main office is in Sapan Sawng in Eastern Bangkok, while we have a 750 square meter warehouse in Samut Prakarn. We also have separate offices in Denmark and Norway.

PG: How can you offer service and assurance in countries where you don't have a branch office?

ABS-R: Throughout the years, we have established a solid service network comprising strategically selected partners in all of our destination countries. We provide port-to-door insurance in every destination country. For example, within Thailand, our insurance can cover up to 3 million baht. As for port-to-port coverage over international waters, there is separate insurance, which we can also provide if the customer requests.

PG: What do/can you ship?

ABS-R: About 90% of our business is household item removal and relocation, for companies, private families and individuals.



The Phuket team is ready to serve clients relocating from/to anywhere in the world.

We can ship pretty much everything including furniture, appliances and other personal items – even pets. The rest is industrial equipment, machinery, and other bulk and large items such as cars and boats.

PG: What's your expectation for business in Phuket?

ABS-R: We're not really worried about the market here. There will always be a demand for high quality services, and our 25 years of experience and reputation for standard, quality and hassle-free service speaks for itself. Another service we offer is storage. I know there is not as big a demand down here, but we will monitor the market anyway, and if we find suitable land, we might consider establishing a small warehouse in the future.

PG: Anything else you'd like to add?

ABS-R: Our team will conduct a free, on-site estimate anywhere in Thailand. If you have an inquiry, feel free to contact us.

For more information, contact ABS-Relocations in Bangkok: call 02-949-4881 and in Phuket: 076 304 298. Or by E: contact@abs-relocations.com; W: abs-relocations.com

Innovative agent takes on South

VETERAN tour agency Khiri Travel recently opened a regional office in Phuket, highlighting the firm's ambitions for expansion into lucrative Southern Thailand.

Marc Ruffet, 28, a Swiss national, was appointed Branch Manager of the Phuket office.

Since 1994, Khiri has offered itineraries in Bangkok, Northern Thailand and the Greater Mekong delta region of Indochina.

Khiri Travel Thailand General Manager, Andre van der Marck said the Phuket office will be the firm's customer service center, as well as creative and quality control office for all of Southern Thailand.

"From our Phuket office, Khiri will develop innovative new pro-

grams such as community based tours. . .being designed to show unique aspects of Southern Thailand to our industry partners," said van der Marck.

The new branch will offer popular excursions and experiences including yacht charters, sea canoeing, Phi Phi Island trips, as well as creative

itineraries to the north of Phuket in the Khao Lak beach resort area and in Khao Sok National Park.

"Khiri's aim is to promote responsible tourism in the South and involve local communities.

"The remarkable limestone islands, remote sandy bays, verdant landscapes and multi-cultural communities of Thai, Chinese,

Muslims and sea gypsies all make the South a fascinating destination for holiday makers who want to get close to nature and respect local culture," said van der Marck.

Khiri Travel Phuket office is at 59/7 Phuket Thani Village, Thepkrasattri Road, Srisoontorn. For more info, call T: 076 617 753; E: marc@khiri.com.



Khiri GM Andre van der Marck

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Why the Internet died on July 9



Live Wire

By Woody Leonhard

IT IS my sad duty to report to you how and why the internet died this past Monday. The DNSChanger virus took down the internet, and I for one will lament its passing.

All of the major news sources warned you about it. Huffington Post said, "The end is nigh, according to the FBI. Internet Doomsday will strike us all on July 9."

Fox News has been flashing scare stories, er, posting warning messages for months. Reuters. AP. MSNBC. ABC. McAfee. Starting in April, all of those reliable news outlets screamed about the "Internet Doomsday" on July 9.

I received a half-dozen emails from people on Phuket in the week leading up to July 9, with some people frantically asking how they could keep their systems going if the internet broke.

Oh. Wait a second. The internet didn't break on July 9. Imagine that! Last Monday wasn't Internet Doomsday. In fact, it was kind of like any other Monday on the internet.

Folks, if you really want to believe the scaremongering and click-baiting, you have every right



NO RETURNS: If you break the Internet you will become a Social Media pariah. Photo: Theseoduke

to do so. It sells newspapers and draws advertisers. But at least get the story straight, and don't panic other people with your disinformation, OK?

I wrote an article in the May 3, 2012 Windows Secrets Newsletter about DNSChanger (W: bit.ly/JrEMiA). My conclusion two months ago hasn't changed a bit: the hype's a crock. Always has been.

Estimates vary, but between 10,000 and 20,000 people had their access to the internet temporarily disrupted on Monday because they had ignored all sorts of warnings (including direct warnings broadcast to infected machines by Google and Facebook), and just continued to use their infected machines without cleaning them up.

Cleaning the mess takes all of

about a minute. If you've been updating your PC and/or using Microsoft Security Essentials – even if you have a pirate copy of Windows – Microsoft cleaned up your computer months ago.

I like to rail about mainstream news sources that "report" on technical topics, and botch them beyond recognition. This is just the latest in a long, long stream of offal disguised as journalism coming from writers who don't have a clue. They're egged on by the antivirus manufacturers who want to sell you more "safety" software, when all you need is the free, simple Microsoft Security Essentials.

If you can't stand the idea of getting protection from the company that made the product being protected, you can always use AVG Free or ESET NOD32, but you have to be careful to avoid the paid versions.

There's a reason why AV companies make so much money: they feed on fear and ignorance, two

traits in wild abundance in the computer milieu.

Symantec Corp (the Norton people) now has a market capitalization of US\$10 billion. Intel bought McAfee two years ago for US\$8 billion. AVG is worth US\$800 million. Moscow-based Kaspersky is worth more than US\$1.5 billion, based on a valuation in January 2011.

My suggestion: don't get your computer news from mainstream publications. If you see a tantalizing computer headline (e.g., "computer virus zaps San Diego fireworks show" which appeared yesterday) assume that the people who wrote it don't know what they're talking about.

And if the headline makes you reach for your pocketbook, take at least a minute or two to check with reputable sources before you part with your hard-earned baht.

By the way, to those of you who wrote telling me that DNSChanger is an FBI conspiracy designed to have normal citizens open up their computers so the FBI can snoop on them – oy!

The fact is that the FBI, in conjunction with police agencies worldwide, but especially in Estonia, ran an admirable, complex takedown operation that left them in the unfortunate position of having to keep certain servers running, so infected PCs wouldn't get knocked off the web abruptly.

I love a good conspiracy theory as much as the next guy, but some of the comments from the tin foil hat crowd on this one run way over the top. The FBI's performance on this was simply outstanding.

If you want to talk about FBI meddling, let's switch the subject to Kim Dotcom and the FBI's unconscionable actions in New Zealand.

Seth Bareiss holds computer sessions every other Wednesday afternoon, from 1pm 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 roundtables 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, follow him on Twitter, @PhuketLiveWire, or "like" his page at facebook.com/SandwichShoppes.

Phuket's PCs4Kids update

ROSS James, the director of the PCs4Kids project here in Phuket, has some very good news. "We've just learned that Microsoft has agreed to donate 50 licenses for Windows and 50 licenses for Office, to help local needy kids."

With licenses for the latest versions of Windows and Office in hand, the PCs4Kids project is now ready to sign up local school kids and mentors who are willing and able to help.

The project has 26 PCs ready to go.

"We need organizations – schools, local charities, orphanages, civic groups – to come up with kids who are interested in learning about computers, and

mentors who know Windows and Office. Any interested organization should email me directly, RossPJJames@hotmail.com."

The project already has two recipients who were nominated by local groups. Aniwa "Oh" Plomtong from Rachaprachnukroh School in Kamala and "Arwoo," an engineering undergraduate student sponsored by the Rotary Club of Patong Beach, have received fully refurbished computers running licensed copies of Windows and Office.

"Our next goal is to find an internet service provider who will give these kids internet access," says Ross.

"We're going to help these

underprivileged kids develop skills that will support a future professional career in a variety of fields, including IT."

The PCs4Kids project, initially sponsored by the Rotary Club of Patong Beach, received an additional 30,000 baht in funding from Rotary District 3330, which covers south Thailand. It's been endorsed also by the Rotary Foundation for all of Thailand.

If you have a PC, monitor, keyboard, laptop, power supply, or other PC equipment – including memory – you can help by donating whatever you have, working or not. Simply bring it by one of the Sandwich Shoppes, in Chalong or Patong.

Social Media workshop

SOCIAL Media maven Able Wanamkok is organizing another series of workshops, this time with a different slant: using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest to market your company, product or service.

The workshops run for three mornings, August 17, 18 and 19, and last three to four hours each.

Lots of hands-on experimenting, with all kinds of questions answered. For more info, email Able at info@awpr-phuket.com.



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SLOW AND STEADY: Investors who need to cash-in soon should avoid over-exposure to risk. Photo: Bien Stephenson

Risk on, risk off

Retirement Years

By David Mayes

THERE has been an increasing amount of correlation in the markets ever since the increased use of computers and algorithms.

This has caused a lot of trouble with conventional diversification methods, and when markets get reactive to political tensions as they have been recently, it is common to see things moving in tandem across assets classes as developments are interpreted to be either "good" or "bad" for the

global economy.

Capital then either flows into or out of the broad category of "risk assets" based on this. The situation has recently begun to be referred to as "risk on, risk off". It unfortunately overrides any changes in underlying fundamentals specific to a certain

asset class, industry, company, country, etc., and also prevents trends from forming and markets moving substantially out of bases. It is essentially the most difficult type of market for managers to make money in.

The way the markets move is similar to the way cattle move. A few big players interpret incoming information and their buying or selling pressure is so great that it gets the markets moving in that direction. The rest of the market participants then make the initial move a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Similar to cattle, this can be an orderly drive or a full on stampede. Unfortunately, today the great uncertainty with regards to the EU and what effects it will have for the rest of the world equates to a cowboy leading cattle and changing his mind just as soon as the cattle think they know which direction they are headed in.

The problem is that it is a very binomial situation with very drastically different outcomes. Either the EU is going to fall apart (at least in part), or else the governments will create a fiscal union which would need to model itself after the American model at least partially (I can imagine all the Europeans reading this and cringing at the thought).

While this is a bit of an over simplification, it makes it easier to grasp what is really going on. The first route (return of the Drachma)

will almost certainly create a panic of some sort in the short run which would send markets lower, although in the long run may be ideal for the European citizens who do not like the idea of a central European government becoming too powerful. The other route will likely lead to much greater stability in the short run, but a loss of sovereignty that will likely never be regained.

If you are close to retirement this is a very bad time to be exposed to risk assets such as direct investment in commodities or the stock markets of the world (especially emerging markets), however low interest rates are forcing many to seek greater returns in various risk classes.

My advice is that if you have capital which can in fact be considered risk capital with a very long time frame before you need, sitting through all of this will make no difference in the long run and you should sit tight and try to not pay attention to the gyrations.

If you need access to your money any time I would try to take the measly return safer assets are paying and know that when rates rise you will still have your principle to take advantage of it.

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



The Eurozone crisis may affect economies globally. Photo: Ibrahim Bilal

Thai officials make plans for possible Eurozone effects

THAILAND is adjusting itself to cope with the Eurozone debt crisis and measures are being worked out by all agencies concerned to help Thai businesses that may be affected.

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra has assigned all relevant ministries to closely monitor both direct and indirect impacts of five European countries on the Thai economy.

The five countries include Portugal, Greece, Ireland, Spain, and Cyprus. The Prime Minister urged each ministry concerned to come up with measures that can be implemented readily if the situation deteriorates.

A recent meeting of all related agencies, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Mr Kittiratt Na-Ranong, said that Thailand is well-prepared for effects of the Eurozone crisis, and reports on the situation are being made daily.

It was also reported that Thai exports to Europe in May of 2012, amounted to US\$ 1.974 billion, an increase of 6.8 per cent over the same period in 2011. The rise is satisfactory when compared with a 16.8 per cent contraction in the first quarter (Q1).

Both the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Finance were asked to study the

looming impact of the crisis on individual exports. They are also studying the situations of major importers of Thai products in various foreign markets.

The Director-General of the Department of Export Promotion, Mrs Nuntawan Sakultana, believes that great opportunities are still available for Thai exports to Europe, since the European Union is large and has high purchasing and bargaining power.

In terms of investment, all EU countries still have good prospects despite the debt crisis, as their logistics and communication routes are linked to one another.

Thai trade centers in 43 countries were told to urgently send reports to the Ministry of Commerce on how Thailand should deal with the volatility of the European economic situation. Their reports include positive and negative effects on various business sectors, such as finance, trade and services.

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports it is expected that, despite the Eurozone crisis, the number of European tourists visiting Thailand will rise by about four per cent to more than five million in 2012.

— Public Relations Department



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Knowledge trumps beauty of ignorance: sea snakes edition

Diving

By Isaac Stone Simonelli

NOT every dive, but often enough, a diver comes across a critter that they become inexplicably and completely fascinated with.

The vast majority of dive instructors and dive masters seem to have their own sea-animal fetishes – from blue dragons to mantis shrimps. They're usually obscure choices that lean away from charismatic mega-fauna like sharks and mantas (not saying anyone's turning down the chance to book an entire dive with a manta ray) and are based more on an in-depth understanding of the animal. I know people who claim to be completely satisfied watching a mantis shrimp for the entirety of a 55-minute dive.

A diver surfaces after a dive, the regulator comes out of their mouth and immediately they say, "That was cool!"

It could have been a pair of boxing shrimp out and active or a horseshoe crab scuttling along, for me, on my last dive, it was a banded sea krait.

The fascination is unexplainable. Occasionally, it's the first time you've seen the animal up close, but more often than not you've seen the critter several times over, and this time it was flint and steel for your imagination.

Even before you hit the show-



Hydrophiinae literally means 'water serpent'. Photo: Vonlohmann

ers, the computer's fan is humming and seven or eight websites about the animal are tabbed in your browser. It's not until you start reading that you truly appreciate how miraculous the creature you just saw is.

I watch the banded sea snake (*Laticauda colubrina*), also known as a colubrine sea krait or yellow-lipped sea krait, swim below me and close to the corals with a goatfish following close behind. The

banded sea snake is known for its cooperative hunting technique, during which it will often flush

small fish, eels and other prey into the open.

One of 62 species of identified sea snakes, known as *Hydrophiinae* – literally water serpent, the banded sea snake glides through the water, its slightly flattened tail propelling it forwards as its forked tongue barely comes out of its mouth to smell the water for prey.

I wanted to turn around, drop close to the corals and swim against the weak current so as to follow it while it was hunting. My plan was to hope that I was lucky enough to see it head for the surface for a breath of fresh air.

With the capacity to stay submerged for several hours, sea snakes are the sort of free diver you are jealous of. Not only have they developed large lungs that extend almost the entire length of their body (rear portion developed to aid in buoyancy rather than to exchange gas), many species of *Hydrophiinae* are able to respire through the top of their skin. Some, such as the black-and-yellow sea snake, have demonstrated the ability to satisfy about 25 per cent of their oxygen requirements in this way.

During a diver's above-water research, youtube inevitably gets involved, despite ones' intentions for maintaining a purely academic fascination with the



TIP OF THE TONGUE: It's easier for a sea snake's tongue to 'smell' under water, so they usually only extend a small portion of it. Photos: Elias Levy

marine animal.

After closing another great dive with Andrea Filippozzi from Sea Bees and firing up the laptop, it didn't take long to uncover some unfortunate youtube videos of divers holding this docile but venomous snake by the tail.

Instead of turning on them and striking, as I imagined I might do in a similar situation, the snake patiently attempted to keep swimming for almost the entirety of the three minute video.

All species of *Hydrophiinae* are incredibly venomous, and yet they are often handled, as seen in the video, without incident.

Nonetheless, pick on the wrong sea snake, such as a hook-nosed sea snake or a Belcher's sea



Sea snakes have flattened tails.

snake, and you are now messing with two of the most venomous snakes in the world.

Alethal dose (LD) of venom, (where 50 per cent of subjects will die), is .02 milligrams of venom to the kilogram of a subjects body weight. These

snakes, when provoked, are not playing.

Despite the potency of the snake's venom, they are not

considered dangerous to humans.

Only about 25 per cent of the time does the snake inject venom when it bites a human, and even the US Navy, (not known to rate threats lightly), describes sea snakes as generally mild-tem-

pered. Although they do note that there are variations among species and individuals.

But back to the banded sea snake, a member of the *Laticauda*

genus. This genus is unique to the subfamily of sea snakes in that its members are the least adapted to sea life, and unlike the majority of sea snakes, it can still live on land.

The vast majority of other sea snakes are documented as being almost completely helpless on land, unable to move properly or accurately defend themselves. However, the banded sea snake's body is only slightly laterally compressed compared to other sea snakes, which is one of the factors that allows it to function both in water and on land.

When it comes to the natural world, understanding is 70 per cent of what blows your mind. The beauty of an underwater soft-coral vista, the miles of blue ocean and the tumbling dance of a juvenile rock moving wrasse. But sometimes, a deeper understanding of the world just beyond your regulator bubbles trumps the beauty of ignorance.

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Olive sea snake photographed in Australia. Photo: Peter Nangle

A professional video camera, likely a Sony CCD camera as mentioned in the text, with 'KTV' logos on the lens and side. The camera is black and silver, with a large lens on the left and a viewfinder on the right. It has a shoulder mount and a handle. The background is a light blue gradient.

90.5 FM

Phuket Gazette

The Gazette is everywhere. Are you in it?



Fashion: from dawn till dusk

By Abby McMillin

EVERYONE has days that are scheduled to the max – overbooked and jam-packed with meetings, lunches, get-togethers and parties. For many women, the challenge is how to make one outfit work for everything that a busy schedule demands.

Maintaining great style throughout the day doesn't come easy, but with a little planning, flexibility and resourcefulness, you'll find a way to look fabulous whatever the occasion.

Shop for versatile pieces

Having adaptable pieces on hand is key for days that demand your nonstop attention, and will help make the transition a breeze. Shop for neutral and solid colors in classic patterns, like a green shift dress, a cropped blue cardigan or a maroon pair of trousers.

It's important to choose styles that are office-appropriate if that's where your day kicks off. Think about wide-leg or high-waist pants. Also, dresses or tops with cap sleeves and skirts that show off your curves but still come down to the knee. These pieces are classy, but chic enough for an evening look with the right shoes and accessories.

If you want to avoid looking too office drone-like, choose items that are jewel-toned or that

have small patterns. Stay away from animal prints unless they are very subtle, and stick to pleasing designs like polka dots, stripes and florals.

Layers, especially lightweight fabrics, keep it conservative in an air-con office, and should easily let you transition into something that shows off a bit more skin for the evening.



Think about sequined or adorned cover-ups for cooler evenings, or even a denim or leather jacket to give your daytime dress an edgier feel. Remember that color coordinating multiple items in your wardrobe will make swapping pieces a lot easier after work.

Plan Ahead

Knowing what your day will bring is essential in arming yourself with the right pieces. If you know that you'll be walking around a lot during the day, wear comfortable, smart shoes, and pack the heels away for later. Large bags work well for day and night. While it's always good to err on the side of caution, this is one item that is okay to go bold with – even at work.

Think about the times you've been frustrated about what to wear. Now imagine what key elements would have solved the problem. Are there some wardrobe staples that are missing from your closet?

It also helps to look around and see what other stylish women are wearing to certain events. Make a note in your phone to shop for similar items that will transition easily from the beach to a party, errands to meetings, and everything in between.

Accessorize

Jewelry can play a major role in defining a look, no matter the occasion. For the office or errands, choose subtle elegance and simplicity. Stud earrings or a dainty chain necklace and a smart watch are all you need.

Stow away costume jewelry for evening looks – jewelry doesn't take up much space in a bag, but it makes all the difference. Think about dangly stone earrings, a chunky metallic necklace, or an over-sized cocktail ring. Just a piece or two will instantly add glamour and evening flavour. Or adapt your style from day to night with a waist-cinching belt, which will add some shape to any evening look.

A change in step

Another reason to pack a larger bag is to hide away a change of shoes. Sandals or flats from your daytime look are easily swapped for a sleek pair of heels or boots for an after-work event.

Remember to be realistic about what the event or occasion is, and consider what's comfortable. If you still want to wear heels for a long day of events, skip the stilettos and think about choosing a low thick-heel or wedge. Ankle boots will help avoid the blisters that come with strappy sandals.

Hair and makeup

Finally, along with nighttime accessories, makeup is easily brought along to help renovate your look for a party in the evening. Add a bit more drama to your eyes with dark liner and shadow, or pop on a pair of fake lashes for impact. A little lipstick and a quick "up do", will add instant elegance.

It's not always easy to go from day to night with one outfit, but the right foresight and wardrobe basics will help smooth the transition.



CLASSY BY DAY SASSY BY NIGHT: Women often need to transform from business to *chic*. Photo: mmmou812ic; Inset: Cap sleeves avlxyz



An example of how you can use layering to give yourself a conservative look during the day and peel-off for nighttime festivities. Photo: Chase O'Black

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Some enchanted evening



By Marc Mulloy

IT'S a Friday evening and as the rains that have been lashing down all day subside and they are replaced by the sweet sounds of birds twittering in the trees. We are sitting in the elegant RE KÁ TA Beach Club watching the waves crashing ashore on Kata Beach. It is sublime.

For many, this setting alone is worth travelling half way across the world to appreciate but for those present this evening sublime becomes divine as we enjoy an evening of fine classical piano recitals from the brightest 'rising stars' in Thailand.

The program commences with wine and refreshments before assisting at the recitals of works by such classical luminaries as Mozart, Bach, Haydn, Ravel, Rachmaninoff and Chopin.

First up was 12-year-old Piyaonn Musikabhumma from Ruamrudee International School who confidently played Bach's Two-Part Invention No 9 in F minor followed by Study No 20 in E minor by JB Cramer and the Sonata in F minor (Op 2, No 1) by Beethoven.

She started her first piano lesson at the age of five and is studying piano with Dr Nopanand Chanorathaikul. Piyaonn



THAI TALENT: The rising stars are (from left) Phumin Boonprapakorn, Usa Napawan, Piyaonn Musikabhumma (also top left), Vuthithorn Chinthammit, Puripat Paesaroch, Achira Assawadecharit and Thaya Kongpakpaisarn

won the first prize in her age category at the 9th Bangkok Chopin Piano Competition.

Next up with Andante and Variations in F minor by Haydn and Nocturne in D-flat major (Op 27, No 2) by Chopin was Vuthithorn Chinthammit who started taking piano lessons when he was 6 years old. Vuthithorn attended Shrewsbury International School in Bangkok from April 2007 to June 2011.

After that, he decided to pursue musical studies seriously and was accepted into the Idyllwild Arts Academy, USA where he is currently a Grade 10 student taking piano lessons with Dr Nelms McKelvain.

The Spanish composer, Enrique

Granados, was featured next with excerpts from "Goyescas" played expertly by the highly sought after collaborative artist and teacher,

Usa Napawan. This was followed by more Chopin with the Sonata No 3 in B minor, (Op 58) played by Thaya Kongpakpaisarn, the first Thai pianist to ever be invited to perform at the prestigious Beethovenfest 2008 in Bonn, Germany.

After a short intermission where wine and some delicious canapés were served, the second part of the evening started with the Sinfonia No 15 in B minor by Bach; the Study in G-flat major by Czerny and some playful Debussy, all expertly interpreted by 13 year old Phumin Boonprapakorn.

Another Shrewsbury International School, Bangkok student, Achira Assawadecharit, played the Prelude in D major, (Op 23, No 4) by Rachmaninoff followed by Ravel's beautiful 'Morning Song of the Jester' before Puripat Paesaroch's passionate *Feux d'artifice* (Fireworks) by Debussy (punctuated by the real thing that briefly erupted on the beach) and then brought the glorious evening to a close with Etude-Tableau in E-flat minor (Op 39, No 5) by Rachmaninoff.

While many Phuket residents were at home watching 'Thailand's Got Talent' on television those at RE KÁ TA got to see first hand that Thailand has indeed got talent – in spades.

It is also good to see that classical piano is alive and well, thanks to those who put considerable effort into organizing this worthwhile evening.

We can only hope that this stunning location will feature more cultural events of this calibre in the years to come. Bravo!



Dr. Nopanand Chanorathaikul (Performer coach) and Mrs. Marie-Laure Fleury (General Manager to Boathouse Resort on the beach)

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2012 THAILAND'S BEST RESTAURANTS

Captain Charlie cruises Koh Samui

By Linda Cartlidge

MANY of the world's finest superyachts are discovering Southeast Asia and its incredible cruising waters, with a growing number of these massive, luxury vessels steaming to the exotic island of Koh Samui – the “Crown Jewel of Thailand”.

Yachts checking into Samui can experience some of the most stunning maritime scenery in the world. A tropical gem situated in the Gulf of Thailand, off the country's southeastern seaboard, Samui is the Kingdom's second largest island after Phuket.

Koh Samui, with its 48 surrounding islands, has earned a reputation for beautiful natural scenery and fascinating locations. These include the nearby Ang Thong National Marine Park, a compact and stunning archipelago of over 80 small and virtually untouched islands, best explored by sea kayak upon anchoring.

Among the Superyachts that have recently visited the eastern Gulf waters of Samui is the amazing 67.2 meter superyacht Vertigo, thus far the largest luxury sailing yacht built in the Southern Hemisphere. A 2012 finalist of the “World Superyacht Awards”, the 220-foot vessel was built by Alloy Yachts in New Zealand in 2010 and delivered to its new owners in 2011.

Commenting on their Samui visit, Vertigo's Captain, wrote: “The owner, guests and ourselves had a wonderful time in the Koh Samui area not only because of its beauty, but also due to the excellent service Charlie Dwyer and his team gave us.”

Capt Charles Dwyer, Founder of Samui Yacht Services and Asia Pacific Superyachts Samui, is the holder of a 1,600 Ton USCG 3,000 Ton International license, skipper of the 120-foot sailing yacht Yanneke Too and has accumulated over 500,000 Nautical Miles (NM) around the globe.

A lifelong, ardent American sailor, “Champaign Charlie” as he's known, has captained some of the most prestigious yachts over the last 20 years, cruising and racing around the Mediterranean and Caribbean seas as well as Asia.

“Though there is no marina, there are many anchorages in Samui, Koh Phangan, Koh Tao and the surrounding areas. Koh Samui is a hub of the Gulf and the best and easiest port of entry in the Gulf of Siam.

“Returning to the island, I'm reminded each time of its breath-taking natural beauty and stunning cruising waters. In beginning a sea-journey here, one finds a perfect haven to regroup and enjoy life, an important part of the fun and thrill of the destination. What brings the owners, captains and crew to Thailand is the culture and people with their



AYE AYE CAPTAIN: Capt Charlie mans the helm of the Yanneke Too while cruising in the Gulf of Thailand. Inset: Anthong Marine Park Archipelago.

welcoming smiles and gracious nature. You won't find this in many other international destinations, which superyachts visit.”

Charlie has been skipper of the 36-meter superyacht Yanneke Too for the past 18 years and is an organizer of the

elite annual Asia Superyacht Rendezvous, held in Phuket, Thailand in December.

For more information about superyachting in the region, visit W:asia-pacific-superyachts.com and/or email charlie@asia.pacific-superyachts.com.

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Arkom all ye faithful

A good restaurant often owes its reputation to the quality of the chef as much as the quality of the food. Here, Phuket Gazette's Marc Mulloy interviews the ever popular Chef Arkom to discover the secret of his popularity and learn a secret recipe or two.

Dining Out

PHUKET Gazette: How long have you been cooking?

Ark: I started cooking at 19 and now I am 49 so that makes 30 years.

PG: Who taught you to cook?

Ark: Both of my parents. When I was young I helped cook for my family in Roi Et in Issan. We all shared the cooking duties.

PG: Your menu features some interesting dishes. When did you start becoming interested in western food, especially French food?

Ark: At 18-years-old I came to Bangkok and worked at a restaurant situated near the bus station in Bangkok where you take the bus to Issan. I was still young and keen so they asked me to help out with many jobs in the kitchen and I was often sent to fetch things for the cooks. Next door to us was a French bakery and nearby was an Italian restaurant so I discovered new types of food, as up to then I only knew Issan food.

My first real love of western food came from eating fresh dinner rolls smothered with butter. I thought they were delicious – *très très bon* – and mashed potato.

PG: You are now famous for your 'fusion food' so what other countries have influenced your cooking?

Ark: I've tried making everything: from homemade marinades, carpaccio and *osso bucco* to *boeuf bourguignon* but some of these items are now out of fashion so I try to keep my menu up to date with my own recipes.

PG: You seem very creative. How important is presentation in your dishes?

Ark: Presentation is very important. You eat first with your eyes – it is like looking at a beautiful lady (laughs). I learned this from the many top chefs in hotels I worked in. The chefs were from France, Switzerland and Japan and I learned a lot.

I then added my own ideas, for example: when I make a beef stroganoff I use a large piece of steak and not sliced beef like everyone else. That way you retain the taste of the meat even though the sauce is the same.

PG: How did you end up in Phuket?

Ark: I arrived in Phuket when I was 25, as part of a team working at Le Meridien. I worked there for two years before the team moved on to the Sheraton in Panwa. I was not a big chef at that time I was just learning the trade.

PG: When did you decide to strike out on your own?

Ark: The last place I worked at was at The Cabana in Patong at the Sala Bua restaurant. The menu concept there was 'East meets West' what we today call fusion. I had ideas like serving grilled chicken with a reduced green curry sauce – not a curry just a sauce. However, I did not like having to always let others decide whether or not my recipes were good enough so I wanted to go it alone.

PG: Would you say that being a chef is like being an artist?

Ark: Of course. As you get older and more experienced you want to create your own dishes and you can only do that with your own restaurant.

PG: Tell me about your very first restaurant.

Ark: My first restaurant was called The Wall and it opened in Rawai 14 years ago. At that time I served the only European food in that area. I was also married to a French woman.

PG: Was she a good cook?

Ark: No I cooked for her (laughs). The restaurant was a big success and my clients loved my food especially my *flambées*.

PG: Much has changed in 14 years in Phuket, tell me about your other restaurants.

Ark: My next restaurant was called Naka Flavor situated between Patong and Kamala and



ARKOM THE ARTIST: Chef Arkom uses only the freshest ingredients in his cooking. Photos: Marc Mulloy

then three years later we moved to Patong. I invested a lot of money into that Patong restaurant and we were only open one and a half months before the tsunami hit and destroyed it all.

PG: Were any of your staff hurt or killed?

Ark: No. Luckily I had given the staff some time off because we were so busy the previous day (Christmas Day) and we were all so tired. Normally I would expect my team to be at the restaurant by 10am but that day I told them to rest up and come in at 2pm. This was really lucky because the tsunami hit at 10am.

PG: Having lost your investment did you not want to give up?

No. We started all over again and rebuilt the restaurant.

PG: From there you moved back to Rawai and reopened The Wall in this new location. What are the origins of the name The Wall?

Ark: The original restaurant had a 12 meter tall fiberglass climbing

wall where kids could play and learn to climb. When we moved back to Rawai we decided to reinstate the old name as it was popular.

PG: I guess if you named the restaurant Arkom's restaurant, people would also return as you are quite a personality.

Ark: Yes, every time a customer arrives they ask for me. It even became a bit of an issue with my wife as the customers always asked "Is Arkom here?". Today one of my customers has even asked for me to fly out to Singapore to cook for his party.

PG: What is your personal favorite food and could you share a recipe with our readers?

Ark: I like all kinds of fish – especially tuna tartare and the recipes I will share with you today are fusion smoked salmon tartare and my own special 'Ark' special sauce which is designed to be eaten with beef. *Bon appetit!*

The wall is located at 79/19 Wiset road in Rawai and is closed on Mondays in low season. Reservations can be made at 0872663220.

Ark's [not so] secret sauce

This simple sauce goes perfectly with a good steak or other meat.



Ingredients (for 5 portions): Half a wine glass of Port, half a wine glass of white wine, two grams of rosemary, half a liter of home-made gravy, sugar, butter and salt and pepper to taste.

Add the Port, wine, pepper, salt and rosemary to a pan then heat and simmer and allow the liquid to reduce a little. Add the gravy and simmer for 20 minutes allowing the liquid to reduce some more. Add some sugar, simmer for 2-5 minutes then take off the heat and add one tablespoon of butter. Whisk and when well mixed strain into a gravy boat.

Ark's Smoked Salmon Tartare

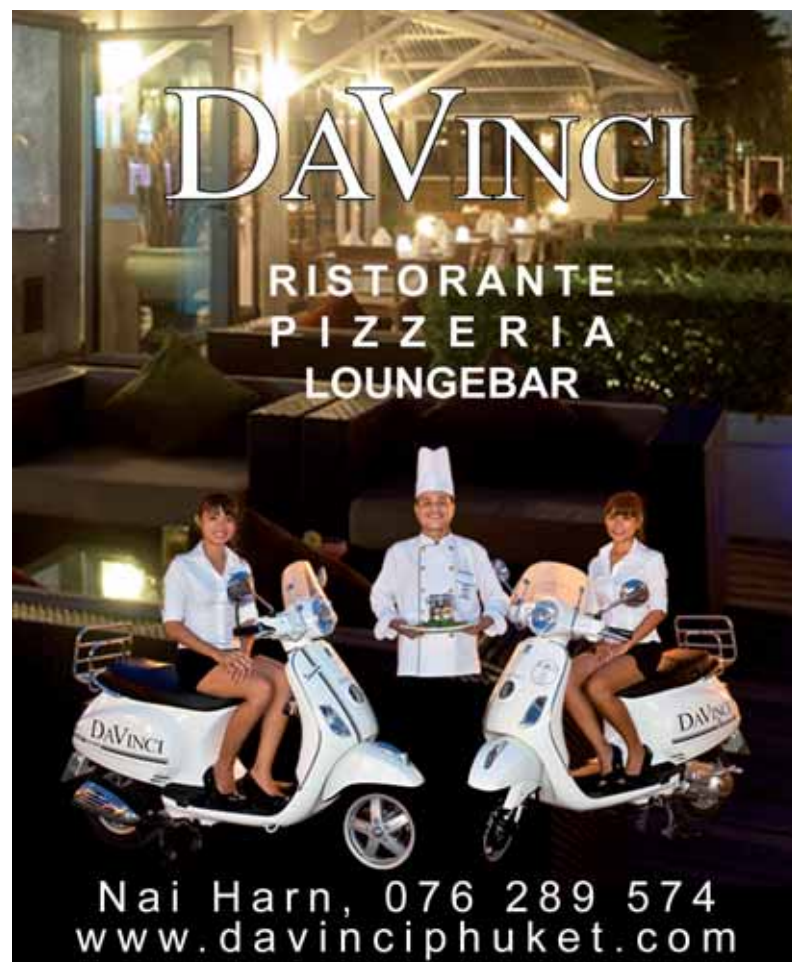
This 'fusion' starter tastes of both smoked salmon and *larb*.



Ingredients: Half a gram each of mint, shallots, garlic, fresh chillies and spring onions. One tablespoon of lime juice, 2 table spoons mayonnaise and five slices of smoked salmon (Keep some other slices for the decoration).

Chop everything up and finely mix it together in a paste. Shape the paste into an upside down bowl shape and cover with slices of smoked salmon.

Decorate as desired with dill and serve with a few slices of toast.



The Dark Knight is in the details

A FEW issues back, this rant pilloried the non-prequel that was Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*. Reviews are now awash upon the Internet and have since proven the disquiet first voiced here in the *Phuket Gazette*.

To be fair, however, the sci-fi geeks and action nerds had misgivings about Mr Scott's latest space dirge long before its final bell tolled. Everybody wanted it to succeed, but many feared it would only do so like a toothless budgie.

This brings us to Christopher Nolan, and his latest mega-movie – *The Dark Knight Rises*. The smart reviews still to come will likely compare it – both favorably and unfavorably – to this year's other comic-book romps, the teen-angst ridden *Amazing Spider-Man* and the triumphant team-up that was *The Avengers*. But that's just not fair.

Mr Nolan has always taken a slightly off-kilter approach to the

Film

By Alexander Maycock

comic-book canon, leaning closer to the darker Frank Miller versions of the character than the Bob Kane original. Christian Bale's brooding, barely contained intensity, matched the spare realism that Nolan managed to evoke in *Batman Begins*.

Go back and watch *Batman Begins* before you leap into *The Dark Knight Rises*. There are tidbits to be found that will affect your enjoyment of the new movie, not least of which is the final scene between Jim Gordon and Batman where they discuss escalation.

During the making of *The Dark Knight*, Mr Nolan realized that the franchise would not fizzle when that movie ended, despite his earlier suggestions that it would be his last Batman movie. The reason for this was, of course, the stellar performance of Heath Ledger as the psychotic Joker.

Try to imagine *The Dark Knight* without Heath Ledger. It would be a solid but not particularly remarkable movie. With Heath Ledger, Mr Nolan was able to create a billion-dollar classic and managed to earn costumed-hero capers a new level of respect.

Had Mr Nolan

gone straight from *The Dark Knight* to *Rises* then he may have gotten away with making a solid but not particularly remarkable third Batman movie. Instead he made the incredible *Inception* first.

There was a story going around that Mr Nolan was actually having trouble getting *Inception* made. This seems unlikely as he had just brought in a billion-dollar earner – and a sequel at that. You would think blank checks would line the path to his next project.

Who knows what backroom Hollywood shenanigans went on, but what may have happened is that the Hollywood held *Inception* to ransom to force Mr Nolan to put his name on the next Batman movie.

And then – surprise, surprise – Mr Nolan's brother Jonathan (who is a pretty nifty scripter) managed to "crack" the third Bat-story and Hollywood green-lit *Inception*.

But what story have the Brothers Nolan cracked? *Rises* takes much of its premise from a mainstream (though no less iconic) Batman story arc called *Knightfall*, in which a previously minor thug called Bane concocts a plan to finally finish off Batman for good.

With revenge as his motive, the Latino luchador mask-wearing Bane frees all of bats' worst enemies by blowing up Arkham Asylum and waits until an exhausted Batman has dealt with all of them before coming out of the shadows to beat him, breaking bats' back.

Within the Batman universe, the *Knightfall* story arc was more of a means to an end, posing the question "Who would replace Bruce Wayne, if Batman falls?" (A mediocre psychopath called Jean-Paul Valley, as it turned out).

Fans of the comics will find bits of *Knightfall* throughout *Rises*, but it is almost as if the Nolans took the trade paperback, cut up the pages then threw the bits randomly at the movie's storyboard until something resembling a plot emerged.

Maybe they did, but here's what we do know. Eight years have passed since Batman disappeared after taking the rap for Harvey Dent's crimes. Though officially an outlaw, the legend surrounding bats has grown large at a grass-roots level. The people know that, should things get bad enough, he will return.

However, things don't look too bad for Gotham. The Joker's psychopathic murder spree has left the city with very few serious baddies to contend with and Commissioner Gordon (Gary Oldman) has been a busy boy rooting out the rest.

Resting upon this false layer of new hope, the city has become



HE'S BACK: The caped crusader returns to a screen near you.

blasé to the horrors it once endured and this sets the stage for the Greek tragedy to come. Enter the harbinger of doom, Selina Kyle (Anne Hathaway), notorious cat burglar, who tries to warn Gotham of the impending storm but... too late, because here comes Bane.

Bane's motivations come across as a bit dodgy – he is not a let-it-all-burn psychopath like the Joker. There is criminal intent behind the malice and his followers do not follow through fear or greed, but from respect and adoration. If he is that smart, how does dragging the city into anarchy fulfill his goals?

There are answers, but really you are far too busy trying to work out what the heck Tom Hardy is doing with his voice to pay attention.

Bane's voice has been a stumbling block since the first clips were released last year. Many people couldn't understand what he was saying, so Mr Hardy had to go back and redub all his scenes – more than once, according to rumors. What

the comic book to a revolutionary white-boy. Would Benicio Del Toro's eyes be any less emotive?

Why then Mr Hardy? Possibly because Mr Nolan enjoyed working with him on *Inception*. He has also brought along Marion Cotillard from his previous film (though her performance in *Inception* wasn't the greatest) to fill an almost pointless role in *Rises*.

Another long-time collaborator who returns for *Rises* is composer Hans Zimmer. Mr Zimmer's work on *The Dark Knight* was excellent and his soundtrack for *Inception* pretty much made the movie. But Christopher Nolan is working the poor guy to death and it shows.

While the occasional leitmotif from *The Dark Knight* OST helps to link the two films, close your eyes from time to time and you would swear you were watching *Inception* again – the *Rises* soundtrack is just that similar.

Rises is beautifully filmed, with most of the action sequences shot with the IMAX cameras that made those massive set pieces in *The Dark Knight* so much fun to watch.

But, does Mr Nolan give us more than just beautiful moving images?

Because of *The Dark Knight* and because of what he achieved with *Inception*, it is possible that he had painted himself into a corner that meant *Rises* could only really succeed if it was exceptional.

It is not, but he has tried very hard to make it so. For that alone, Mr Nolan deserves our respect.

Ultimately, you won't NOT enjoy *The Dark Knight Rises*. It is a solid and not unremarkable completion of the Nolans' Batman Trilogy. Christopher Nolan can walk away happy that he has not killed the franchise for future directors.

Now, could someone please go and fetch Christian Bale a Fisherman's Friend?

Alexander Maycock regularly shouts out the next line of new movies just to prove Hollywood hasn't had an original idea since Casablanca.



THE EYES HAVE IT: Tom Hardy has to work hard to overcome the impediment of a props dept. gone wild.

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CAT ME IF YOU CAN: Selina Kyle is addicted to stealing Bruce Wayne's toys.

we finally get is a baddie who sounds suspiciously like a sinister Fozzie Bear.

It's not Tom Hardy's fault really. Christopher Nolan commented that he was amazed at how much emotion the actor was able to project through his eyes. Of course he had to act with his eyes. The rest of his face is covered with an enormous black breathing apparatus. It's no wonder he was unintelligible.

The excuse for the mask is simply not strong enough, nor is there any excuse for changing the character from the Latino gangster of

Wichai Wattanawisuth

WICHAI Wattanawisuth's love affair with cars began when he was a 15-year-old novice monk at a temple in Nakhon Sawan situated right on the Bangkok-Chiang Mai highway, which was also a route of many cross-country races.

Once, Wichai, a mere bystander, was asked to watch over a crashed car awaiting services. Fascinated by that "beautiful gleaming machine" he played in it, admiring its interior and equipment.

Bitten by the car bug, Wichai later studied motor mechanics and worked in Bangkok for service centers of well-known brands before ending up as the chief motor engineer of General Motors Phuket in 1994.

A few years later, he opened his own garage, Wichai Auto Service, having completed training in gas and petrol installation in the Netherlands. His was the first garage in Phuket to offer gas engine installation.

Now operating in Sapam on Thepkasatri Road, Wichai's garage is well known to locals and expatriates alike for its good and efficient repair services at reasonable prices.

Once the garage business started to run itself, Wichai embarked on his life-long dream of becoming a rally driver. He outfitted his first car on a budget, turning an old Suzuki Caribbean into a race-worthy vehicle.

Modestly equipped, Wichai entered the world of cross-

THAI gallery

By Nanthapa Pengkasem

country races and took part in many events organized by the Asia Cross Country Rally, Asia's answer to the famous Paris-Dakar race. The course ran all over, from Singapore to Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, and each day, Wichai and his navigator had to negotiate 200 kilometers of difficult terrain consisting of swamps, jungles, mountain roads, deserts, and river crossings. A tough activity by any standard.

"This is an extreme sport in which you bounce up and down all day long, and that can take a heavy toll on your body. I have lost count of how many times my car turned over. It's part of the game and part of the fun. But, I do have to prepare myself physically before any race. Cycling 40 km every day is a great way to get fit," explains Wichai.

Wichai became a professional rally driver in 2006 and his proudest achievement was coming second in the 2009 Asia Cross Country Rally. As a car mechanic, he believes he has an edge over many rally drivers who "may be good drivers but are not necessarily

trained to look after engines when something goes wrong."

His experience as a rally driver and skills as a motor mechanic helped open the door to another quite special possibility. In 2011, Wichai became the first Thai to be appointed as a FIA (*Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile*) scrutineer – a professional who ensures that cars entering a race conform to its regulations. To date, there are only two Thais to have been given such an honor.

This job enables Wichai to get up close and personal to something he is passionate about. He talks excitedly about witnessing top car engines employing state-of-the-art technology that costs millions of dollars. Other perks include travelling the world and taking part in many international races, which he thoroughly enjoys. His last scrutineering job took him to Abu Dhabi for the "Desert Challenge" event that took place earlier this year.

Away from the cross-country terrains, Wichai, who still works at his garage, lives a quiet lifestyle. A father of two children, he takes them cycling around Bang Wad dam in Kathu to relax and unwind.

Wichai is relieved that his 11 year old son is not interested in cars. "If he was, I'd fear for his safety! Perhaps one rally driver in the family is quite enough already," says the 43 year old Wichai lightheartedly.



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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MIXED BLESSINGS: Mövenpick Resort & Spa Karon Beach Phuket celebrated its sixth birthday on June 20 and hotel a Brahmin ritual ceremony was held in the morning followed by the Monks' blessing ceremony and the Muslim's blessing prayers. Hotel GM Hansruedi Fruitger (right) is seen here receiving a blessing.



REAL TOURISTS: Football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo, who plays for Real Madrid and the Portuguese national team arrived in Phuket with his girlfriend Russian model Irina Shayk to spend their vacation at the luxury Six Senses Yao Noi resort.



HERE BE DRAGONS: The Rawai - Nai Harn Dragonboat Club travelled to Penang recently for the International Dragon Boat Festival 2012 held at the Teluk Bahang Dam.



TEAM SPIRIT: JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa showed its sporting spirit by sponsoring the British International School, Phuket team that travelled to Bangkok to compete in the FOBISSEA Primary (Group A) Games 2012.



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YOUR Phuket



GOOD ADVICE: Sawaddi Patong Resort recently received a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence award.



WELCOME: The Phuket Gazette welcomed the new inspector at Phuket Immigration to his new position. From the left are Phuket Gazette news reporter Orawin Narabal, Phuket Immigration Police Inspector Lt Col Napat Nusen and Phuket Gazette Managing Director Oranee Hildebrand.



SEEING DOUBLE: Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club has recently hosted their Tennis Doubles Championship with a total of 12 clubs from all over Phuket, Phang-Nga, Trang and Krabi. In the photo is Mr Travis Bertram, Tennis Director of Thanyapura, who presented the trophies to the winners and runners up.



WELL CONNECTED: Kantapat Luengcharoen-watan, CEO of Pyramid Solutions (center), recently arranged a seminar entitled "The solution after tomorrow" with assembled IT managers at the Royal Phuket City Hotel.



WHEN ACQUA MET GAJA: At the recent Gaja Wine tasting at Acqua restaurant were (from left) Ms Nina and Mr Michel Cowan (Outrigger Hotels), Mr Robert Wigman (Wine & Taste), Ms Michela Inghese (Gaja Winery), Mr Alessandro Frau (Acqua Restaurant) and Mr Peter Tkac.



OPEN: The Kamala Waterside condominium held its grand opening at Jungceylon Phuket. Left of the condo model is Cherrng Talay OrBorTor President Ma-ann Samran and right of it is Kamala Waterside CEO Mohammed Amin Khan.



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8th The Junior Dublin Literary Awards
for Thailand 2011/2012

Theme:

"My Biggest Decision"

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- This contest is open to all Thai students aged 14-18 years
- All entries must be in English
- Essays must be written by the student and should not be edited by others
- The submission must be 800-1,200 words long
- Submissions will be accepted from July 15, 2012 until August 31, 2012
- The names of the winners will be announced at the Awards Presentation Ceremony on September 21 in Phuket and the authors will be asked to read their submission

PRIZES

- 1 The Winning Author in each region will earn 10,000 baht and there are two Merit Awards per region of 5,000 baht each.
- 2 The Overall National Winner will receive 50,000 baht in cash.



**Write your name/surname in Thai and English, age, school name, class, e-mail address and contact number at the top of your entry*

WRITERS FROM SOUTHERN REGION CAN SEND THEIR ENTRIES VIA E-MAIL TO:

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THE NATION

WHAT'S ON in Phuket

July 14, 7 to 8:30pm:

Exhibition Opening works by Robin Gillow & Libby Harrison "Oceans Apart". Divided by an ocean, yet linked through art and friendship, Phuket-based artist Robin Gillow and South African artist Libby Harrison will be showing their newest work. They have known each other since their teens and attended the Johannesburg College of Art together. The exhibition's ocean related theme perfectly suits the duo's subject matter. Oceans apart in life, the style of the work being shown is very different and suits a varied audience. The exhibition also offers a wonderful opportunity to experience South Africa and Asia in true colour. Gallery open daily from 11am to 8pm.

July 13-15: Fifth Multihull Regatta hosted by the Ao Chalong Yacht club

Palm Garden Resort in Chalong will host Friday night, July 13 and Serenity Resort and Residences, Rawai, will host the final night on Sunday, July 15. Saturday, July 14 will host an awards ceremony at the Ao Chalong Yacht Club. Thereafter the club has been hired for a private function.

July 18-22, 10:30 to 12:30am : Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek

Now in its ninth year, Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek comprises four days of world-class yacht racing and four nights

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of magical, beachside parties at the luxurious Cape Panwa Hotel – all captured for international TV broadcast to 140 million households. The regatta is run over six classes, including cruising and charter yachts. It's competitive, high-octane racing for the serious boats and fun courses around the islands for the less serious racers. The evening parties are legendary. According to one competitor, "It just gets better and better. It's my favorite. We're very lucky to have such a regatta on our doorstep." This event is proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and *PGTV*.

July 19, 7 to 10pm: Phuket International Women's Club

annual couples dinner

The July "lunch" is traditionally a dinner with friends and partners. It will be held at Vset Restaurant on Chalong Pier. For further information or to make a booking, contact info@phuketiwc.com. The Phuket International Women's Club is supported by the *Phuket Gazette*.

July 19, 6pm to 12:00am: Martini Manicure Ladies Night @ RE KA TA

Free express manicure for ladies. Free martini for ladies on arrival, and 50 per cent off drink list for everyone all night long. From 6pm to midnight – DJ tunes till late.

July 20, 7 to 11:30pm: Think Design Magazine Art Dinner

at Dedos restaurant

This Think Design Art Dinner will feature local Thai artist Khun Watcharin, combining six pieces of Mr Watcharin's art with a specifically designed dish and wine responding to and influenced by the artwork itself. Each individual piece of artwork will be discussed and reviewed as the dish is devoured. The objective of these Art Dinners is to encourage artistic cross-pollination of art through different mediums. Help make Phuket a cultural destination. This event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*.

July 20, 7 to 11pm: Curry Fridays Phuket

We present Phuket Curry Fridays on every first and third Friday. Here is your chance to enjoy an authentic and lavish Indian curry buffet every Friday. "Chicken Tikka Masala", very hot "Mutton Vindaloo", succulent Kebabs, Goan fish curry and much more... all served with Nan bread and Basmati rice. All you can eat for only 449 baht nett!

Kebabs, Goan fish curry and much more... all served with Nan bread and Basmati rice. All you can eat for only 449 baht nett! Draught Beer by the glass: just 50 baht nett. Special discounts on beverages. Venue: Navrang Mahal India Restaurant at Karon Sea Sands Resort & Spa. For reservations, please call: 076-286464, ext 4.

July 21, 12 to 3pm: Saturday Brunch @ Two Chefs!

Saturday brunch at Two Chefs Kata Center. Every Saturday we are setting up our brunch buffet, filled to the limits with home-made delights. In our smoke house, we smoke all of our fish and meats ourselves and in the bakery we bake all our own bread. With very well trained chefs and a Swedish head chef, we can promise you that you won't leave hungry or thirsty. All this for only 395 baht, and if you add an extra 300 baht you can choose to drink what you want from our free flow alternatives. For more info, please visit W: twochefs.com.

Aug 2, 2012: Asarnha Bucha Day – Public Holiday

This full-moon day of the eighth lunar month commemorates the Buddha's first sermon to his first five disciples after attaining enlightenment more than 2,500 years ago. In Thailand this day is celebrated as a public holiday and many places will not serve alcohol.

August 3, 7 to 11pm: Curry Fridays Phuket

We present Phuket Curry Fridays on every first and third Friday. Here is your chance to enjoy an authentic and lavish Indian curry buffet every Friday. "Chicken Tikka Masala", very hot "Mutton Vindaloo", succulent Kebabs, Goan fish curry and much more... all served with Nan bread and Basmati rice. All you can eat for only 449 baht nett!

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

COFFEE break

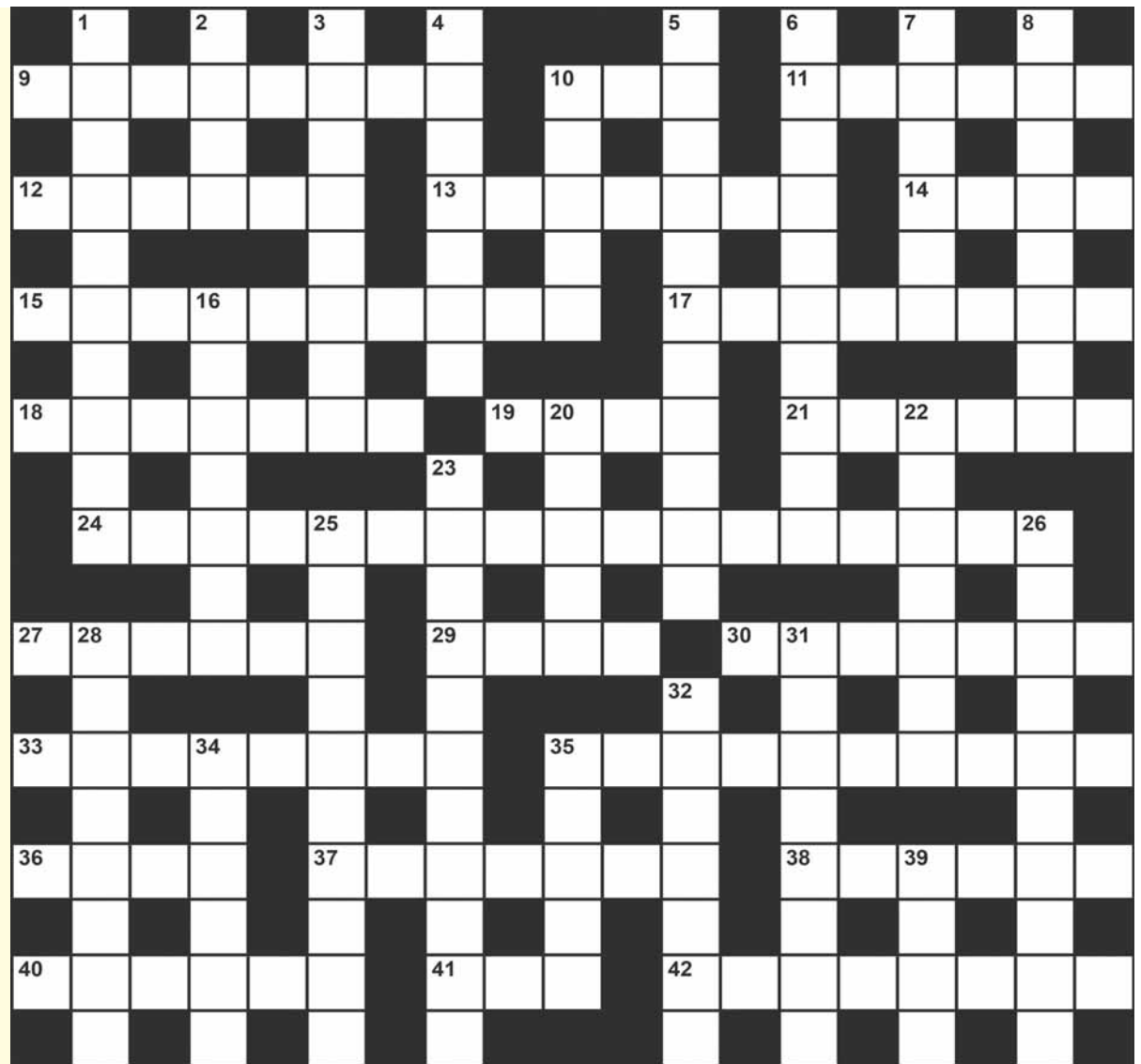
Across:

9. Let's tape out ranges of colors (8)
10. Rear Admiral, fellow in British service (3)
11. Not in rent for manufacturer's shop (6)
12. The way many Thais exclaim "Camera!", hearing the sound of a beautiful Phuket beach (6)
13. Not connected to rotten ancestry (3,4)
14. Clever sailor, back the Spanish (4)
15. Declares secret category if one points (9)
17. Kin, mates, could be wrong (8)
18. Gee, lass could be never looking older (7)
19. Ridiculous play in second gear (4)

21. Vile move liberal unknown makes in an unprincipled way (6)
24. Restrained, do as is becoming a right-wing group (12, 5)
27. Has, son, the French trouble (6)
29. See off a disorderly rabble (4)
30. On account of cue, be as revised (7)
33. Shortly right back in saddle, sit on horse (8)
35. A count in the forties adds a trio to fabled thieves (5,5)
36. Third unknown incorporated in metal (4)
37. Sticker shows hearts informally (7)
38. Do stay around, it's fresh (2-4)
40. No bail arranged for the person not having colour (6)
41. Aim for the finish (3)
42. Goodness! Expensive loved one! (4,4)

Down:

1. Disabled father hit lower limb



- 1 note (10)
2. Animal fluids right in the sea (4)
3. For singular type of shirt, a rinse out of soapy substances (8)
4. Notes new one, a European country (7)
5. Yes, five firm at a commotion (11)
6. Pal, resolve in a way where romantics end it all (6,4)
7. Star at different levels of rock (6)
8. Goodness! Healthy source of water! (4,4)
10. First, change the lack of

- friendly relations (5)
16. Break supports (7)
20. Little Katherine, socially acceptable in a Phuket district (5)
22. Right, in a niche may be possible (2,5)
23. Finished, created wildly, went over the top (11)
25. Deem nation managed elimination of errors (10)
26. Yes, Terry moved each in days gone by (10)
28. Hints all untidy piles of earth

- produced by workers (3-5)
31. For example, oddly pity an inhabitant of a country on the Mediterranean (8)
32. Could be as crude as a strenuous campaign (7)
34. Icy area, car slid on an involuntary response (6)
35. French note editor released (5)
39. Do party, old bird (4)

This cryptic crossword was compiled by Patong Bill. Answers on page 43

CANCER (June 22-July 23):



Serenity prevails during the second half of July. The stars suggest that efforts made putting more order into your life are about to have positive benefits. Different ways to enjoy your free time become apparent this weekend when a fire sign friend gives tips. Those with a birthday in the days ahead should experience less stress with finances in the coming year. Number one appears lucky for Cancerians this week.

LEO (July 24-Aug 22):



Life remains a little complicated for those born under the sign of Leo during the coming days. However, the stars suggest that a slowing down of pace after Wednesday should allow you to get back on top of things. In the realm of romance, a burning issue needs to be dealt with this weekend. Those seeking love could be caught off guard by a water sign. Number six looks lucky for Leos this week.

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept 23):



Virgoans suffering from itchy feet could be motivated to travel further afield after the middle of the month. The stars indicate that another earth sign's invitation is too good to turn down, even if it

means letting someone else down. Those in a committed relationship are advised to be more open to their partner's ideas this weekend. Lucky days for finances are Sunday and Monday. Number three stands out for Virgoans this week.

LIBRA (Sept 24-Oct 23):



This is an auspicious week for personal relationships, with emphasis on reconciliation. A water sign you recently fell out with is forecast to offer an olive branch this weekend. Money matters are somewhat less well starred; there are signs that errors will be made midweek. Lonely heart Librans could discover that they have more in common with another air sign than anticipated. Your lucky number this week is two.

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22):



The stars advise that keeping too much control over what is going on could prevent Scorpions from seeing new possibilities. The cosmic climate during the second half of July will encourage different directions to open up, and at least one of these can lead to a more fulfilling employment situation. Wearing a piece of amethyst can encourage a more relaxed attitude. The number eight can be important for Scorpions this week.

YOUR horoscope By Isla Star

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21):



Paddling against the tide is likely to tire those born under the sign of Sagittarius this week. The stars suggest that a work related situation should be put on the shelf until more facts become obvious. Another fire sign can offer some words of wisdom, but an air sign is grasping at straws. Your romantic outlook improves, with the spotlight shining on commitments. Number four can open the door to luck this week.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20):



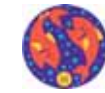
Where work is concerned, a slip of the tongue early next week could land Capricorns in trouble. The stars indicate that more people are in the dark than you realize – keeping privileged information to yourself is advisable until you are sure the coast is clear. In the realm of romance, wearing your heart on your sleeve is unlikely to impress another earth sign. The stars suggest that number nine brings good luck this week.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19):



The remainder of July continues to be an auspicious time where finances are concerned. A salary increase is forecast for some of those born under the sign of Aquarius; others are likely to see a work related bonus being paid. In the realm of romance, your judgment could be clouded where a relationship with another air sign is concerned. Moves made quickly will be regretted. Aquarians' lucky number this week is one.

PISCES (Feb 20-March 20):



The stars predict a productive week for Pisceans. A project that you had lost heart in should be revitalized – expect an earth sign to provide inspiration on Wednesday or Thursday. Affairs of the heart are affected by mixed astral conditions. The road to romance with another water sign takes an unexpected detour this weekend, but a relationship with an earth sign becomes more solid. Number five comes alive this week.

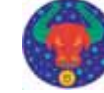
ARIES (March 21-April 20):



Jealousy could color the coming week green for those born under the sign of Aries. Another fire sign's fondness for playing games is forecast to have the desired effect if you

allow this person to have their way. The stars suggest that your financial outgoings could be higher than usual at the end of July. Budgeting in the meantime is advisable. Your lucky number this week is three.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21):



Crossing bridges before you come to them could cause unwonted stress during the days ahead. The stars advise reflecting back to occasions when you have anticipated the worst and it hasn't happened. Your outlook for the remainder of July is mostly positive, and romance is particularly well-starred. Those who have become interested in a water sign learn that the feeling is mutual. Number seven can bring good fortune for Taureans this week.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):



The stars hint that an overflow of mental energy will need to be addressed during the second half of July. Geminis are advised to find creative outlets for their thinking; another air sign could propose a project that is exactly what you have been looking for early next week. Where personal relationships are concerned, over-spending could become a bone of contention with a fire sign partner. Number four is fortunate this week.

PROPERTY Gazette

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Natural Selection

Kamala Waterside offers comfortable living in a tropical setting

KAMALA is an area full of designer condos and luxurious sprawling villas. To really find any privacy and escape the construction in a part of Phuket that's being built every hour of every day is no easy task.

Kamala Waterside will be a tropical oasis situated on one rai of land in one of the most sought after addresses on Phuket.

Located next to a lake, surrounded by lush landscape, the 7-storey building will boast 30 condominium units in total.

Owners can choose between a studio, one bedroom and two bedroom units, ranging in size from a 35 square metre studio to a 129 sqm two bedroom condo.

Each floor will have between 3 to 6 units fitted with Ikea kitchens. The building's modern design and cutting-edge energy saving technology aims to give owners a sense of well-being.

Helping to increase the owners' quality of life, the development plans to have a spacious lobby lounge and glass-house equipped with an automated electrical system, which will give the owners an area of comfort without congestion.

Facilities at the property will include a swimming pool with Jacuzzi and sun deck, children's swimming pool, fitness center, waterfall feature, garden and wifi. Nestled away in the landscapes near Phuket Fantasea means the development is within proximity to Kamala town and of course, the fantastic beach.

Kamala Waterside will offer its guests unrivalled views and the location is unlike a lot of condominiums in the area, affirms Amin Khan, Chief Executive Officer of Twoseason Real Estate.

"Our lake-side property is in a very peaceful area. The units come with a sea view or mountain view and are very private. Kamala Waterside is a place where owners can relax and unwind surrounded by nature" he said.

The condominiums were offered off plan at a pre-sale event at Jungceylon on July 8, attracting tenants by offering a free Yamaha motorbike to everybody who signed a sales contract. With units starting price going at 55,000 baht per sqm, 14 units – nearly half – have already been sold.

Freehold titles allow the property



ROOM WITH A VIEW: The luxurious setting and view from one of the sea view condominiums.



TROPICAL WORK OUT: The fitness centre is the perfect place to relieve stress.

to be 100 per cent in the owner's name. Also, there are leasehold agreements available for those who do not want to own out right,

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Working for the weekend



ONLY IN LAGUNA: Laguna Phuket was one of the first resorts to start using air conditioned buses for its staff.



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Terms & Conditions: The developer reserves the right at any time to make changes to the project at its own discretion. Images are computer generated and for visual reference only.



THE majority of hotels offering the best benefits to staff on Phuket are international chains, though some independent hotels compete head-on with global giants, according to a recent survey.

Working on weekends continues to be a hit and miss proposition for island hotel staff. The survey shows that 50 per cent of Phuket's upscale and luxury resorts expect staff to work a five day work week, 23 per cent offer alternative schemes between five and six days and 27 per cent remain at six days.

Some hotels are willing to compromise with either five or six days off per month or two days in low season and one in high season. The majority of hotels surveyed were Thai chain operators but a number of international chains took part.

Companies that provide the bare minimum to their staff tend to be older legacy hotels, local groups and one off properties. It is important to note that this list does not cover all registered accommodation but reflects the upper end of island hotels.

Once you get into budget and mid-scale hotels, the vast majority offer a minimum wage, often using seasonal contracting and only provide what is required by law.

The survey shows how much work remains to be done by Phuket's most important economic indicator in terms of human capital.

I cannot help but recall moving here in the year 2000 and seeing hotel staff being transported to work in a vehicle better suited to hauling livestock than people. Open air lorries with wooden benches and little protection from the wind or rain was the accepted standard in those days.

JW Marriott and the multi-hotel Laguna Phuket first started using air conditioned buses which today, for the most part, have become a common sight on the road of Phuket.

Over the past few years an influx of bright, shiny, new branded-hotels have seen 5 day work weeks taken up as standard operating procedure. Much of this has to do with the larger chain's global standards and the need to recruit the best and brightest hotel staff available.

Pragmatically speaking it's much easier for new developments to fall into step with the times than their aging counterparts. Recently we are seeing a number of older hotels transact, close and upgrade. Hotel employees are terminated and the new

owners receive a clean slate to work with.

Is there a moral conundrum in all of this? Certainly, for an industry which prides itself as one focused on service, this requires a human touch.

But there are business issues that cloud the mix. For hotels, the two most expensive operating overheads are staff and energy costs (electricity, water etc...). Some hotel owners, with properties built in the 1980s up to the end of the decade, have been content to operate for maximum profit, with little reinvestment into their aging assets.

Styles change. Travellers' tastes and the geographic source of business do as well. In many cases, an increasingly competitive market has forced these properties to cut rates and lower expenses. Here lies the crux of the problem: if these properties were to suddenly bring benefits in line with their glossy counterparts, it would only hit the bottom line.

Phuket is evolving and over the next decade we will likely see as much redevelopment as new building. Many hotels are past their shelf life but have had their lifelines extended by a new surge of mid-scale, budget-oriented, travellers.

The inevitable decline has been postponed, but for how long?

Unfortunately for staff, this creates a two tier employment market – the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Ultimately, as an industry, the biggest failure is to adequately train, develop and promote staff to take them further in their careers.

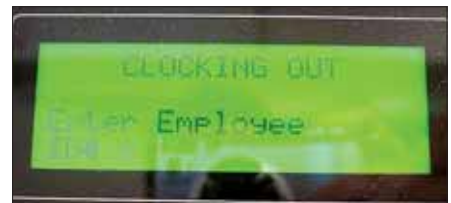
We don't need more maids, gardeners and minimum wage earners in Phuket. What is more relevant, is to increase productivity, develop skills and nurture the next generation of hotel workers to be closer to broader international standards.

A continued rise in the minimum wage and rampant inflation are warning signs. At a time when Asia leads the world in the post financial crisis recovery, our hotel industry needs to start coming to parity with what is termed the developed world.

Of course benefits come at a cost, but, much of this can be offset with hotels restructuring productivity, training and raising expectations to a higher level.

Phuket is world-renowned for its glittering luxury hotels and the same attention that goes into capital investment now needs to be spent on human capital.

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



HOTEL CHECK OUT: The staff version.



SELF SUSTAINABLE: 11 years after establishing Safeway Asia, Gordon Adamson is ready to sell his profitable business so that he can retire.

DRIVE down any main road around the island, and you'll be bombarded with property posters and billboards galore, all with a common pitch: "A perfect home in the perfect location at the perfect price."

How they should read is "Act now and you can become the proud owner of a box inside a box, lined up beside a bunch of other boxes."

As unappealing as such a prospect may sound to some, perhaps investing in 'boxed living' may be a smart investment – that is if you think outside the box.

Phuket expat Gordon Adamson was doing just that when he established Safeway Asia Co Ltd 11 years ago in Chalong.

"When we first started up, we were selling and renting out storage space, utilizing 20 and 40 foot shipping containers," he told the *Gazette*.

By the second year of operations, Gordon, a Scot-turned-Aussie, added modular buildings to the business, converting the shipping containers into mobile offices.

Built to withstand the elements,

the obvious advantage of shipping containers is durability; however, they don't offer a lot of flexibility for design, Gordon noted.

Thinking ahead of the market, he began designing and building modular offices using insulated panels.

Constructed with polyester coating and a polystyrene mid-layer, such panels have the advantages of being light in weight, easy to shape,

handle and provide for an overall cooler building interior.

Diversifying its scope, the company went on to generate and meet demand for porta-pot-

ties, guard houses, bungalows and all types of offices and accommodations.

"We can pretty much design and build any type of room or building that you can think of," Gordon affirmed.

Business eventually grew too big for the small yard in Chalong, prompting Gordon to open a new yard at a site in Thalang, off Thepkasattri Road, about two kilometers north of



Long-lasting, temporary housing.

Modular building business going up

With land prices across the island skyrocketing, demand for affordable housing, storage and office space has shot through the roof. The *Gazette's* Steven Layne spoke with Gordon Adamson, founder of a modular building company, about his booming trade.

new Tesco Lotus.

Safeway's clients over the years have included Phuket International Academy, Laguna, Ao Por Marina, Yacht Haven and Sea Ray at Royal Phuket Marina, among many others on the island, as well as in Koh Samui, Nakhon Sri Thammarat and Phang Nga.

Outlining the current business volume, Gordon said that 60% of cash inflow is for offices and showrooms, with storage space accounting for about 20%, followed by accommodations (15%) and porta-poties (5%).

"About 70% of demand is for insulated panels, though the trend for office containers has gone up recently," he said.

Beyond durability and flexibility, perhaps the biggest advantage of modular buildings over conventional types is mobility.

"These buildings can be quickly moved and relocated as is, with no need to dismantle the structure. They are especially ideal for people leasing land," he said.

And while regulations in Thailand

forbid, if not greatly obstruct foreigners from owning land, modular buildings provide a considerable asset ownership alternative.

"Most of these structures are considered temporary buildings, which means you don't need to get approval from the local

major advantage: the speed of erection, with an average delivery window for new units of just 3 to 4 weeks.

If all this hasn't swayed you, then the cost comparative advantage – 10,000 to 12,000 baht per square meter – certainly calls for considerable consideration.

With the cheapest condominium unit in Phuket priced 300% more than this, it's no surprise that inquiries for new projects continue to pour in.

But after a decade of building up his lucrative business from the ground up, Gordon wants out.

"I'm ready to retire. I want to have more time to myself and my family, so I'm selling the company, including

over 10 million baht worth of equipment. Someone could easily double the business volume in no time," he concluded.

For more information about the company or its offerings, see *W: safewayasia.com* or call Tel. 076-281283 and 081 892-4804



A laborer cuts a piece of insulated panel, which allows for a quicker 'speed of erection' compared to conventional methods.

administrative branch for them.

And while the government considers them temporary, they certainly can outlast most "permanent structures" as they are not prone to rust, cracking or termite infestations, requiring only basic cleaning maintenance.

Gordon points out another



Every perspective of living...at Laguna.

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ZCAPE
CONDOMINIUM

* Picture for Advertisement.

The Owner: Tri Property Co., Ltd. Registered capital (Baht): 100,000.00 (Fully paid up). Head office located at no. 21/114 Block D, RCA, Soi Soonvijai-rama9, Rama9 Rd., Bangkapi Sub-District, Huaykwang District, Bangkok. Managing Director: Mr. Adisorn Vivakanond. Zcape condominium project will be constructed as a Residential Condominium of 7 storey(ies), 1 building, total of unit(s), 198 unit(s) on the land title deed no. 40583, 40584 Baandon-Cherngtalay Rd., Cherngtalay Sub-District, Thalang District, Phuket Province, total of 1 plot(s) approximately land areas: 1-1-58.6 Rai, under the titles of the Project Owner and have been mortgaged with Bank of Ayudhya Public Company Limited. Now the project is in the process to submit the building permission and expect to commence from December 2012 and expected to be completed in February 2014. The project will be registered as the condominium after the construction is completed. The unit owners must pay common property expenses, tax and fee at the rate as stipulated by the Project Owner or in accordance with the Regulation of the Condominium Juristic Person under the condominium law.

Cavalcade of Cassias

WITH the tennis season in full swing, sports addicts are hitting the covers off yellow balls, or watching day-glo missiles hurtle over the net on TV. Yellow is, apparently, more visible than the conventional white of my tennis-playing days.

Yet this most vibrant of colors has plenty of negative associations. Yellow has traditionally been the color of cowardice, a skin-borne indicator of illness, or of terminal decline. *Macbeth*, awaiting his meeting with destiny,



Gardening

By Patrick Campbell

declares he is “in the sere, the yellow leaf.” In the world of insects, the color is a warning to steer clear of creatures too poisonous to meddle with.

Flowers are blissfully unaware of such connotations. They just blaze away, adding their brilliance to our gardens and avenues. There are enough yellow fellows in Thailand to fill a sizable book.

Take the *cassia* brigade, more than a hundred strong. One, *C. fistula*, also known as the golden shower tree, took center stage on a TV soap opera a few days ago.

The tree was a mass of blooms, and so abundant were the vivid yellow racemes you could not even see the foliage. The characters can oodling beneath were not only caressed by falling petals, they



CASSIA CASCADE: (clockwise from top left) *Cassia fistula*, *brewsteri*, *javanica* and the beautiful Rainforest Shower Tree. Photos: Koshy Koshy, Tatiana Gerus, Jayesh Patil, Jan Smith.



BLOOMS TO LOOSEN YOU: *Senna didymobotrya*. Photo: By-Your.

were positively upstaged by the tree's golden opulence.

Cassia used to be a much larger genus. Now re-classified, it still contains more than a hundred species. *C. fistula* is a signature tree on Phuket, a visible presence both on roadsides and in gardens. Thais call it *khuun*.

Though it will sometimes take from half-hardened cuttings, it is easier to grow from seeds soaked in water. They are easily obtained, since the plant is leguminous, and has long, cylindrical, dark brown pods. An ideal garden tree that likes full sun and moist well-drained soil, it is one of those smallish, fragrant, decorative trees that every gardener should crave.

C. brewsteri is not Asian, but an Australian native – which probably explains why it is uncommon here. It has similar drooping clusters of small yellow flowers, sometimes tinged with orange. Unlike *fistula*, which possesses attractive grey bark, this species has blackish branches.

Not all members of the clan are yellow flowering. *C. javanica*, which sometimes carries the name of pink shower tree, has graceful pinnate leaves that droop when young, and impressively large blooms (up to two inches across). Their coloration varies from buff through pink to crimson. Another small tree, it is frequently used to lend color to avenues and public spaces. A cultivar, “rainbow shower” is even more spectacular, with flowers that develop orange tones before turning to cream.

Many other *cassias* are listed in one of my gardening books, but the general view now is that most of these should be re-classified as *sennas*. The confusion is understandable. *Cassias* and *sennas* both have fern-like, pinnate leaves,

almost all are evergreen, and the majority have showy yellow flowers that typically occur in clusters. Since they are all legumes, the fruits are large, long pods.

Many of these species have medicinal qualities. Indeed, I recall my distaste for senna pods as a child, then used as a laxative. Its important chemical properties are now more widely recognized – in the treatment of ringworms, for example. Best

known among these is *senna alata* (formerly *cassia alata*). But *alata* is an American native. For species which will light up our Phuket gardens with their golden florets, we will need to consider *senna siamea* or *didymobotrya*.

If you have a question or a garden that you would like featured, you can email me anytime at: drpaccampbell@gmail.com.

Tip of the Week



FLOWER POWER: *Michelia champaca* in bloom. Photo: prashantby.

Trees for the garden

TREES are the backbone of your garden, providing shade and shelter, and bringing year-round appeal through their leaves, fruits, flowers, scent, bark, and overall appearance.

Typically, they are tall plants with one dominant trunk topped by a crown of foliage, whereas most shrubs are smaller, and have leaves all the way to the ground.

You need to decide what kinds of trees are best for your space. Do you want them primarily for their flowering capacity (*Michelia*, *plumeria*, *cassia*, *thevetia*, *senna*), for their edible fruits (longan, mango, avocado, rambutan, pomelo, guava, lime) or for their attractive foliage or unusual shape (palm, *casuarina*, Norfolk pine)?

Or you may want fast growers (fiddlewood, *neem*), but these are likely to be heavy feeders, and once established, may need frequent pruning.

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HOUSE AT PRIME PLACE VILLAGE



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

SEA VIEW HOUSE FOR RENT

Fully furnished, prime location for long holidays & hostel business. Tel: 081-595 7986, 089-871 6599 (English & Thai). Email: phudit1979@hotmail.com

LUXURY POOL VILLA

Has all, near Laguna, live in resort setting, quiet. Price: 22,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-594 4067.

PATONG STUDIO 50SQM

For rent long term: 25,000 baht per month, 14th floor, sea view, high standing, pool, park. Tel: 081-086 3586.

LONG-TERM RENT

1-2 bedroom, furnished houses, beautiful garden, Chalong area 10,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-892 4311.

CONDO AT ROYAL PLACE



Condo at Royal Place Project, Bypass road, opposite Tesco Lotus. 37sqm, 2fl, 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, kitchen, fully furnished (2 aircons, washing machine, refrigerator, TV, microwave, cable TV, 24 security with key card etc). Pls contact for more details. Tel: 089-469 1813, 086-476 9612.

B.L. APARTMENT

New in Kathu. Big rooms, 1 bedroom, 1 living room, aircon, cable TV, ADSL, hot shower, garden, and car park. Rent: 7,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-692 3163.

KATHU GOLFVIEW

Villa and penthouse for rent, 330sqm, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, big pool, 4km to BIS, superb view of Loch Palm Golf & Valley. Quiet, secure on top of private hill, furnished, WiFi. Long-term rent: 65,000 baht. Available on 23 June 2012. Tel: 087-269 8492, 087-091 1552.

SINGLE HOUSE FOR RENT



3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished with small garden, quiet area. Price: 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-607 8567. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com

TOWNHOUSE IN KOH KAEW



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

2-BEDROOM TOWNHOUSE

For rent, in Phuket Top Land, Rassada area, 13km to Patong Beach, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, dining area and family room, 3 TVs, cable TV, washing machine, garden area, very close to all amenities. Price: 20,000 baht per month. For inquiries please contact Tit. Tel: 087-280 4410.

SEA VIEW, 2 BEDROOMS

Quiet, clean building. Fully furnished and great area, cable TV, WiFi. Rent: 32,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-892 8208.

PLUS CONDO KATHU

For rent. 1 bedroom, 30sqm, aircon, kitchen, washing machine, gym, WiFi. Tel: 086-947 1273.

RAWAI BEACH FRONT POOL VILLA

Rawai, beach front pool villa. For rent and sale. 3 bedrooms, furnished, land: 1 rai. Contact Siriporn. Tel: 089-649 9939.

KATAHOUSE ONE BEDROOM

Fully-furnished, terrace, bathroom, kitchen, aircon, internet and cable TV. Price for long term rent: 9,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-606 2827 (English & Thai). Email: nij017@hotmail.com

KATA HILL SINGLE HOUSE

2-storey, fully-furnished, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room, kitchen, 2 aircons, 3BB internet, TV and car park. Price: 19,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-606 2827 (English & Thai). Email: nij017@hotmail.com

SEA VIEW BUNGALOW

Private cottage, pool set in established gardens, furnished, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, only 15 mins to either PIA or BIS. 35,000 baht per month. Tel: 082-420 3270.

PHUKET VILLA 5 VILLAGE



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

PATONG, 3 BEDROOMS

For rent, fully furnished, in complex, 6-month term: 23,000 baht per month, 1-year term: 20,000 baht per month. Email: gm@thenetworkproperty.com

RAWAI BUNGALOWS

Fully furnished, aircon, WiFi, TV, kitchen, 1+2 bed, quiet location. Price start at 8,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-279 0837.

POOL VILLAS FOR RENT

1, 2, 4 bedrooms, fully furnished, Bang Tao area, nice location. Tel: 090-156 7927.

LOFT STYLE - KATHU

Furnished, quiet, central location. Good for running. 8,000 baht/month. Tel: 086-664 5575 (English). Email: hkmsn@yahoo.com

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Chalong, Rawai, magnificent ocean views, low season rates. Tel: 086-144 7101. Email: marinepower76@yahoo.com

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Kamala. 48,000 baht per month. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Western amenities. 2 storeys with decks looking out onto Kamala Beach. Minimum 3-month lease. Available now. Contact Jean. Tel: 088-447 7631 (English). Email: ayearlikenoneother@gmail.com

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Snorkeling Instructor/Tour Leader required for a boat charter company. Enthusiastic, outgoing person with Padi license. Tel: 076-289 044, 081-787 7702.

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Thai male to help run a car hire company. Driving License and English skills are required. Tel: 087-555 8155. Send resume with recent photo to info@phuket drive.com

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Full time Nanny/helper wanted for Thai/English family in Kathu. Tel: 086-274 1493 (English), 084-193 5124 (Thai). Email: clairelester1807@yahoo.co.uk

PIZZA MAKER OR/AND COOK (2)

Full time 10-15,000 baht. Tel: 076-314 345, 080-147 2468 (English&Thai). Email: manager@phuketadventuregolf.com fb:phuketadventureminigolf

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Customer service agents needed for expanding internet fashion retailer. Are you CS experienced, Thai, hard working, computer savvy and fluent in English. Salary of 17-25,000 baht per month. Tel: 085-789 9249. Email: graham@holy clothing.com For full details: www.holyclothing.com/htmlx/work.html

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Department: Front Office

Job Responsibilities:

- Assist the Resort Management with the supervision of the front office staff, from maintaining proper cash control to guest service standards on a day-to-day basis.
- Attend to Guests' enquiries, requests, complaints and compliments.
- Monitor departmental costs to ensure performance against budget.
- Ensure proper training and procedures are in place to ensure provision of quality services.
- Record the details of events and take necessary actions.
- Supervise Reception personnel to ensure optimum occupancy.
- Monitors Front Office personnel to ensure guests receive warm attention and personal recognition.
- To oversee and manage the resort porter/ concierge service.
- Ensure that that Front of House area is tidy, warm and welcoming at all times.
- Informs other operating departments, notably Housekeeping of all Front Office matters that concerns.

Qualifications:

- A relevant Degree in Hospitality.
- Minimum five years hotel experience.
- Demonstrated supervisor skills; good judgment and common sense.
- Computer literate.
- Superior written and oral English communication skills.
- Excellent organizational and time management skills

Contact: The village coconut island

51/7 Moo. 6 T.Kohkaew A.Muang Phuket 83200 Thailand | Tel: 076-352153, 081-9686912

E-mail: Ladawan@thevillage-coconutisland.com or hr@thevillage-coconutisland.com

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- Restaurant Supervisor
- Night Room Service
- Hostess
- Waiter
- Waitress

RESERVATION

- Reservation Officer

HOUSEKEEPING

- Assistant Housekeeper
- Sous Chef

MAIN KITCHEN

- Executive Sous Chef
- Sous Chef

ACCOUNTING

- Chief Accountant
- Storekeeper

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Assistant Human Resources

ENGINEERING

- Assistant Engineer

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STAFF APARTMENT, TRANSPORTATION, UNIFORM, MEALS, SOCIAL SECURITY, BIRTHDAY PARTY, STAFF PARTY, STAFF PICNIC ETC.

If you are confident, please send your full details with recent photograph to E-mail: apply@horizonbeach.com

Tel: 076-292526-30, 076-284555

PROJECT MANAGER / SALES

Male 25-30yrs, Civil Engineer or related field. Proficient in English & AutoCAD. Willing to learn about products, travel & sales. 2 years minimum experience preferred. 20,000 baht + benefits and sales commissions. Send CV. Tel: 076-304 307, 081-823 9448 (English). Fax: 076-304 306.

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Sales and marketing roles. Native English speakers or other nationals with fluent English-speaking skills. A proven track record in sales is a must. Send CV & recent photo to email: careers@pp-intl.com

ITALIAN RESTAURANT MANAGER

Italian restaurant in Rawai is looking for Italian Restaurant Manager, age between 30 - 40 years old, expertise in the field, personality, problem solving and experience in personnel management in Thailand. Excellent knowledge of English and Microsoft Office. Knowledge of other languages is an advantage. Benefits: salary and profit sharing. Tel: 084-922 1602 (ITA).

SENIOR ARCHITECT

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

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COOK MAID FOR HOLIDAY VILLA

Luxury 7-bedroom villa in Patong looking for full time live-in staff. The cook must have English speaking skill and willing to clean when not cooking. The maid can speak only Thai but must be able to assist the cook in preparing meals. We can accept a married couple to work together or single men or women. We prefer someone with experience in luxury holiday villa business but not necessary. Must be able to cook on time for large groups of 14 to 16 people. Tel: 080-699 2436. Email: bookings@rentalvillaphuket.com For further details, please see our website at www.villayoosook.com

ACCOUNTING (1)

Tax compliance, WHT, VAT, Financial statement, Rev.& Exp. (Excel), Update receivables, WHT (1,3,53), SSO, Payroll. Tel: 076-314 345, 080-147 2468 (English & Thai). Email: manager@phuketadventureminigolf.com

SECRETARY WANTED

Basic accounting. Speak English. Tel: 089-652 5664.

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Salary 20,000 baht + excellent commission & benefits. Tel: 081-823 4627, 085-782 1200. Please email your CV to ying@phuketpooltables.com

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We are now looking for an experienced marketing manager to join our successful real estate agency. Tel: 076-341 045, 081-459 0152 (English). Email: andres@phuket-condos-homes.com

JOBS FOR HOTEL WORKERS

Hiring reception & house-keeping positions now. Experience preferred. Tel: 085-159 7400 (English), 086-902 8566 (English & Thai). Email: dshumny@yahoo.com

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Tropical Properties is looking for Thai national with good knowledge of English, internet & MS Office. Handling general office admin, good communication skills. Accurate reporting & working independently is required. Tel: 087-882 2856 (English). Email: luc@phuket-tropical-realestate.com

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30m yacht requires a cook for 7 days from Feb 1st. Please call urgently. Tel: 087-630 8312, +60-12-932 0592 (English). Email: shiryn@zoho.com For further details, please see our website at www.sy-kayumanis.com

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Bamboo coffee table for sale. Excellent condition. 110cm square with inset in center (for flower decoration, etc). 10,000 baht ono. Email: beijingmarcher@yahoo.com

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Barely used (10 hours). Have 2 units for sale. Price: 15,000 baht each. Contact Margy on 089-908 7486.

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I am selling my Heat Press Made in USA, very highly used (about 60 t-shirts), like new. I bought it in Bangkok. Paid 125,000 baht, selling 60,000 baht. Tel: 076-283004, 086-742 3437. Email: joelvdo@hotmail.com

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Rawai beach, newly established Plaza. Now for rent. Restaurants from 16,000 baht per month. Bars from 8,000 baht per month. Spa 12,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-280 3282. Email: merzin canli@aol.com

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Only 250,000 baht, beautiful decorated, 100sqm, space plus 2x2 upper floors for living or storage. Rent: 50,000 baht per month, 1km east from Heroines Monument. Tel: 081-892 2419 (English & Thai). Email: kirjon@gmail.com

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Address: 120/5 (34) Srisoonthon road, Cherngtalay, Thailand, Phuket 83110. Close to Lady Pie shop, near gas station. Tel: 083-968 6714.

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At Plus Condo2, Kathu, 47sqm, 247 units, next to pool. Price: 2.7 million baht. Monthly: 9,600 baht. Tel: 086-947 1273.

LAUNDRY BUSINESS!

At Cherngtalay. Includes spa, restaurant and hotel clients. Tel: 081-892 4684 (English & Thai). Email: info@easy laundryservice.com

BAR FOR SALE

Patong, Soi Tiger. 14-month lease from July 1. Rent per month: 36,000 baht. Sale: 1.8 million baht (neg). Tel: 085-472 4427 (English). Email: thai_mand@hotmail.com

GUEST HOUSE: PAY IN 20 YEARS



Rawai beach, sell: 9 million baht, land 400sqm, 6 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, 300m to the pier. Tel: 084-242 8914. Email: rawai4@yahoo.com

SHOP RENT/SALE, BANGLA ROAD



New shop in great location, near KFC and 7-Eleven, 40sqm, 3 years on lease: 100,000 baht per month. For sale: 1.5 million baht. For rent: 390,000 baht deposit + 130,000 baht per month. Contact Mark. Tel: 080-141 6040, 085-591 6605. Email: hmthailand@yahoo.com

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12	K	A	M	A	L	A	13	O	F	F	L	I	N	E	14	A	B	L	E
15	C	L	A	S	S	I	F	I	E	S	17	M	I	S	T	A	K	E	N
18	A	G	E	L	E	S	19	S	K	I	T	21	E	V	I	L	L	Y	
24	C	O	N	S	E	R	V	A	T	I	V	E	P	A	R	T	Y		
27	H	A	S	S	L	E	29	R	O	U	T	30	B	E	C	A	U	S	E
33	S	T	R	A	D	D	L	E	35	F	O	R	T	Y	T	H	R	E	E
36	Z	I	N	C	37	T	I	C	K	E	R	S	38	T	O	D	A	Y	S
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International Sport

Thailand's Olympic hopefuls

Since the arrival of the Olympic Torch in London last May, anticipation for the games has continued to grow.

The torch is being carried across the UK by around 8,000 people ranging from athletes such as Sir Steve Redgrave, local people and celebrities.

The torch will finish its 70 day relay by lighting the flame that signals the start of the games on July 27.

This is the third time London has hosted the Olympics. Once just before the First World War in 1908, and again after the end of WWII in 1948.

London expects to see 205 nations take part in over 300 events, and Thailand will of course be one.

Thailand made its Olympic debut in Helsinki in 1952, though did not win its first medal until the 1976 Montreal Games when boxer Payao Poontarat claimed bronze.

Dhawe Umpornmaha continued the boxing theme with the silver at the 1984 Los Angeles Games. Somluck Kamsing won Thailand's first ever gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Games, also in boxing.

The Kingdom is sending 37 athletes to London to compete in 19 different events, including a young Phuket athlete.

Maneepong Jongjit partners with Bodin Isara in the men's badminton doubles and were victorious in April this year at the Indian Open, defeating the Korean pair to qualify.

Another youngster hoping for glory in badminton is teenager Ratchanok Intanon, three time defending youth champion, and is confident she has what it takes to claim Thailand's first ever medal in badminton.

The Amateur Weightlifting Association



GOLDEN BOY: Pen-Ek Karaket.



Jongjit Maneepong (L) and Issara Bodin celebrate their win at the Indian Open. Photo: AFP

caused a shock by announcing they would not be taking current Olympic champion Prapawadee Jaroenrattanakoon, who won the women's 58kg gold in Beijing

Thailand's hopes of winning a gold medal could rest with the current Asian 58kg taekwondo champion, Pen-Ek Karaket.

The athletes have also been given an extra

incentive by the government and sponsors to help them strive for medals. Each competitor winning a gold will receive 10 million baht, silver 5mn and 3mn for bronze.

Channel 7 and Siam Commercial Bank will also award each gold medalist 1 million, silver 500,000 baht and bronze medalists 300,000 baht.

— *Phuket Gazette*

A quick look back



Formula 1

By The Digby

THE next race will be at the Hockenheimring and will mark the half way point of the F1 season, so it's a good time to sit back and re-view where everyone is.

At the start of the season, McLaren looked unbeatable except by error. They seemed exhausted by Silverstone.

Why? Because Ferrari and Red Bull had upgraded their aerodynamics, and the sheer power of the Mercedes engine was not enough for McLaren. It's about down-force, and Silverstone is one of the fastest tracks of the year, and notoriously destructive of tyres, which is why Pirelli brought their new hard tyres to the GP.

Red Bull introduced refinements at Valencia, and at Silverstone had a new exhaust pipe mantle while Ferrari had a whole new wing design. Some say that McLaren erred in designing a car with a lower nose than their rivals, as the higher chas-

sis give more opportunity for aerodynamic development.

And, while Lotus Red Bull and Ferrari seem to have tamed the neurotic Pirelli tyres, McLaren is still struggling. Jenson Button, in particular, cannot get his front tyres to temperature.

The drivers' title looks likely to be between the Red Bulls and Fernando Alonso. For McLaren to challenge they need to show real development and soon.

They have an upgrade for Hockenheim. Let's hope, because McLaren has a mountain to climb.

Red Bull is on a roll, but they desperately want their golden haired Sebastian Vettel to win, not dispensable Mark Webber with his annual contracts. The team just announced that Webber's contract has been extended for yet another year, and

rumor says he drove an irritatingly hard bargain.

Ferrari is looking much better, and Massa seems to have recovered form. Lotus is the 'nearly' team. They came 5th and 6th at Silverstone, and are now third in the Constructors Championship.

We are still waiting for them to win.

McLaren is down to the realm where it is only just possible to recover. Mercedes cannot be happy with their showing.

Sauber has been unlucky, and Kamui Kobayashi his Silverstone pit crew was a poor moment.

Williams is having mixed fortunes; Pastor Maldonado keeps hitting other drivers, but Bruno Senna is racking up a few points.

Force India is stronger than their unlucky Silverstone result



Maria de Villota was injured during her first drive for Marussia. Photo: AFP

mowing down



POS	TEAM	POINT	POS	TEAM	POINT
1	Red Bull	216	7	Williams	47
2	Ferrari	152	8	Force India	44
3	Lotus	144	9	STR	6
4	McLaren	142	10	Caterham	0
5	Mercedes	98	11	Marussia	0
6	Sauber	60	12	HRT	0

shows, and they probably feel good.

Toro Rosso is going nowhere.

None of the other teams have scored any points yet. Silverstone showed how slow the Caterham is, but HRT is at least creative, putting Pedro de la Rosa on a one stop strategy at Silverstone.

But our hearts must go out to Marussia who did admirably at Silverstone after their test driver Maria de Villota's awful accident. Maria had what seems to be a horrible freak accident in routine testing.

She has lost her right eye, and is undergoing extensive reconstructive surgery.

Hockenheimring is next. It is a technical track. The surface is slippery, making tyre choice important. Depending on the weather, it can be treacherous. There are good straights, so teams will opt for a medium down-force setting. Overtaking is difficult, with the best opportunities at the first corner and the hairpin turn.

That first corner is notorious for ending drivers' races at the start.

SPORTS briefs...

BOXING: David Haye and Dereck Chisora come head to head this Saturday in a grudge match that has been boiling over since the infamous brawl at a press conference last February.

The then retired Haye and Chisora exchanged blows after Chisora lost a WBC title bout to Vitali Klitschko. The winner of this fight is expected to get a shot at fighting one of the Klitschko brothers.

Amir Khan is also boxing on Saturday night against American Danny Garcia for the WBC light welterweight title in Las Vegas.

STRANGE SPORTS: Three Americans and a Brit were gored earlier this week during the annual running of the bulls in the city of Pamplona.

The runners, dressed only in white except for a red handkerchief, try to stay ahead of the bulls, which can weigh as much as 620 kilograms.

Half a million people were expected to arrive to celebrate San Fermin festival, made famous by Hemmingway's *The Sun Also Rises*.

Richard Hammond from BBC's *Top Gear* was filmed participating in the bull run.

FOOTBALL: The Russian Football Union released an ambitious shortlist of managers they would like to replace the departed Dick Advocaat.

The list contains such high-profile candidates as Pep Guardiola, Rafael Benitez, Harry Redknapp, Fabio Capello and Marcello Lippi.

In other news, new Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers is open to Andy Carroll going out on loan, Queens Park Rangers bought Park Ji-Sung from Manchester United and Diego Maradona was sacked as manager of United Arab Emirates side Al Wasl.

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Andaman Eagles drown Islanders

Krabi prevails over Phuket in wet and wild Phanga Bay derby

A SINGLE goal by Krabi FC captain Thaweepong Jaranrup was enough to defeat Phuket FC at Surakul stadium in a wet and wild Phang Nga Bay derby match on Saturday night.

By the time the Andaman Eagles started warming up at 5pm, Surakul's waterlogged pitch had already been soaking the monsoon's fury throughout much of the day.

Despite being perched high in third place of the TPL Yamaha One league table, Krabi would not be taking 13th placed Phuket lightly.

As the Andaman Eagles could be seen warming up long before the home side, early-arriving fans – largely decked in yellow – knew they were in for an exciting evening, despite the grey atmosphere.

By the time the Islanders took to the field, close to 6pm, much of the covered stands were already full.

The official attendance for the game was a reported 3,200, making it the highest home turnout for Phuket so far this season.

The two Southern side's supporters had set up their cheer band in dry sections on opposite ends of the sheltered stands – Phuket's Hulk on the north, Krabi's Energy on the South – playing identical cheers.

Meanwhile, late showing cheer squads, Krabi's Yellow Blue set up base next to Phuket's iconic "12th man" fan club shirt, with Phuket's Hardcore faithfully in their usual spot exposed to the harsh elements – just like the players.

At first it wasn't clear which side a large number of neutral-appareled spectators in the covered stands stood on. All became clear in the 77th minute, however, when Thaweepong earned his second goal of the

Football: Thai Yamaha 1

season, narrowly beating Alonso at the near post.

Indeed, the ensuing celebrations revealed that the number of visitors closely matched the scattered home sides following. And the visitors continued to dominate, as they had throughout the match, enjoying most of the scoring chances, giving Phuket's Da Silva a work out.

Phuket beefed up its attack strategy, pulling out key defender Nenebi in the back to free up one of their places for foreign player quota (TPL allows each team a maximum three non-Asians to field).

Coach Joksic nominated Phuket's star premier league forward, Ibrahim Kanoute.

But even as a superior dribbler and more skillful player, the Ivorian – on loan from Muangthong United – struggled to adapt to the swampy dynamics of Andaman monsoon.

And just when hope was slimming for Phuket, a hard drive and fall late in the game by Thawin Butsomat near the goal line caught the attention of the referee.

Home fans relished in the golden opportunity that had been granted.

Krabi keeper Anusorn Chansod was yellow carded for the take down, sending the visitor fan base into rage.

Such mood was instantly shifted in reverse when Phuket leading scorer Wacharakorn "Bird" Klaithin missed his shot and opportunity to gain his fourth of the season.

Anusorn read the low shot, redeeming the ref's call redundant while triggering the stands into an

energetic eruption of cheer for the second time of the night.

Despite five minutes given for extra time, and seeing the towering Da Silva run the length of the pitch to try and give Phuket an added attack advantage, Krabi prevailed.

The result saw the Andaman Eagles move up to second place of the table, two points behind Ratchaburi, who maintained their league reign, with a 5-3 home win over PTT Rayong.

Suphanburi FC also maintained momentum with a convincing 3-0 victory over Bangkok United (29 points), moving up into 3rd place, just one point and spot behind Krabi.

Draws by Saraburi (away against Rajpracha) and Phatthalung (home against JW Rangsit) resulted in Phuket dropping back down into the final relegation zone spot, 14th place.

Phuket went on to lose their Toyota League Cup match on Wednesday night (See right) against Samutprakarn United.

With no more tournaments for Phuket, their next match is against 6th placed PTT Rayong on Saturday. For the latest results, check the *Gazette* sports online.

Phuket are set to return home to conclude the season's first leg with another tough regional rivalry match against Songkhla FC on July 22.

In 10th place with one game in hand, Songkhla – who beat Krabi 2-0 at home back in March – will be the subject of yet another epic showdown at Surakul Stadium.

Rain or shine, thousands of fans will look forward to watch live the keeper face off between Phuket's Brazilian Da Silva and Songkhla's Frenchman, former Phuket keeper, Jonathan Matijas.

– Steven Layne



BATTLE OF THE BAY: The match's only scorer, Krabi Captain Thaweepong Jaranrup (yellow) challenges Marcio Santos. Photo: Peerapat Rattana

TOYOTA LEAGUE CUP ROUND TWO		
Southern Side Matches - July 11, 2012		
	S Prakarn Utd 1 - 1 Phuket FC (PEN 5-4)	
	SP Customs Utd 1 - 1 Krabi FC (PEN 4-3)	
	Kasetsart U 1 - 1 WuaChon Utd (EXT 1-2)	
	Pattani FC 2 - 1 OM Saraburi	
	Songkhla FC 2 - 2 TOT SC	
	Hat Yai FC 0 - 1 Buriram Utd	
	Phatthalung FC 2 - 4 Bangkok Glass FC	

Boxing bout 'shells' out



Fighters stand behind officials and promoters. Photo: SiamSport

HELPING to bring Phuket's sea turtles back from the brink, WBO Oriental Bantamweight (118lbs) title fights recently saw Thailand's boxers maintain their dominance over Filipino fighters. As part of a Thai Channel 7 series, the WBO Bantam-weight title belt was flown in by helicopter and carried by armed Thai soldiers, who made a rapid-descent (fast-roping) from their helicopter. Thai boxer Pungluang Sor Singyu (42-1-0) defeated Filipino Rey Migreno (16-21-3) by an unanimous points decision in the main event. The event raised an estimated 3 million baht according to organizers – money that will be used for sea turtle conservation projects.

The venue was changed from Nai Yang Beach at the last minute to the multi-purpose hall at Phuket Airport due to the recent bad weather. Singyu controlled the pace of the fight early on, landing several heavy combinations to the midsection of Migreno as they neared the closing bell of the first round. Migreno found himself unable to connect with the uppercut he so desperately sought throughout the fight, due to solid footwork and a tight guard by Singyu. Migreno landed some effective punches in the third and fourth rounds using his reach advantage, but they weren't heavy enough for a knockout and weren't enough for the judges either.

The five-bout card was sponsored by M-150 and attended by Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha, Government Spokesman Prompong Nopparit and other local dignitaries. The Andaman Region's beaches traditionally hosted 5,000 to 10,000 sea turtle nests. That number has now dwindled to just a few hundred. The trend indicates that sea turtles, many species of which are already listed as "highly endangered", could be on the way to total extinction in local waters.

– Chris Hudon

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Sport

Toyota races back to Phuket

By Atchaa Khamlo

THE Toyota Motor Sport Series is set to return to Phuket next week, with organizers hoping to repeat the resounding success of last year's edition.

This year's program was announced last week at a press conference held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel.

Presiding over the conference were Phuket V/Gov Sommai Prijasilpa and Vice Director of Toyota Motor Thailand Company Nikorn Prasertsom, who lauded preparations.

The Toyota Motor Sport Series 2012 will feature a total of 50 cars to race in three categories including: Yaris One Make Race Class C, Vios One Make Race Lady Cup and Vios One Make Race Class C.

Among the racers will be four university students from different parts of Thailand who were selected by the Toyota Racing School Team after passing a number of rigorous tests, devised by some of Thailand's Championship winning drivers, in both driving theory and practice.

In addition to racing, spectators will be treated to an array of per-

formances and activities at this year's event, which also coincides with and thus celebrates Toyota Thailand's 50th anniversary.

Among these include the Champion Performance Show, which will give Toyota's best driving instructors the chance to show off their skills.

The Toyota 86 Drift Show will feature famous drift driver

KiKi Sak Nana in a rear wheel drive sports edition, Toyota 86.

Thailand's Super Car Champion 2011 Nattawut Charoensukwattana will perform a Toyota Team Thailand Victory Show.

The Legend Show will feature energizing performances from popular Thai superstars, including Pete Thongjue, Um Ummanin and Kratae Supaksorn.

Students from Phuket will take part in a cheering team contest with more than 70,000 baht in prizes up for grabs. Thai superstar Bank (of the band Clash) will play a free concert in Sapan Hin on Sunday at 6pm to bring the event to a close.

Racing commences at Sapan Hin July 21-22 from 7am to 5pm.

Qualifiers are on Saturday with the finals to be held on Sunday.



SPEED DEMONS: Toyota Vios racing cars tearing up the track in Malaysia last month.

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Young sailors to race in Raceweek 2012



READY TO ROCK AND ROLL: The Phuket Youth Sailing Team let out a cheer in anticipation of their race in the Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek 2012. Photo: Graham Collier

LOCAL Thai children are due to set course for adventure thanks to an opportunity to compete in Cape Panwa Phuket Raceweek 2012 to be held this weekend. Two Phuket-based businesses; Sunsail Thailand and Phuket Island Radio (91.5FM) have come together to provide the Youth Sailing Team with all the necessary supplies.

Phuket Raceweek is now in its ninth year. Last year, in 2011, 38 boats entered the event with approximately 400 participants, helping to maintain Phuket

Raceweek's reputation as the fastest-growing regatta in Asia.

"It's great to team up and offer a brand new yacht to the Phuket Youth Sailing Team so they can participate in one of Asia's most exciting regattas. I'm sure they will enjoy the week, learn a great deal and hopefully go on to have successful careers in the marine industry," says Kevin Quilty, Managing Director of Sunsail Thailand.

The Regatta is organized by Image Asia Events under the auspices of the Ao Chalong Yacht

Club (ACYC), in conjunction with the Yacht Racing Association of Thailand, and is staged under the authority of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT).

"This is one of the most exciting community projects we've undertaken since the station started in 2008. We're delighted that Sunsail is joining with us in providing the boat, skipper and other necessary training and equipment to these kids.

"I'm sure this is going to be a memorable week for these youths who normally don't get to partici-

pate in major Asian regattas," says Byron Jones of 91.5 FM.

The team's vice president and coach Kathleen (Katy) Gooch was delighted at the announcement saying, "The young sailors are really excited to have this opportunity and are looking forward to the challenge of racing on a 40-foot yacht. Most team members are between 12 and 17 years old and have recently had success in the Phuket Youth Games."

Phuket Raceweek was voted "Best Asian Regatta of The Year"

at the Asia Boating Awards 2011, making it the second of Thailand's six regattas to win the prestigious award. Grenville Fordham, Managing Director of Image Asia and the regatta organizer said, "We've supported youth sailing in Phuket and Koh Samui for several years and it's great to see these kids, who usually sail small dinghies, get a chance to race on a 'big boat', in a major regatta. It'll be a new experience for them and hopefully strengthen their passion for sailing." — *Phuket Gazette*

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