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Officials push to slash Phuket's road accident death toll

INSIDE TODAY

September 15 - 21, 2012

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■ TAXIS MUST DISPLAY DETAILS OF DRIVER, UNIQUE NUMBER FOR IDENTIFICATION

Taxis agree to standard fares

■ Benchmark agreement sets fares across all of Phuket; launches complaints hotline

By **Atchaa Khamlo**

MORE than 50 representatives from taxi organizations across Phuket have agreed to a schedule of standard fares to be charged island-wide.

The benchmark agreement, which is expected to resolve many of the issues – and violent conflicts – related to fares charged, was forged at a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on Wednesday.

The schedule of standard fares will be posted on notice boards at main taxi ranks in six main tourist areas across the island, including at Central Festival Phuket on the bypass road, on Thaweewong Road (the beach road) and Rath-U-Thit 200 Pi Road in Patong, and along the beach road in Kata-Karon.

"Each main tourist area, including Kata-Karon, Patong, Kamala, Rawai, Phuket Town and Phuket Airport, will have these fares posted at main taxi ranks so people can see the fares before getting into the taxi," explained Jaturong Kaewkasi of the Phuket Land Transportation Office (PLTO).

"The fares must be listed in English and Thai, but operators can add other languages, such as Russian and Chinese at their discretion.

"Taxi rank operators will need about a week to have...

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A worker at Harbin Electric Company waits patiently at his station. Photo: Chris Hudon

'HARBINGER' OF THE FUTURE

CHINA: Waiting patiently for the dawn of a new industrial era. Special report by Chris Hudon.

Full story on Pages 16-17



Scuba divers remove a net from a coral reef as part of an underwater cleanup. Photo: NOAA Photo Library

PADI shoots for their biggest underwater cleanup ever

Full story on Page 4

Inaction over inferno sparks fire-safety blitz

By Chaiyot Yongcharoenchai

THE lack of follow-up on fire safety standards more than a month after the deadly Tiger Discotheque inferno on August 17 that killed four people, has prompted Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha to launch a campaign to improve fire safety at large public venues across the island.

Governor Tri told the *Gazette* that he had already called on the heads of Phuket's three District Offices to boost their fire-prevention measures. "I have also asked the District Office chiefs to step up building fire safety inspections in their respective areas," he added.

However, top of the governor's list are entertainment venues where large crowds gather.

"I am calling all business...

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Taxis agree to set fares

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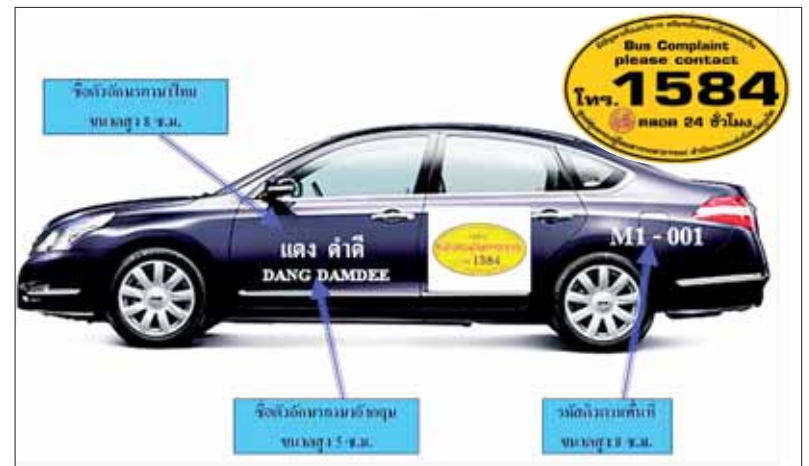
the notice boards made, so we expect the boards to up in about two weeks. The fares agreed to were reportedly already in use by most taxi operators on the island, so it was relatively easy for them to agree to make them standard," he added.

Although all the key parties involved had agreed to the list of fares, the Provincial Office had yet to ratify the list and will make it official by proclaiming it at a later date, Mr Jaturong said.

As part of the agreed conditions for drivers to legally operate taxis, the vehicles must have a sticker on the outside showing the complaints hotline number 1584. Inside the vehicle the details of the driver, including name and license plate number of the vehicle must be displayed.

"The list of fares must be shown inside the vehicle and each taxi vehicle must be branded with a unique letter-number combination to identify that exact vehicle," Mr Jaturong said.

"Having passengers being able to identify the vehicle by remembering a simple code shown plainly on the outside of the car or van [such as 'M1-001'] is expected to help reduce crime. It will help



Taxis must display details of drivers and unique identification numbers.

passengers identify which vehicles they were in if they are, for example overcharged, and it will therefore help police identify which drivers are wanted for questioning.

"We hope that the end result is that the 'bad' drivers will sooner or later withdraw their license, leaving only the 'good' drivers to serve tourists and other passengers," he added.

Representatives from taxi ranks also suggested that each taxi organization have its own uniform, with the names of the driver on the shirt. "This has yet to be agreed on, but at this stage it sounds like a good idea," Mr Jaturong said.

At the meeting it was con-

firmed that there were 651 legally registered taxis in Phuket, but the PLTO had received 3,594 applications for private vehicles to be registered as taxis.

"Of these, 1,277 applications are from people who already work for a taxi rank. These applications are the only ones we will approve for now," Mr Jaturong said.

The PLTO was expecting at least 700 more applications before registration closes this Saturday, September 15.

"This is to allow any drivers already working for a legitimate taxi rank to file their application" Mr Jaturong said.

[See the Phuket Gazette website for the list of agreed taxi fares.]

No memorial for One-Two-Go

By Orawin Narabal

THERE will be no official memorial service this Sunday, September 16, to honor the 89 people who died in the crash landing of One-Two-Go Flight OG269 five years ago.

"It is not a day to remember. It was a tragedy and we do not want to perpetuate horrible memories of the incident," Phuket Airport Director Prathuang Sornkham told the *Gazette*.

When asked what respects people visiting the airport to commemorate the event would be permitted to perform, he replied, "We have no policy. We have received no requests from people saying they want to pay their respects to those who died in the crash."

Mr Prathuang explained that



The wreckage of One-Two-Go Flight OG269. Photo: Gazette file

Phuket Airport has improved some safety procedures since the accident five years ago.

"Our facility meets the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization [ICAO] and every year we are inspected by the Department of Civil Aviation to make sure our safety procedures meet international standards," he said.

Orient Thai, the parent company that operates One-Two-Go, and its CEO Udom Tantiprasongchai have never faced any remedial action as a result of the crash despite an inquiry by Thai officials and a British Coroner's Inquest citing a "deficient approach to air safety... with disastrous and tragic consequences."

Police close case on death of German expat woman

POLICE do not suspect foul play in the death of a foreign woman found dead in her Phuket villa last Sunday morning.

Cherng Talay Police inspector Sarubadee Butranongsaeng told the *Gazette* that the woman was found dead by her husband at her home in Baan Layan.

He named the deceased as German national Maria Makeenta, as identified by her husband.

"We were told that she had cancer and had been seeing a doctor regularly," Lt Col Sarubadee explained.

Mrs Makeenta's body was taken to Thalang Hospital to con-



Foul play was not suspected in the death of Maria Makeenta.

firm the cause of death, after which it was to be handed over to relatives for a funeral service, Col Sarubadee said.

— *Thawit Bilabdullar*



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'Killer cop' kicked off police force



Rachaporn Semaksorn is still waiting for an arrest warrant to be issued. Photo: Gazette file

THE off-duty police officer accused of shooting a man dead in Phuket Town on May 5 has been kicked off the police force, but has yet to face charges for the killing.

Rachaporn Semaksorn was discharged from the Royal Thai Police about a month ago after months of being relegated to desk duties, Patong Police Deputy Superintendent Kittipong Klaikaew told the *Gazette* on Tuesday.

However, Rachaporn is still waiting for an arrest warrant to be issued by the court for the killing of Eakkasit Sangam, Lt Col Kittipong added.

Rachaporn and his brother, Dechaporn, who was present the time of the shooting, are both currently out on police bail.

"We needed more [witness] statements, which I submitted on August 6. Since then I have not had any other requests regarding the case," Phuket City Police Station Deputy Superintendent Jumroon Plaiduang.

However, Phuket Provincial Chief Public Prosecutor Chiengsean Panhya told the *Gazette* that more statements were still needed.

— **Orawin Narabal**

Inflamed Governor orders inspections for fire safety

From page 1

operators of large venues in Phuket to come to meetings where we can explain to them what the law requires in terms of fire safety and building regulations. We have started with night entertainment venues first, because the operators of those kinds of businesses seem to not fully understand building safety standards," Gov Tri said.

"They should be aware that there will be regular inspections. If they fail to meet any of the criteria, we will have no choice but to order them to close until the problem is fixed," he warned.

Among the "criteria" is a regulation introduced in March this year limiting the amount of light or flammable materials used building or decorating large venues, such as the foam used in making the original iconic Tiger Disco decor.

Initial reports by fire investigators identified the foam as one of the main contributors to the spread of the deadly fire last month.

Although the operators of Tiger Disco admitted that much of the original decor at the ill-fated nightclub was made from highly flammable foam when the venue was built 10 years ago, they later claimed that much of it was replaced by concrete features in order to comply with the new regulation.

To this, Governor Tri is granting large venue operators 180 days to make all necessary modifications to their buildings in all to meet all building safety requirements.

"We have spoken to some of the entertainment venue business



Outraged by the lack of action by officials, Governor Tri (pictured here at Tiger Disco, in black jacket) has ordered an island-wide crackdown on all public venues where large crowds gather. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

owners in Phuket Town and in Patong, including Tiger Group. Those we have already spoken with have been given 180 days to change or modify their structures.

"We will go back and check every three months after the [180-day] deadline to ensure that they are still complying with the required laws," he said.

After the key entertainment venues on the island are brought under closer scrutiny, next on the list are shopping malls and convenience stores.

"I am not too worried about them since the safety measures they already have in place are much



Governor Tri inside Tiger Disco.

better than the entertainment venues. They even have their buildings inspected once a year. They seem to follow the law quite well and have good safety precautions, but

still, they have to be inspected once a year," Gov Tri said.

However, he added that government officers who approve building permits for structures that breach fire regulations will also be in the firing line.

"If we find out that the building permit is not right, not only will the building owner be held responsible, but also the person who signed off as approving it," he told the *Gazette*.

Governor Tri cited Patong Municipality as an example for being responsible for approving the building permit for the Tiger Discotheque.

Dokset appears in court over 'business conflict'

STEIN Havard Dokset, the Norwegian Phuket expat charged with the murder of his ex-girlfriend Rungnapa Sukdong in February, appeared in court on Monday in an unrelated business case.

"He is the plaintiff suing foreign acquaintances who were previously his business partners," a Phuket Provincial Court officer told the *Gazette*.

"I can only tell you that the case closed yesterday [Monday], but the judgment is not to be made public at this time," he said.

Following Dokset's arrest on February 28, Lt Col Boonlert Onklang of the Chalong Police told the *Gazette* that a formal complaint was filed with Chalong Police on August 4, 2009.

A Swedish man, who he identified only as "Jan", filed the complaint, accusing Mr Dokset of defrauding him out of 68,000 Norwegian krone. "Mr Jan said he



Stein Havard Dokset appeared in court on Monday. Photo: Gazette file

asked Mr Dokset to look after the money because he knew Mr Dokset had a safe in his home. He also claimed he gave Mr Dokset 500,000 baht in cash to look after.

"But when the Swedish man asked for his money back, Mr Dokset... claimed that the man did not give the money to him," he said.

— **Orawin Narabal**

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Go-Eco Phuket goes for record

Phuket to stage biggest PADI reef cleanup in world

By Isaac Stone Simonelli

GO-ECO Phuket, a recently established marine environmental group, announced on Tuesday that it is now looking to stage the biggest PADI "Diving for Debris" reef cleanup project on record on September 30.

The event escalated from what was originally expected to be a reef cleanup carried out by a coalition of several PADI dive centers on the island to the largest dive against debris project in PADI's history.

The project is sponsored by PADI and the Project AWARE Foundation, a nonprofit group established by PADI in 1989, which held its first International Cleanup Day in 1993.

"I thought it would be the biggest reef cleanup in Thailand, and then we found out maybe the biggest reef cleanup in Asia... then

about four days ago we looked at the figures, and if everything goes to plan, it will be the biggest [PADI] 'Dive Against Debris' in the world," said PADI regional manager Tony Andrews on Tuesday.

The Go-Eco Phuket project gained momentum on Monday after a meeting with several government offices including the Phuket Provincial Administration Office, the Marine Police, the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources and the Royal Thai Navy Region 8. The meeting concluded with the various offices offering their full support to the project, said Mr Andrews.

Department of Marine and Coastal Resources donated a speedboat for the day as well as two dinghies to transport non-divers to the beach for the beach cleanup.

In addition to some other logistical support, the Marine Police will escort the dive boats for protection and the Royal Thai Navy Region 8 has assigned four Thai Navy SEALs for security on a liveaboard boat. The liveaboard boat will be staying overnight off one of the islands as dive professionals attempt to raise larger pieces of rubbish, explained Mr Andrews.

The project currently has 13 dive boats and more than 200 volunteers registered. However, with the number of interested participants, the group is looking for more boats to be donated to the cause.

Currently, only five of the 13 boats have corporate sponsors: Hilton Worldwide, Rumblefish Adventures, British Business Association of Phuket, Reef Check and Skai. Corporate sponsorship is 15,000 baht and covers the cost of the fuel for the boats, the use of



A diver in Florida deals with the tyres that mark the US state's disasters attempt of creating an artificial reef in the 1960s. Photo: Matthew Hoelscher

which have been donated to the cause by several dive companies.

In conjunction with the reef and beach cleanup, the Society Environment Economy Knowledge (SEEK), a local environmental group established to create continuity within the "green movement" in Phuket, has volunteered to establish and run a pre-dive education program for local school children.

The program is expected to run for about an hour on Chalong Pier.

The reef cleanup is also sponsored the *Phuket Gazette* and will be covered on national television (UBC/True Visions, channel 99) by the *Gazette's* new show *Phuket Today*.

Phuket businesses interested in joining the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the *Gazette* as a sponsor of "Dive Against Debris" are invited to contact any local PADI dive center, or Tony Andrews, Regional Manager of PADI, at Tony.Andrews@padi.com.au.

Chalong seeks B300mn for flood prevention



Chalong Mayor Samran Jindaphol has spearheaded the request for 300 million baht in funding for a flood prevention system in Chalong.

THE Chalong Municipality has requested 300 million baht in funding from the Royal Irrigation Department for a permanent flood-prevention system after last month's floods again highlighted the issue of flash flooding in Phuket.

The project proposes the construction of retaining walls along all canals in the Chalong area to prevent debris and soil from clogging and disrupting the water flow, which was cited as one of the causes of the recent flooding.

"The Chalong area usually floods after heavy rain, partly due to the narrowing of canals by soil slipping into the water and people throwing rubbish into them," said Chalong Mayor Samran Jindaphol.

The municipality has already

budgeted 20 million baht for the dredging of canals in the 2013 fiscal year, he said.

"There are many canals in the Chalong area that allow surface water to be diverted directly out to the ocean. The main two are Klong Bang Kata and Klong Thanon Chao Fa. We have already dredged those two canals and are now planning to work on the rest in the Chalong area," he explained.

In addition to the building of retaining walls, the Chalong Municipality is planning on building a 15-million-baht water gate, which, it is hoped, will solve the flooding problems near Ladthi Wanaram Temple (Wat Tai) on Chao Fa East Road.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

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Road safety campaign to slash island death toll to 50 per year

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

OFFICIALS are moving ahead with a campaign to reduce the number of deaths on Phuket's roads to just 50 per year within the next three years.

Last year, 116 died in road accidents in Phuket.

The move is part of a nationwide campaign to reduce the road accident death toll in conjunction with the United Nations' "Decade of Action for Road Safety", which aims to reduce the global toll from the current 3,500 lives lost every day in traffic accidents around the globe.

Dr Weeraphan Suphanchaimat, vice president of a national committee tasked with tackling road safety issues, chaired a seminar in Phuket Town on Monday, which was attended by more than 350 representatives of organizations assisting in the project throughout Southern Thailand.

Dr Weeraphan explained to the gathering that a target of reducing the national road death toll by 30 per cent by next year had been established.

Dr Wiwat Seetamanotch, deputy direc-



Dr Weeraphan hopes to see the death toll in Phuket drop below 50 in the next three years.

tor of the Phuket Health Office, said, "According to the World Health Organization, more than 1.2 million people die in road accidents each year. In Thailand, more than 16,000 people were killed and nearly a mil-

lion people were injured in road accidents in last year alone."

Despite the carnage, driving behavior was not improving, Dr Wiwat said.

"About 30 per cent of drivers involved

in road accidents are drunk. Also, only about 50 per cent of people wear helmets when riding a motorbike, or a seat belt when travelling in a car," he said.

Dr Wiwat added that the Department of Highways estimated that road accidents across Thailand in 2008 alone cost the national economy about 232 billion baht.

"According to the information we have, the number of the deaths in road traffic accidents per 100,000 citizens in Southern Thailand is considered relatively high compared with other parts of the country.

"However, Phuket is one of the top three provinces in the country for having the most motorbike riders wearing helmets. We have found that this has helped to reduce the number of deaths in traffic accidents in Phuket by 40 per cent, when compared with [the number of deaths] just five years ago.

"Hopefully, in the next three years the number of the deaths on Phuket's roads will be less than 50 people per year," said Dr Wiwat.

As part of the campaign, the Phuket Highways Office is spending 84 million baht on making 40 road accident "black spots" across the island safer.

Villagers' plea to keep road, power supply after park raid

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

THE community of farmers living on a road leading into Sirinath Marine National Park, on Phuket's west coast, have appealed for the road and power supply to their village not be cut off following a police complaint being filed against a nearby villa project for encroaching on national park land.

In making the plea, Jaroon Boonchu presented to Sirinath Park chief Cheewapap Cheewatham a petition signed by 20 heads of families living in Baan Layan Moo 7, in Cherng Talay.

"The villagers have been living on Layan Soi 7 for 30 to 40 years. People who live here use this street to transport rubber, vegetables and fruit that they grow. Demolishing the road and pulling down the power poles would affect us," explained Mr Jaroon.

"There are about 20 families living along that road and about 30 rubber plantation operators in the area. We are afraid that we will have no electricity and no direct access to our village," he added.

The villagers live on the same road that leads to one of the developments under investigation for encroaching on Sirinath National Park.

Park chief Cheewapap last week filed a police complaint against the claimant landowner for encroaching on park land. It was the fifth police complaint he had filed for park encroachment as a result of the August 15 raids.



Jaroon Boonchu presents the petition signed by 20 heads of families living in Baan Layan Moo 7, Cherng Talay. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong



The entrance to the street that borders on the park. Image: Google Earth

"We will have to see how the case goes. If the court orders that everything built illegally on state land is to be removed, we will have no choice but to follow the order," said Mr Cheewapap.

"However, I don't want the

villagers to worry too much about it. By law, roads and power poles meant for public use can be on national park or public land, but permission must be granted from the national park first," he explained.

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Phuket Food Festival goes alcohol free

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

FOR the first time in its 15-year-history, the annual Phuket Good Taste Food Festival at Saphan Hin in Phuket Town this year will be held without any alcohol for sale and with no plastic food containers.

Announcing the news last week, Phuket City Mayor Somjai Suwansupana said that about 100 booths selling food will be at this year's week-long festival, together generating about 10 million baht.

Mayor Somjai explained that the restaurateurs taking part in the festival themselves requested that no alcohol be sold at this year's festival, which started on Friday.

"The festival is intended to support and promote local food vendors and to help boost their sales. The food vendors asked us this year to hold the festival without any alcohol for sale for the very first time," she said.

Although no alcohol will be sold at the fair, visitors may bring their own, but may not consume alcohol in a designated "booze-free" area to be set aside at the festival.

Songkran Pakchokdee, director of the government-affiliated Stop Drink Network, said that he expected the booze ban to have little effect on visitor turnout.



On center stage at Saphan Hin, 'Dear At Ten' (in gold top) will entertain the 'dry' visitors at the Festival. Photo: Facebook

"This is the first time the Stop Drink Network has joined the Phuket Food Festival. We have joined many other festivals in other provinces where drinking has caused a lot of trouble.

"At first, we were afraid fewer people would come to the festivals because no alcohol was being sold, but so far we have seen that the festivals still attract a lot of people," he said.

"Phuket has its own local food as its selling point. I believe a lot of visitors will come to this festival," he added.

Mayor Somjai also pointed out that her officers will be monitoring food hygiene at the festival.

"We will ask the food operators not to put MSG [monosodium glutamate], artificial citric acid or any other additives in their food. Officers from Phuket City Municipality's Public Health Department will test food at every booth at the festival to make sure it is clean and safe for consumers," she explained.

Regular visitors to festivals at Saphan Hin might have noticed that many of the stall operators over the past year have switched to using long-life, eco-friendly, energy-efficient light bulbs to light up their stalls, instead of regular energy-hungry light bulbs.



Alcohol and plastic food containers are banned for the 15th Phuket Food Festival, but if the food last year is anything to go by, this year should be just as good. Photo: Gazette file

This year, they will also cease using styrofoam containers for serving their food, opting to use biodegradable containers instead.

Chaisin Jiasakul, president of the Phuket City Restaurant Operators Association, highlighted that in addition to the usual low-priced fare on offer, the festival will host many stage performances as free entertainment throughout the festival.

Among the artists performing live on

center stage will be "Dear At Ten", known for her sexy song and dance performances; as well as Southern Thai *luk thung* (Thai country) singers O Para and the bands Zuzu and Dalah Sao Satul, and the Teng Noi Copy Show comedy performance. Local bands are also booked to play.

The fair, being held at the central stage area at Saphan Hin Public Park in Phuket Town, will be open from 4pm to 11pm daily until September 22.

Cherng Talay Police seize heroin and capture the dealers

POLICE on September 5 arrested a heroin dealer from Narathiwat, seizing more than 80 grams of heroin, as well as a stash of dried marijuana from one of his agents.

The arrest was announced at a press conference led by Cherng Talay Police Superintendent Jirasak Siangsak held the same morning as the arrest.

Col Jirasak presented to the press two suspects: Wissanu "Wit" Dumnoy, a 40-year-old resident of Tak Bai District in Narathiwat; and Teerayut Gaysorn, 30, from Takua Thung District, Phang Nga.

The arrests followed an investigation by undercover police who caught Mr Teerayut in the act of chopping up some marijuana at Leping Beach, immediately north of Cherng Talay, at 2am.

A search of his rented flat nearby uncovered 22.1 grams of heroin, 200 grams of dried marijuana and drug-taking paraphernalia. Police estimated the value of the recovered powder at 50,000 baht.

Under questioning at Cherng Talay Police Station, Mr Teerayut identified his supplier as Mr Wissanu, residing at a home on Soi Pasak 5 in Cherng Talay.

Police raided the home, where they found 12 vials of heroin weighing a total of 60 grams in a bag. Police estimated the value of the heroin at 120,000 baht.

Under questioning, Mr Wissanu confessed to having sold drugs in the Thalang area "for a long time".

He originally rented a house in Baan Don, but then moved to his current home in the Pasak area in

order to avoid arrest after he began to fear that Cherng Talay Police had been informed of his activities, police quoted him as saying.

Mr Wissanu told police that he sourced the heroin from a "big supplier" in Tak Bai, who sent the drugs to Phuket stashed inside reams of documents that were sealed in addressed manila envelopes. These were then transported on air-conditioned buses plying the Su-ngai Kolok to Phuket route.

His customers would pay him through electronic transactions made into a bank account opened under his mother's name, he said.

Both men were charged with possession of a Category 1 drug with intent to sell.

— Thawit Bilabdullar



Superintendent Jirasak Siangsak briefs the press on the arrests of Wissanu 'Wit' Dumnoy (red shirt) and Teerayut Gaysorn at Cherng Talay Police Station. Photo: Thawit Bilabdullar

Getting ready for the tourists with the 'Big Cleaning Day'

THE three district offices of Phuket staged cleanups at public areas across the island on September 6 as part of the "Big Cleaning Day" initiative.

More than 500 people, including government officers, staff from private businesses as well as local students and residents, gathered at Saphan Hin Park in Phuket Town, where the Muang District Office held its cleanup.

Thalang District Office staged a similar cleanup at Surin Beach, while Kathu District Office held another in front of the Kathu District Office.



One of the many students assisting with the big cleanup.

At Saphan Hin, Vice Governor Sommai Prijasilpa explained to participants, "The government is

moving ahead with plans to promote tourism in Phuket that will see more than 12 million people coming to Phuket each year.

"Since we are the hosts of our province, we have to prepare and be ready in every aspect in order to welcome the tourists, which will be twice the number of tourists that we have now," she said.

"Cleanliness is the first impression that will make the image of our province look good. Trash belongs in the bin, not on the street or elsewhere," V/Gov Sommai added.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

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Boat crewmen steal tourist's Macbook

TWO ferry crewmen were arrested and charged on Monday after CCTV evidence showed the pair stealing a laptop computer from a tourist travelling on their boat.

The victim, 31-year-old Australian Evan Russell Darnley-Pentes, was returning with a friend from Phi Phi Island the previous day when the theft occurred.

However, it was only after his return to Rassada Pier that he realized that his MacBook Pro laptop had been taken.

Mr Russel requested to see footage from the boat's security CCTV system.

The boat's video showed that the theft occurred from the lower deck about 10 minutes after the *Andaman Wave Travel* ferry had departed Phi Phi Island.

Mr Russell recorded footage from the CCTV monitor using his iPhone and reported the incident to the Tourist Police.

Tourist Police contacted the boat manager to have the suspects at the pier at 11am the next day when the *Andaman Wave Travel* docked.

Police meeting the boat identified two men they wished to question and took them into custody. After questioning the suspects, police escorted them to a computer shop at the Big C shopping center, where they said they had sold the laptop for the bargain price of 8,000 baht.

Base models of the MacBook Pro currently go for 39,900 baht.

One of the men who confessed, Manus Jantra, 23, from Songkhla told the *Phuket Gazette* that he had only taken the laptop to sell at the computer shop.

"The one who took it from the bag was 'Son', whose real name I don't know. He is about 20 years old and I don't know where he is now," said Mr Manus.

Another suspect Thawatchai Armah, 20, from Phang Nga, confessed that he was trying to cover the CCTV camera on the boat while the robbery was being done.

Both Mr Manus and Mr Thawatchai have been charged with collaborating in robbery. The shop owner himself is now facing charges of receiving stolen property.

The boat manager told Tourist Police that there had been many cases of theft from passengers in the past.

— *Atchaa Khamlo*

B153mn indoor sports center opens in town

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

SPORTS fans and spectators packed the 4,000-seat Indoor Sports Complex at Saphan Hin on September 8 for the new venue's official opening ceremony.

Built on 207 rai at a cost of about 153 million baht, the center was first used for the 28th National Youth Games held on the island earlier this year.

Among the guests at the event last Saturday were Phuket MPs Anchalee Vanich Thepabutr and Raywat Areerob, along with Phuket City Mayor Somjai Suwansupana.

"This 4,000-seat stadium is up to international standards, so we are able to host national and international sports events," Mayor Somjai said.

However, Mayor Somjai added that the new complex will not be restricted to hosting national and international events. "It can also be used by local sports associations, which makes it a great facility for developing sports within our own community."

Mayor Somjai explained that the pre-existing "gymnasium" has a capacity of only 500 seats, but will remain in use for smaller local events.

The new center was built by Phraram 2 Civil Engineering Co Ltd over 720 days at a cost 152,999,000 baht, she added. Other major Phuket developments built by Phraram 2 include the Phuket Incinerator plant, the Supalai Condo in Phuket Town and the original Simon Cabaret entertainment complex in Patong.

MP Anchalee pointed out that having such a venue would help boost Phuket's prominence in sports tourism.

"Without having a venue of this quality, we could not request for large sporting events to be held here," she said.

After a variety of entertaining activities, including marching bands, dance performances by students and "wacky games", including a "3G [three generations of ages]



The crowd was treated to a slick performance by school dancers, 'wacky games' for all ages and a display of culture (bottom right). Photos: Kritsada Mueanhawong



As a part of the opening ceremony night the sports hall held The Democrat Futsal Cup.



human centipede race", the venue was put to its first sporting use post-opening ceremony: the final rounds of the first-ever "Democrat Futsal Cup" Phuket-only futsal tournament.

See Sports page 47

Hospital staff get wet for fire safety

AS THE rain drenched locals and tourists in Phuket on September 6, staff at Patong Hospital, assisted by the emergency services, staged their annual fire evacuation drill.

"The exercise simulated a fire starting in a medical storeroom in a building next to the inpatient ward. The flames spread into the recovery ward, forcing us to evacuate the entire inpatient

building," said Hospital Director Phumin Silapunt.

As part of the exercise, medical staff attached simulated bed-ridden patients to a flying fox to evacuate them from the three-storey building.

"The exercise today was impressive. At least we know what to do if we ever have to evacuate our patients and officers from the

building, as well as coordinate our efforts with Patong Police and the Patong Municipality Fire Department," Dr Phumin told the *Phuket Gazette*.

"Also, the firefighters had the chance to become familiar with the layout of the hospital, so they will be well prepared should a fire really happen," he added.

— *Chutharat Plerin*



HERE SHE COMES: Firefighters stand at the ready to catch a patient descending the flying fox.



SAFE: Once fished out of the net the firemen are ready for the next evacuee. Photos: Chutharat Plerin

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Officers hack back island drug 'growers'



More than 60 kratom trees were cut down or uprooted in Thalang and set alight. Photo: Thawit Bilabdullar

THALANG police and district officers hacked open a path for progress in the war on drugs in Phuket by cutting down more than 60 kratom trees in Srisoonthorn on September 7.

Despite the trees being native to Southeast Asia, their leaves have been designated a controlled substance, in the same category as cannabis, since promulgation of the Kratom Act in 1943. The law made planting the trees illegal and ordered all existing trees cut down.

Local residents alerted officials to the presence of the trees after finding that teenagers in the area were stealing the leaves to make a popular party cocktail "4x100", which was allegedly linked to the deaths of Canadian sisters Audrey and Noemi Belanger on Phi Phi Island earlier this year.

However, 4x100 is not considered lethal when made using the usual ingredients of kratom leaf extract, cough syrup, cola and ice, but the alleged addition of DEET in the Belanger sisters' drinks may have introduced the tragic consequences.

"The stumps of the bigger trees were treated with a chemical to prevent them from growing back, and the smaller trees were completely uprooted," explained Chief Administration Officer Natchapol Khongkhang.

"Many households have kratom trees growing on their property. Some were growing them for personal use, but others were doing it to sell the leaves, which cost about 1,000 baht a kilogram," he added.

Mr Natchapol vowed to continue pulling down kratom trees in the district as part of his war on drugs.

— **Kritsada Mueanhawong**

Andaman ocean trash inflicting mayhem on turtles

A TURTLE with one flipper severed and another suffering a deep cut inflicted by discarded fishing nets was recovered from Karon Beach on September 6.

The discovery brought to 24 the total number of turtles rescued from Phuket and Phang Nga beaches in the past two months alone.

The turtle is now being nursed at Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC).

Dr Kongkiat Kittiwattanawong, who heads the PMBC's Endangered Species Unit, explained to the *Gazette* that, "We will administer her antibiotics and anti-inflammatory medication, just as we have done with the other sea turtles we have rescued."

"Some of them have needed operations because their flippers were cut off or cut to the bone by fishing nets, but they are all alive and receiving treatment at the center," he said.

Dr Kongkiat said 24 adult female Olive Ridley sea turtles had washed ashore since July, with 21 of them requiring medical treatment for cuts and wounds caused by nets.

"All the turtles rescued were females ready to mate. I think there will be far fewer Olive Ridley eggs laid on our beaches this year than in previous years because we're only two months into the mating season and already 24 turtles have been stranded," Dr Kongkiat said.

— **Kritsada Mueanhawong**



The turtle was seriously injured by fishing nets. Photo: Karon Tourist Rescue center

Baby elephant probes target southern camps

By Orawin Narabal

THE inspection of elephant camps in Southern Thailand, geared to ensure that all pachyderms on the premises are legal, started on September 3 and will include searches of the locations in Phuket where elephants were seized earlier this year.

"We received an order from National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department [DNP] Director-General Damrong Phidet to send Regional Natural Resources and Environment Crime Suppression Division [NREC] officers to investigate elephant camps in the South," NREC Superintendent Watcharin Phusit told the *Gazette*.

"DNP and NREC officers are to check the number of elephants in each camp and investigate further, should they uncover evidence that might indicate that any of the elephants are being kept illegally," he said.

The investigation is set to be completed by September 30, Col Watcharin said.

In February this year, Col Watcharin headed the investigation that led to three baby elephants being seized from three different camps in Phuket: the ATV @ Hill Adventure Tour camp on the road to the Big Buddha image in Kata; the Elephant Camp



Col Watcharin insists that anyone found guilty in the case involving the three baby elephants seized in Phuket will get up to four years in jail, a 40,000-baht fine, or both. Photo: OxOx

at the Laguna complex in Cherno Talay; and the PhuThai Souvenir Market in Chalong.

Samples were taken from the baby elephants in order to conduct DNA tests and confirm whether or not the elephants were related to their alleged mothers or if they were illegally taken from the wild or born to an elephant illegally taken from the wild.

Col Watcharin expected DNA test results to be available by the end of February, but still Col Watcharin is waiting.

"We have not received any DNA test results from the DNP veterinarian team who are conducting them. I met with them in August and asked for an update. They told me they were still working on it," he told the *Gazette*.

"I have no idea what the reasons for the delay are, or why we had to seize the baby elephants before the testing was done."

Col Watcharin added that he was worried that the tests were taking so long.

"If the results reveal that the baby elephants are legal, then the DNP has been wasting their and the camp owners' time," he said.

Man kidnaps self, gambles on ransom from mum

A HAPLESS gambling addict, desperate to pay back large debts, staged his own kidnapping in order to demand a ransom payment — from his own mother.

The man, 28-year-old Chalong Phisaisuk, made the rather glaring mistake of showing up to collect the money all by himself. After police hiding nearby promptly arrested him, his mum refused to pay him a single baht.

Officers were alerted to the "kidnapping" by a colleague of Mr Chalong.

Rattaphon Sodawat, 21, told police that Mr Chalong did not



report for work the previous day, but called in to say he had been kidnapped.

The "kidnappers" demanded 100,000 baht in exchange for Mr Chalong's safe release.

Mr Rattaphon informed the mother of the "victim", Pranee Phisaisuk, who called the "kidnap-

pers" back and arranged to exchange the money for her son at Nong Prajak Park, located in downtown Udon Thani.

The exchange was set for 11am on August 27, but the cops were invited, too.

Mr Chalong told police that he had pawned a friend's iPad, as well as his own two-month-old Ford Fiesta for a mere 150,000 baht.

When he still did not have enough money to pay off his debts and began receiving daily threats, he resorted to more desperate measures, he admitted.

— **Khao Sod**



46/169, Pra Baramee Rd, Kathu (Opposite Go-Kart Speedway) Phone: 082 803 0356 (Khun Philippe)

Suprise RKK cease-fire declared in Deep South

AROUND THE nation

ABOUT one hundred suspected insurgents led by a man allegedly involved in the 2004 military camp raid on Tuesday met the Fourth Army region commander in Narathiwat to declare they would cease fighting in the strife-torn Deep South.

Army Commander in Chief Gen Prayuth Chan-ocha hailed the historic meeting that took place in the Narathiwat Islam Committee office as a great step forward and achievement by both sides.

The separatist group was led by Wae-ali Copter Waji, alias, Jeh Ali, who has a bounty of 1 million baht on his head for alleged involvement in a notorious raid at an army camp in the same province eight years ago, in which four officers were killed. The raiders snatched a large cache of weapons.

Wae-ali submitted a letter to Fourth Army region commander Lt Gen Udomchai Thammasararat signed by Bedan Penyelaras Wawasan Baru Melayu Patani (Patani fighters).

In the letter they wanted to know how the government would deal with them, particularly those who face arrest warrants, and how the government would eliminate conflicts to allow all areas to see a restoration of peace.

They said they expected to get concrete answers from the



Flames rise from a burning car and building following a car bomb attack at a hotel in Pattani on July 31. Photo: AFP
INSET: Rebel leader Wae-ali Copter Waji submits a letter to Lt Gen Udomchai Thammasararat. Photo: The Nation

government and the Army.

The meeting came as a surprise and it was unclear whether the insurgents had surrendered or not. However, the Army chief said that the talks between Udomchai and the suspected separatists, believed to be members of RKK movement, was considered a great success.

"The talk had been prepared for a period of time but we could not reveal it to the public. The coordination was done through their families and society," Gen Prayuth said.

He believed the RKK members

decided to start talking with the Army because they had seen the gruesome violence perpetrated by the group. They disagreed with the use of violence, so they tried to surrender to the authorities while the group used all means to prevent them from doing that.

"What we want now is for them to surrender to the authorities while the punishment [they face] will be considered later but will be in line with the law," Prayuth said.

The Army chief confirmed they were the real RKK members, saying checks were done and the results confirmed their status.

He insisted an investigation would verify whether they were lured to join the group or not.

Meanwhile Aziz Benhawan, chairman of the Advisory Council to Promote Peace in the Southern Border Provinces hailed the meeting as a positive signal for the crisis in the far South.

Although the talks would not immediately end the violence, it was expected to lead to peace.

"The talks will send a signal to other RKK members who are active in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat to reconsider and review their actions and to end their activities."

Bangkok frets over heavy rains, flooding in North

THAILAND'S North and Upper Central regions are being lashed by heavy rain and flash flooding – as Bangkokians worry about the potential of floods in the capital this year.

More than 300 households in Uttaradit's Muang and Laplae districts were affected, with a number of residents isolated after a 100-meter stretch of road to a key bridge collapsed when hit by strong currents.

Five communities in Muang Uttaradit also suffered a flash flood with water up to 50cm deep.

Soldiers and relief workers provided assistance and supplies in the two districts, where water was about a meter deep.

In Lampang, seven districts of 13 were declared disaster zones, while around 5,000 rai of farmland in Phichit was flooded and most of the rice crop started to rot.

Meanwhile, a poll showed most Bangkokians were not fully confident about the Yingluck administration's measures to contain possible flooding.

In the Dusit poll, some 20 per cent said they thought the government was competent enough to handle a possible flood while 11 per cent said they thought the money being spent on flood prevention was unnecessary and wasteful and that more should be done in other areas, not just Bangkok.

However, the poll showed that a majority of respondents in the west of Bangkok were satisfied by the government's recent water drainage drill.

Graft chief's transfer ruffles govt feathers

THE government is scrambling to counter accusations it faces over the "suspicious" transfer of the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC) chief to a more senior, but less active post.

Last week, PACC Secretary-General Dusadee Arayawuth himself wondered aloud – to the mass media – if he had been given the job of deputy permanent secretary of the Justice Ministry because of some serious graft cases he was pursuing.

In an exclusive interview published September 6, Mr Dusadee told *The Nation*: "I can tell you that the suspects behind some big cases are quite close to certain influential figures."

He went on to wonder "which" of the cases he was investigating could have resulted in his shunt upstairs: the government's flood-relief projects, the smuggling of luxury cars, the use of fake documents to get loans from banks, illegal land rights issued for coveted plots in Phuket or resorts



PACC Secretary-General Dusadee Arayawuth. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo
encroaching into forests on Trat's Koh Chang.

All these cases involve billions of baht.

"I investigated budget reimbursement in flood-relief projects not because I want to blow up the government, but because I wanted to check if the flood victims really got help," he said.

"Once, a former classmate called to attack me, saying, 'If you make such arrests, you are not our friend, you are on their side.'"

When he rose to the helm of the PACC last year, he was seen as a red-shirt supporter. Last week's developments echo a growing split between the red shirts and the Pheu Thai-led government.

"I don't think there is an 'our side' or a 'their side' when it comes to corruption. In my opinion, we must let justice run its course," he reflected.

However, analysts wondered if he had succumbed to pressure by September 10 when he told a special press conference that his transfer was a promotion and "not related to politics".

"I hereby affirm [that] I am happy that Justice Minister Pracha Promnok has promoted me and is assigning me to be in charge of drug suppression, which I am good at. I was not pressured or persecuted by politicians," he said.

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, her deputy Chalermsak Yooamrungsri and Justice Minister Pracha all told the media there was nothing untoward in the transfer.

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Through the revolving door

AFTER eight months serving as Phuket's top-ranking police officer, Chonasit Wattanvrangkul will be transferred out of the province to continue his career elsewhere. At the same, at the end of this month, Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha will retire.

While Col Chonasit's replacement will be Narathiwat Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Chote Chawanwivat, a replacement for Governor Tri has yet to be named, just three weeks before he retires.

The *Phuket Gazette* understands the need to rotate government officers in and out of Phuket, but as Governor Tri points out (see Letter from the Governor on facing page), transferring officers too quickly after arriving in Phuket only does the province harm. The officers never get the chance to come to grips with the unique nature of Phuket that sets it apart from Thailand, never mind actually formulating and rolling out policies for the long-term benefit of the province.

Even if they were able to get that far, they would be unlikely to be around when the policies-cum-campaigns are put into action. As with Governor Tri's "last stand" on fire safety (see news pages), he will not be here to see the fruits of his efforts. He will not be here to enforce the building inspections if his underlings fail to properly carry out his orders.

To be blunt, very few high-end officers stick around long enough to suffer the embarrassment of their actions or inaction, let alone any potential legal consequences. Of course, that may well be the intention. But it does beg the question of exactly what criteria the performance of such officers is reviewed on, with so little time for their work to have any effect, positive or otherwise.

A good case in point is the Sirinath Marine National Park land probe ordered by Damrong Phidet just two weeks before his retirement. After all the hours of prime time TV coverage and all the ink spent on reporting the alleged encroachment, not one official has been named. The *Gazette* would be surprised if this were to change, despite the stated willingness of the investigators to publicly reveal the names of the resorts and companies they accuse of encroaching on park land.

In the meantime, a French businessman stands to have his multimillion baht villa demolished, even though officials have admitted, quite openly, that the man has done nothing wrong.

The *Gazette* sympathizes with the new incoming governor, whoever he or she may be. How can any official prepare for taking up the role as the leading official in a province, particularly one as important as Phuket, on such short notice?

Meanwhile, for better or for worse – you be the judge – it will be business as usual for the resident forces at work here in the land of so many virtues and disappointments.



Airport scolding leaves client sour

Can someone tell me why the immigration service [*sic*] at Phuket Airport is so bad? Most of the time only 50 per cent of the process counters are manned. In addition to this, the staff are very slow and very unfriendly. Outbound is the worst of the two, with long queues being common.

I have an APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] card, and coming into and out of Bangkok is a breeze. However, I recently went to the VIP counter at Phuket Airport and there were no passengers waiting – it was empty. I asked the officer if I could use my card; I then got a very bad scolding and was told to go to the end of another line. To make it worse, everyone heard the exchange, and my scolding, much to the general amusement of all.

What is the official position with regards to these issues. APEC is recognized everywhere except Phuket, and how about employing younger immigration officers, who at least might try to make entry and exit an experience similar to what one expects from the friendly Thai people.

Kevin
Singapore

Stop reckless riding

Re: Phuket Opinion: Time to roll on traffic law enforcement, September 9

I really like living in Thailand, but I do shudder at some of the things I see on an almost-daily basis. I wish that the police would do more to bring poor driving skills under control – and I don't mean the occasional checkpoint to inspect driving licenses.

Most of us will have passed, or been passed, by motorbikes driven by children, who are certainly under the age of 14. Overloading is another issue: how many times do you see motorbikes with three or more people on them?

To be fair, I've noticed more

Letters to the Editor

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

riders wearing helmets these days. That said, there is still an element that use a cheap plastic version purely as a "fine-protector".

One horrible practice that must catch quite a few unwary tourists out, is the "ghost rider". The ghost rider is the Muppet going against the traffic flow because they're too lazy to drive in the correct direction to the first junction, or wait for a break in traffic to join the lane they need to be in.

If only the police were proactive by following and stopping these clowns who hail from the planet Stupid. Once the fines start, word will get around, and then perhaps drivers just might slow down a bit and start to believe that they're not the only pilgrim on the road.

EarthmanJon
Phuket Town

Desperate need for smarter traffic lights

Traffic on the bypass road is getting worse. As a long-term *farang* resident, I have often wondered why there are no "smart traffic light systems" used in Phuket? I'm talking about automatic traffic light management systems that use road sensors to change traffic lights (rather than timers or being done manually) for u-turns where traffic lights are needed and even some right-hand turns.

At the bypass road heading north from the Tesco Lotus intersection and in front of Keehin, there is a very dangerous u-turn, which has already been the site of several bad accidents, and there will be more.

A traffic light is needed at this u-turn, and if a smart traffic light system was installed, then it could turn on the green light for u-turns. It would prevent a lot of accidents in the future and more than likely some lives!

Bradley Kenny
Mueng

Dead and hurt that don't wash ashore

Re: Gazette online, Phuket ocean trash inflicting mayhem on turtles, September 7

Just last week we found a turtle nearly drowned because it was trapped in a piece of old fishing net. Thank God or Buddha our captain spotted it and was able to cut her free of the net.

What's found washed onto the shore is for sure not everything [being injured and killed].

Stephen
Gazette online

Fighting for Siamese fighting fish

Beta fish, also known as Siamese fighting fish, are present in all the small 24-hour SuperCheaps on the island and I must admit, I'm curious as to why.

I could venture a guess, which would imply illegal gambling on such fish.

However, that is not what concerns me, as I buy them simply because they are elegant fish that need almost nothing in the way of aquatic aquarium comforts. What does concern me is the recent decline in the quality of fish available.

I live in the Chalong area and was looking for a new Beta fish, but found that all the fish available were surprisingly ragged. It's upsetting to see such stunning fish in such terrible condition.

Tony Kleinschmidt
Chalong

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Official reshuffle hampers progress

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR

THERE are both positive and negative effects from the yearly reshuffling of high-ranking government officials. The reshuffle does allow for officials to be transferred to places where they can better apply their expertise and successfully develop areas.

However, it also creates discontinuity, which hampers the progress of projects.

Those in charge of the reshuffle should consider a more appropriate time frame for allowing each officer to achieve some of their goals before being transferred to another province. I believe two years would be appropriate.

It takes many of the high-ranking officials who are transferred to Phuket almost a year to adapt to the system, people and other factors here that are necessary for them to understand in order to successfully do their jobs. If they were around for a second year, they would be able to perform their work to their fullest capabilities and truly make a difference.

Maj Gen Chonasit Wattanavarangkul, who has been transferred from his position as Phuket Provincial Police chief, is an excellent example. He had not even completed one year in Phuket before he was transferred. Yet, we need someone with the same talent and work ethic in Phuket to help us resolve some of the issues the island faces.

Every time we have a reshuffle like this, we have to start the whole process over again. The discontinuity affects projects such as drug suppression, which require continuity. Drug suppression requires coordination between the police



Tri Augkaradacha, 60, took office as the Governor of Phuket in October 2010. Not appearing on this year's transfer list, Gov Tri will be retiring at the end of his term on September 30.

Here, Governor Tri talks about complications created by the yearly reshuffling of high-ranking government officials.

(suppression), provincial administration (prevention) and the public health office (rehabilitation). If the head of each unit is not there long enough to work in concert with the others, the progress being made is interrupted and we are unable to fully resolve the issue.

On the other hand, when a person is transferred to Phuket but is unable to perform the job properly, or neglects their duties, there is no reason for them to continue their work on the island.

Currently, the provincial administration does not play a large role in the decision of who gets to stay and who is transferred out of the province. We have to wait for the central government in Bangkok to tell us what's happening. All we can really do is help the new officers adjust to the island and help them understand their responsibility here as quickly as possible.

At the moment, a governor cannot even reward a high-ranking official for their good work.

Because a governor does not have the power to reward or promote anyone, senior central government officials often will not listen to – or work with – provincial governors' input or advice.

There was a concept called "Provincial Governor CEO", which supposed to give each governor absolute authority over his province. This was to allow for the province to be governed in a way that was most beneficial to it, without having to take orders from the central government in Bangkok. But in reality, provincial governors do not have that level of authority.

I don't expect the central government to change the current system. They must be confident that this system is best for the country as a whole to be using it for so long. In reality it works fine, though there is still room for improvement.

All I expect from the central government is that they carefully consider the reshuffling of the high-ranking officials. Those who have done exemplary work should be allowed to serve their time in a province longer in order to continue to develop and fully establish their projects.

Phuket has many talented government officials. I just hope we can maintain the excellent quality of officers we have and work as a team to make our home a better place.

Thieves caught on camera, now what



CCTV footage taken of the alleged burglars in Chalong.

CCTV has been mentioned for a long time as a way to deter would-be criminals on Phuket and catch those who do commit a crime. High-profile cases such as the Australian travel agent murder and the alleged rape of Stevie Bamford used CCTV footage.

But what about crimes that are not deemed high profile? I have CCTV at the front and back of my house and always thought this would be a deterrent or would at least help to catch the criminals if something did happen.

At 2:36pm on a Thursday two gentlemen pulled up to the front of my house on a blue Honda Click, one alighted and walked to the back of my house where he gained entry through a downstairs window. His companion waited outside keeping guard. The burglar spent 35 minutes in my house stealing a number of things that are too painful to list here.

He walked out my front door jumped on the back of the waiting bike and went on his way. You

Island View

By Andrew Scott

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

could clearly make him out on the CCTV video I played back after the robbery.

Upon reporting the crime and taking my evidence to a police station I was informed the computers at the station don't have a program they can use to watch the video. Case closed. The officer did not try in any way to help as nothing "serious" had happened.

CCTV cameras on Phuket clearly work, but only if something serious happens. The people who are affected by the smaller crimes seem to be forgotten about. If the police refuse to use the technology they have to help the little people then it becomes a very expensive tool that serves no purpose.

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

What happens to the dogs and cats that are disappearing from Wat Tai?

I am aware that many people drop dogs and cats off at temples, such as Wat Tai [Wat Lathiwanaram].

I have started feeding the cats and dogs at Wat Tai, and taking care of them on a daily basis. Since I started, I have noticed dogs and cats are disappearing from the temple on a regular basis.

Where are they going?

*Gulnara Gasanova
Chalong*

Wat Tai (Lathiwanaram) Abbot Phra Palad Pramote Pamuthito replies:

There are many stray dogs and cats on the temple grounds, and we feed them every day.

However, we have not estab-



Why would anyone get rid of their dog or cat? Photo: Hoangnam Nguyen

lished a specific area for them to live in, which leaves them free to leave and enter the temple

grounds. Sometimes, they wander into the road, onto the roof [sic] or somewhere else, and we

do not know what happens to them. We can only give them food and a place to stay; it is just not possible to keep track of all of them.

In the past, we have had animal lovers who have visited the temple and liked a cat or dog so much that they decided to take it home with them.

Some of the animal lovers ask permission before taking the animal, others do not. There have been times when we do not find out that an animal was taken until a vendor at the temple tells us about it.

You must understand, it is impossible to know exactly where all the animals are going.

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

Submit your issue at

www.PuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

However, I can assure that we don't cull them. We are always kind and sympathetic when we deal with them.

The temple grounds are considered an animal sanctuary, so I am confident that none of us would harm them.

Championing pickup sales

Leading the pack of the Kingdom's 1-ton pickup truck market for six continuous years and counting, the Toyota Hilux Vigo Champ lives up to its name. The *Gazette's* Steven Layne recently joined a trip to Thailand's automotive industrial heart to find out what a champion is made of.

REINFORCED with continuous, cutting-edge improvements to its steering and suspension systems, the Toyota Hilux Vigo Champ looks to retain its stronghold on the domestic pickup market.

The *Gazette* had the opportunity to join an exclusive tour of Toyota Motor Thailand's (TMT) Ban Pho production plant last Friday, gaining a first-hand look at the prized truck's production and assembly line.

Comprising of some 40 members, the VIP Phuket group included representatives from the island's public and private sectors, government offices and academic institutions.

During the trip, the *Gazette* engaged in discussions with representatives from TMT as well as with Phuket's exclusive Toyota dealer.

Anusorn Kosasaeng, Sales Manager of Toyota Phuket Pearl Co Ltd, told the *Gazette* that he is confident that the brand will continue to hold its top market position.

He remarked: "The Hilux Vigo Champ has been recognized by JD Power [and associates] for being the top selling pickup truck in Thailand for six continuous years, and I don't anticipate this changing any time soon."

"As we can see, TMT continues to put a lot into research and development in response to the needs of the market."

"Namely, the latest models, launched in Thailand last month, have implemented 'Diamond Tech Suspension' or DTS systems."

"The performance improvements have particularly focused on handling, steering and road traction, especially for rough terrain, hills and sharp curves," he noted.

As for Toyota's championing of the pickup truck market, Anusorn was adamant that it has been no easy feat.

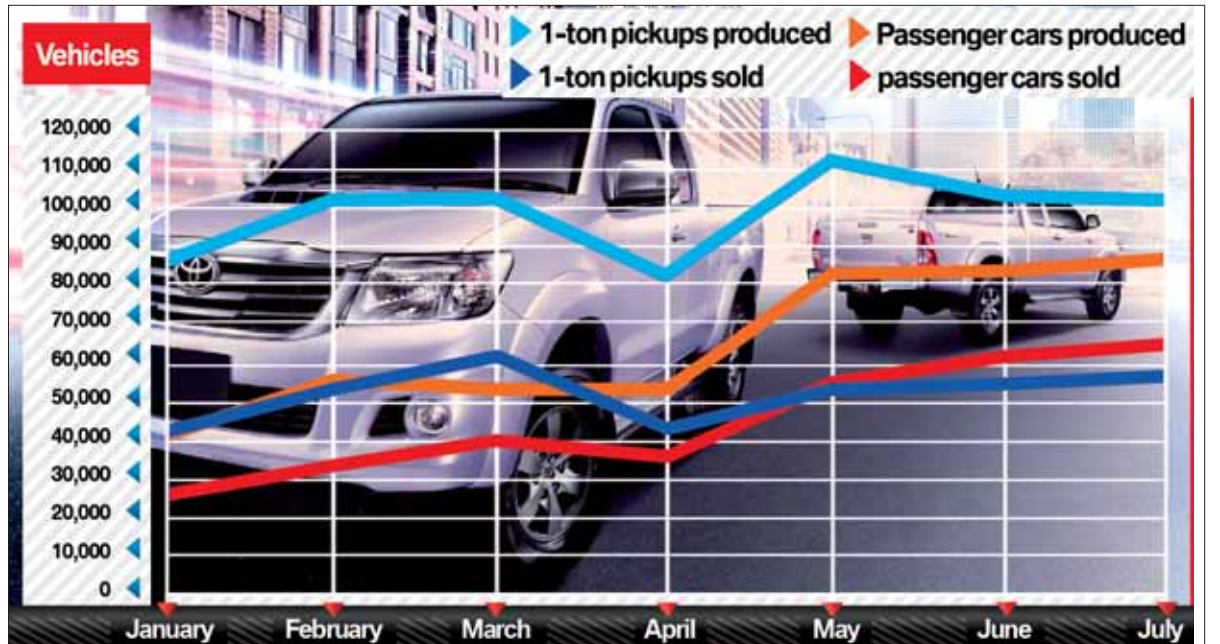
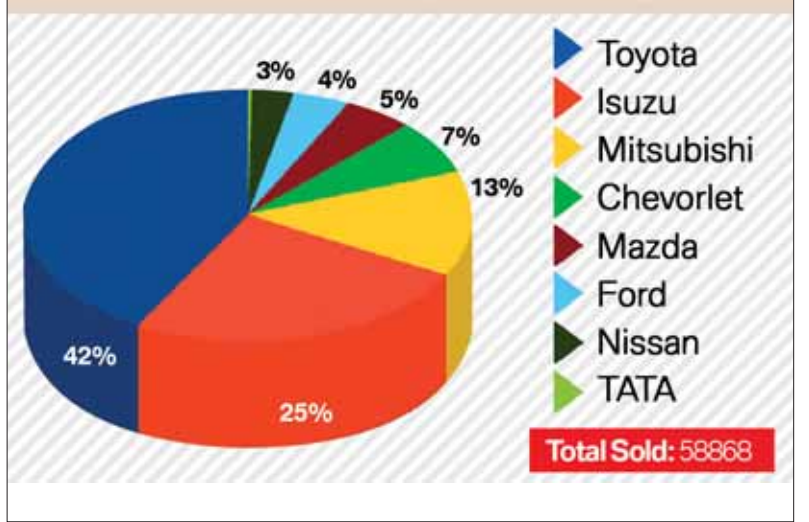
"Such an accomplishment has no doubt been challenging, and has required a continuous effort to improve the performance of the vehicle on many levels," he said.

Asked about the competition, which has increased much in recent years, Anusorn responded: "It would be very difficult for competitors to gain an edge on us."

"With its sustained commitment to quality, continued development of technology and top-of-the-line production standards, it's not really surprising that Toyota has been the market leader in this segment for so many years."

"This is highlighted by the JD Power accolade."

Thailand 1-ton Pickup Sales: July, 2012



CAR CULTURE: Supply and demand data for the first seven months of the year, as published by the Federation of Thai Industries, shows pickup truck and passenger car popularity are on par. Image: Gazette Graphics.

As for the objective of the tour, Anusorn explained: "We want participants to come and see with their own eyes the levels of quality and standard applied in the Toyota Hilux Vigo Champ's production."

"We also want to give the participants a chance to test for themselves how reliable, effective and safe the new DTS system is."

Before touring the production plant, members of the tour group were given the chance to test

drive the newest Champ on a controlled test track that featured a number of terrain simulation obstacles.

Following the tests, Yuthana Bunsablersdee, an automotive technician, and pickup enthusiast joining the tour told the *Gazette* that he was impressed with the performance of the new Champ.

"I noticed a clear difference in the different models. The suspension and breaking system

[of the Champ] has improved a lot since earlier models. It definitely handles a lot smoother on steep hills and sharp turns."

"The good thing about Toyota is it is always improving its offering to address the needs of the market," he added.

Stay tuned for an in-depth business feature about the tour of the Ban Pho plant, which will be published online and in print next week.

Krabi needs AEC prep

WITH 100 billion baht (US\$ 3 billion) requested by government agencies for Thailand's preparation for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, private and government organizations in Krabi were called on yesterday by the Asean Secretary-General to step up their efforts in order to establish a "central role" in the Andaman.

"Krabi will have an advantage over several other Thai provinces due to its being the central province of the Andaman coast. However, Krabi businesses and citizens must be prepared for AEC 2015," said Asean Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan at the recent foundation stone laying ceremony of The Ozone Condominium in Krabi.

With government agencies having requested 100 billion baht to prepare for the AEC 2015, Mr Surin



ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan says money itself is not enough to prepare for AEC.

assured his audience that there was no reason to panic about Thailand's membership in ASEAN and consequent exposure to the increased competition inherent in the AEC. However, he pointed out that if Thai

citizens did not adequately prepare themselves for the transition, the money will have been wasted.

"I think asking for such a big budget isn't the best solution for preparing for the AEC. There are so many better and cheaper ways, such as focusing on the development of Asean foreign-language skills," he said.

Mr Surin made it clear that he believed there were still some people who did not see the opportunities in the AEC, or did not know how to take advantage of it for their, and Thailand's, benefit.

"I would like successful businessmen to give advice and share some of their experience with the new generation of businessmen to help reduce social inequality and prepare for the AEC," Mr Surin said.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

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Smile: you're flying THAI

By Chaiyot Yongcharoenchai

THAI Airways International (TA) recently announced new Phuket routes, to be launched next month and serviced by its new airline, THAI Smile (TS). Here, the *Gazette* speaks with Prasert Tanhansa, manager of TA's Phuket sales office, about positioning and strategy of the national carrier's new airline.

Phuket Gazette: TS has been referred to by some as an Ultra Low Cost Carrier (ULCC) compared to Nok Air, which is an LCC. Is this correct?

Prasert Tanhansa: We don't classify TS as an ULCC or LCC. We position ourselves as Light Premium, which is in between premium and low cost.

The current situation of our market has not been very good. The parent airline, TA used to be the leader in the aviation business, but now we share the market with many other low cost airlines. We used to enjoy 70% market share, but now it is down to 40%. Even though we are hurting, we can't reduce our standards as we've always offered premium standard service and intend to keep it that way.

However, if we don't do anything to get the market share back, we will lose all of our business to LCCs. Therefore, we've launched TS, which will contain some of the same premium services as TA, but the pricing, as well as some products and services, such as meals and on-board entertainment, will be reduced.

For example, TA serves full meals on all its flights, but TS flights will have snack packs or light meals served instead. If the passengers want to eat more food, they can choose to buy more.



ALL SYSTEMS GO: THAI Smile, which uses the same 'TG' code as its parent, Thai Airways, welcomed its first A320 aircraft. Photo: Thai PR

What is TA's current and anticipated future stake in Nok Air (NA)? What is the difference between TS and NA?

TS is another product under the brand name of TA, while TA holds 49% share of NA. We do not directly operate NA. Even though NA is classified themselves as an LCC, they position themselves as a low-fare, high-value budget airline.

Originally, TA planned for TS to service routes covering different destinations from that of TA, but now that NA services those destinations – small towns – already, TS will service the exact same routes for main destination of TA.

The only difference between TA and TS will be price and services. The services offered by TS and NA are quite similar. The differences are the brand names and their respective mileage program. TS passengers can collect mileage under the Royal Orchid Plus program, just like TA passengers.

NA uses an entirely different mileage program, however. TS passengers can use their mileage to fly with TA. TS passengers can also choose their seats, check in up to 20 kilograms of luggage for Smile

Class (Economy class) and 30 kg for Smile PLUS Class (Business class) – at no extra charge.

Can you confirm the initial and future routes of TS?

We ordered 11 brand-new, 168-seat Airbus A320-200 aircraft. So far, four of them have already arrived. The first route we launched, as of July 7 this year, was Bangkok to Macau. Routes from Bangkok to the South will include Surat Thani, Krabi, and Phuket. Routes planned from Phuket include to Bangkok and Chiang Mai.

In the near future, we also plan to launch a Phuket-Singapore service. This should launch by January 2013. Another potential route with high demand that we may launch is Phuket-Udon Thani. We cannot confirm this route yet as it is now under the process of review.

What is your expectation for TS' first year of operation?

We are not that concerned about most of our routes, with the exception of the Phuket-Chiang Mai leg. Compared with other routes, this route can be very challenging...Phuket seems to be the last destination Thailand's international tourists visit before returning home...There are not that many tour-



Prasert Tanhansa in front of a Phuket-Chiang Mai route promo poster.

ists who want to travel from Phuket to Chiang Mai before they head back home. Part of it is because Chiang Mai doesn't have that many international outbound flights.

TA has always offered flights from Chiang Mai to Phuket because many tourists travel this route. We don't expect much from the Phuket-Chiang Mai leg in the first year. We will keep the price down to attract passengers initially.

Once this route becomes more popular, we may reconsider the price. We have publicized this new route to all of our sales representatives as well as tour operators. I asked them to include the tour program that starts from Phuket to Chiang Mai and some other places so that we can promote this route.

Our primary target for the Phuket to Chiang Mai route are foreigners, while Thais are our secondary target. There might be some Thais who use this route to visit their home town.

We expect the occupancy rate for this route to be about 60% in the first year. Compared with other airlines that already service this route, our price is still a bit higher.

I have just proposed a promotional price that is attractive enough for passengers to decide to fly with us. We are now waiting for the approval of the special promotion price. Even though our price may not match the competitor's price, our service is much better. I think that is our strong selling point.

A full version of this interview will be available on PhuketGazette.net.

Labor chief: pay the B300 minimum wage or be prepared to pay the price

THE chief of the Phuket Provincial Labor Protection and Welfare Office has warned employers that his office is inspecting businesses across the island and prepared to take legal action against any firms found paying less than the 300 baht a day minimum wage.

Phuket Labor Welfare chief Kittipong Laonipon explained to the *Gazette* that his concerns about minimum wage cheats were raised when investigating the welfare of women and minors in the workplace.

"Generally, there are no serious concerns about the safety and security of women and minors working in Phuket. We found no evidence and received no reports of any women or children [sic] being abused," he said.

"We did find several minors

aged between 15 and 18 years old serving alcohol in a restaurant in Phuket Town. That issue has now been resolved and the minors are now performing duties that does not include serving alcohol," Mr Kittipong explained.

"However, we did find that some employers did not want to pay minors the minimum wage for a day's work, as required by law," he added.

"Children older than 15 and under 18 are allowed to work,

but they must not be involved in any dangerous occupation or heavy work and they must be paid 300 baht per day just like adults," Mr Kittipong said.

The discovery sparked a campaign by his office from April through August, when 120 businesses in Phuket were inspected for minimum wage compliance.

"Of the 120 businesses inspected, two employers were found paying a total of 51 employees less than 300 baht a day. "We issued the employers a



Chief Kittipong Laonipon said that firms who don't comply will be fined.

warning, giving them 30 days to amend their practices and to start paying the minimum wage. We have since returned to check on those two employers and they are now complying with the law," Mr Kittipong said.

"If they continued not paying the minimum wage we would have filed a police complaint against them. If found guilty, the employers would face a sentence of up to six months in jail or a fine of up to 100,000 baht – or both.

"We will continue to inspect businesses across the island to make sure they are complying with the law. If we find any employers not paying the minimum wage, we will take the same action against them," he warned.

Also, see minimum wage story on page 15. – Chutharat Plerin

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All I want for Xmas is a 3G tab



Live Wire

By Woody Leonhard

WELCOME to the fourth and final installment of my series about where the computer industry is headed.

With the Christmas season just around the corner many people are thinking about buying new electronics – computer, tablet, phone, maybe even a TV. This column will help you stay on top of developments between now and Christmas.

In Part 1 of the series, I talked about Windows 8 and how I don't expect it to do particularly well. I also talked about Windows RT, which is a horse of a completely different color.

Microsoft's going to get into the hardware manufacturing business, and the combination of Windows RT and a Microsoft Surface tablet may – just may – be enough to put a small dent in the iPad juggernaut.

Microsoft has to push out some killer apps, and bring the price down, but if they can do both, I expect we'll see a few Windows RT tablets in Christmas stockings around the island.

In Part 2 of the series, I talked about Apple. There's a good reason why it's the largest public company (in terms of market capitalization) in the history of the world. They make great products, and the future for Apple is bright.

In Part 3 of the series, I talked about Android phones and tablets, and Kindles and Nooks (which are,

in fact, Android tablets, although you wouldn't know it to look at them). They're doing well in the market place, and every indication is that they'll do even better later this year. Unless Apple makes a small iPad and rolls right over the Kindle and Nook.

In this, the final part of the series, I want to talk about how the market's likely to evolve in Thailand, and what you should be looking for, specifically, before you shell out baht for electronics this Christmas.

In Thailand, we can watch these new gizmos rolling out in the rest of the world, but availability here is never simple. Chances are good that some of the tablets, computers and phones I mentioned in the earlier parts of this series will meet with huge demand.

If that happens, we won't

see those particular products here in Thailand until months after they appear elsewhere. And when they do arrive, they'll trickle in very slowly. If you don't yet know a specific clerk at one of the Apple shops, now might be a good time to introduce yourself.

On the positive side, though, most of the online services – iTunes, Windows Store, Amazon, Google Play, and the like – are finally losing their infuriating bias about customers in Thailand.

It's about time the Apples and Amazons of the world learn that there's a baht or two to be made out here.

If you're thinking about picking up a Windows PC this year, my best advice is to wait until



HARDWARE HEAVEN: Christmas is looking good for tech heads. But, why bother with shiny new toys if crazy cat videos still take forever to buffer? Photo: photosteve101

we have a clearer picture of where Windows 8 sales are headed.

No doubt you'll want to buy the PC with a valid copy of Windows 7. But we're going to see a huge influx of touch-sensitive tablets, and my guess is that touch-less computers of all types are going to move to fire sale prices rather quickly. Touch is the next big thing. If you don't want touch, wait and watch for the bin bargains.

There's a general trend here that I think will turn into an outright stampede over the next year or two.

People who need big desktop computers and hunkering monitors will probably be able to get by with the hardware they already have: once you're running Win7 on a reasonably fast computer, as long as you don't bog your system down with a lot of junk, you have very little impetus to upgrade – unless your old machine completely dies.

At the same time, more and more people are finding good uses for tablets. In many cases, that new iPad fills the gap that would've been occupied by a laptop computer just a year ago.

In my case, I have no reason to buy a new desktop PC – the three-year-old HP I have works just fine – and my laptops are basically gathering dust. If I need to take a computer with me, I grab the iPad.

There are exceptions: I'm currently on a three-week vacation, and I borrowed a light Asus Eee laptop to go along. If I had the courage of my convictions, I would've toughed out the whole trip with nothing but an iPad and a keyboard, and I bet it would've worked just fine.

In general, I expect desktop and laptop sales to continue to decline and I expect tablet sales to continue to jump in leaps and bounds. The one exception: MacBook Air still seems to have a lot of life left in the brand.

That isn't good news for Microsoft, unless they can get the Windows RT Surface to really engage Apple. But it's good news for you, if you're looking for a Windows computer. Expect prices to continue to fall – perhaps precipitously. And watch as "older" non-touch-enabled hardware gets dumped while computer manufacturers chase the touch-enabled brass ring.

Most of all, for those of us on the island, everything I mentioned in all four installments of this series relies on the Internet.

Every single piece of electronic equipment you're going to buy in the near future will likely need a reliable internet connection. Spending the time (and if need be,

the money) to get a good internet connection may be the most important decision you make this holiday season.

Getting the latest, flashiest hardware and software means nothing if you can't get your bits up and down the data pipes.

Want to give somebody a great Christmas present? Get them a fast ground line, or a decent 3G package. In the long run, that's going to be far more important than getting the latest version of Windows, or the fanciest tablet.

Seth Bareiss holds computer sessions every other Wednesday afternoon, from 1 to 3pm. If you have a Windows problem that needs to be solved, drop by one of Seth's free afternoon sessions, or come to one of our free Sunday morning 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.

Kingston cajoles overclockers

KINGSTON has announced the launch of its HyperX Predator. The new high-performance DRAM module is aimed at more extreme enthusiasts and the overclockers looking to push their systems to the maximum.

With its new heatspreader, HyperX Predator offers a more aggressive design, which accompanies the look and design of the latest PC hardware, and provides heat dissipation to optimize memory reliability.

All HyperX Predators have

been fully tested and validated on the top range of motherboards currently available on the market. End users can overclock their systems by selecting a profile in BIOS with no need for manual adjustments.

"The PC gaming market is robust and growing and we are pleased to contribute to that market with our new, more aggressive HyperX Predator memory kits," said Ann Bai, DRAM sales director, APAC region, Kingston.

"Enthusiasts will experience higher performance, ultra-responsive multitasking possibilities and an overall faster system thanks to its top optimized performance settings for specific modules - handpicked and tested by our Kingston engineers."

Kingston HyperX Predator is available in speeds up to 2666MHz; CAS latencies of 9 and 11; and capacities from 8GB to 32GB in various dual and quad-channel kit configurations.

– *Thaibizpr*



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200 years of market crises

Island Investor

By David Mayes

WITH the US stock market sitting near its 52-week high, and already having made a 100% move upwards from its low at the peak of the selloff that occurred during the financial crisis, I have dug a bit deeper into history to get a feel for the frequency of crashes.

I have a good grip on the longer bull/bear market cycles that typically last between 13-20 years or so, if measured by trailing p/e (price to earnings ratio) peaks and troughs, but I've never realized how much time there has historically been between crashes.

Unfortunately, there is not a large enough sample to draw any statistically significant conclusions, but we can look to history to see what some of the observations in the last 200 years might tell us.

Obviously hard data from the 1800s is not as easy to come by as the current market data you can access online, but looking at crashes, which drew enough public panic to be recorded as a historic event on Wikipedia, gives us a starting point.

Few academics would admit how commonly used this source is, prior to digging up "real references" that expand upon and clarify what you initially learned from Wikipedia.

There are entries for 1819, 1837, 1847, 1857, 1869, 1873, 1882, 1884, 1896, 1901, 1907, 1929, 1937, 1973, 1980 (sil-



THE OTHER KIND OF MARATHON: Thousands rush to withdraw their savings from a bank in Berlin, after political instability caused market concerns in 1931. Photo: Pahl Georg

ver crash), 1982 (Kuwait market, third highest market cap in the world at the time), 1987 (Black Monday), 1989 (mini-crash), 1991 (Japan), 1992 (Black Wednesday), 1997 (caused by the "Asian crisis" often blamed on a bubble in "Amazing Thailand"), 1998 (Russian Ruble Crisis), 2000 (dot-com bubble), 2001 (9-11), 2002 (global drop in equities), and more recently crashes resulting from the credit crunch, European sovereign debt crisis, etc.

Some interesting points can be gleaned from these numbers. There is usually not more than 10 years without a crisis of some sort. The long stretches without any crashes may contain some, which have just not made it onto Wikipedia.

It appears that crashes generally were more spaced out in the last two centuries increasing in frequency during the last 30 years (especially since the invention of the Internet).

This leads me to believe that we can

hardly expect to go more than a decade without a crash in the stock markets.

It seems more likely that they will continue to occur even more frequently due to the ability of the "electronic herd" to move out of markets *en masse* with a few clicks of the mouse.

This can cause massive panics such as the "flash crash" (which was created simply by computer algorithms picking up on drastic movements in the markets and amplifying them, rather than any panic by the investing public who are the usual suspects).

Thus, six years would be the upper end of my prediction for when we can expect the next crash or crisis of some sort (not that we are really through the current one).

The fact that we are approaching record high levels in US markets is more a cause for concern than a reason to celebrate in my view.

Obviously at some point the old highs will be replaced with new ones, but historically this has been the time to begin selling rather than buying.

One promising expectation of all of this, is that recoveries are likely to happen more quickly as well. This means a Contrarian investor will not only see opportunities more frequently, but will likely be paid off more quickly as well.

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

Wage hike may result in 15% cost increase

THE increase in the daily minimum wage to 300 baht in another 70 provinces will help stimulate domestic consumption and benefit the economy in the long run says a Chulalongkorn economics lecturer.

The hike, which was recently approved, will go into effect on January 1, 2013 but will not affect employers or result in much higher costs, Associate Professor Narong Phetprasert said at a recent lecture.

"There is a wide misunderstanding that the hike will result in a 40% rise in production costs, but the figure is more likely to be 15% on average," he said.

Businesses expected to be

most affected by the hike are those in labour-intensive sectors such as textiles and furniture. Some of these, however, should be able to take advantage of government help to negotiate with neighbouring countries for incentives and assistance in relocating out of Thailand, said Narong.

"Those [Thai-owned] factories should be operated in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, hiring local workers under tax incentives and other investment-relevant benefits given by host countries," he added.

A Thailand Development Research Fund senior official, Yongyuth Chalaemwong, says he approves of a minimum-wage hike

in principle, but said it should be implemented step by step over a three-year period.

"Paying 300 baht to workers in 70 provinces [in addition to the seven already covered] at one time will abruptly and greatly burden employers, who, as a result, may have no choice but to opt for lay-offs or give up their businesses.

"Increasing work efficiency through skills training will be an effective way to cope with unemployment in the long term, because it will help unskilled labourers extend their contracts, while those laid off will be able to get training and be re-hired quickly – there is still a lack of skilled labour," he added.

– The Nation



The lecturer at Chulalongkorn (above) addressed concerns of businesses in the Kingdom, that are tensely waiting for the introduction of a new national minimum wage. Photo: Chris Brown

Government to organize logistics fair

THE DITP is collaborating with Thai National Shippers' Council (TNSC) and Hazardous Substances Logistics Association (HASLA) to organize the 9th Thailand International Logistics Fair 2012 (TILOG 2012) from September 19-22. Mrs Nuntawan Sakuntanaga, director general of the Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP), Ministry of Commerce, said that the government is seeking to increase Thai exports to ASEAN markets, so the DITP is introducing measures to sure up readiness among Thai exporters.

The aim of this year's fair is to strengthen logistics networks, increase cost efficiency and profits, and publicize the readiness and potential of the logistics industry in Thailand. These initiatives will also support and increase export products and services out of Thailand.

"The cost of logistics is a key factor in every operational process in business today, and management has to adjust to market realities and find solutions for reducing such costs.

"TILOG 2012 will help enhance Thailand's competitive level and offer greater opportunities to fully realize the potential benefits of the AEC trade agreement," said Mrs. Nuntawan.

Exporters, importers, and anyone else interested in the 9th Thailand International Logistics Fair 2012 can get more information at logisticsfair.com or thaitradefair.com, or call the Department of International Trade Promotion Hotline: 1169, or visit facebook.com/TilogThailandInternationalLogisticsFair.

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ORIENTAL MOSCOW: The steeples of Saint Colas Church at Volga Manor. The original was torn down during the Cultural Revolution, pictured is a replica.

By Chris Hudon

I WAS an emissary of the *Phuket Gazette*, bound for China to meet with our latest media partner, the *China Daily* – not to be confused with the *People's Daily* – China's Mandarin-language state-run news agency.

The *China Daily* is a state-controlled newspaper, established in June 1981, in response to rising demand for an English-language daily that reports to the world from inside the People's Republic of China (PRC).

With a circulation 800,000, it

is now the most frequently quoted newspaper by Western media outlets reporting on China, and partners with such heavy hitters as the *Washington Post* and *The Guardian*.

I left for Beijing from Phuket International Airport at 2am on a Monday. It might sound like an awkward time to travel, but actually, there was the benefit of avoiding traffic and long lines.

The airport was like a ghost town when I arrived, and, after one last unusually long look at my passport, I was stamped out of the Kingdom of Thailand and



RUSH HOUR: Downtown Harbin from outside the New Synagogue, the city's Jewish museum. Photos: Chris Hudon

on my way to the PRC.

Destined for Harbin in the north-east – a city of note as a major stop along the famed Trans-Siberian railway – I would explore a place that brings together two of the world's largest countries.

As an invited guest of the government of China, I traveled with a special "J-2" visa, that was, to put it lightly, difficult to procure. I was told that China makes visas more expensive for Americans because America makes visas harder for Chinese people.

In the end I sorted my visa out in Bangkok, once they confirmed who I was and after handing over the sum of 5,700 baht.

I arrived in Harbin, (only a few hours train ride from Vladivostok, Russia) after a brief stopover in Beijing. Beijing Airport was clean and admittedly massive, but I couldn't see the city through the amount of thick smog surrounding it.

Friends who live in the capital tell me that what I saw is typical and that sometimes it gets so bad the government shoots silver nitrate into the atmosphere to forcibly make it rain.

At Harbin Airport our English-speaking hosts greeted 20 members of foreign press from ten countries, including: Brunei, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Malaysia, the UAE, Australia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

Being the representative from Thailand was a times at bit cumbersome. I would be introduced like a boxer hailing from two different countries.

The intro went, "And now,

coming from Thailand by way of Miami, Florida, Mr Christopher Hudon of the *Phuket Gazette*."

To this everyone would have two reactions, "He doesn't look like he's from Thailand," and, "Where is Phuket?"

From the very start China had a formal air that I'm not accustomed to in the generally laid-back environment that is Phuket.

The city's publicity director dubbed our tour, *Harbin in the Eyes of the Global Media*, and nearly every minute was scheduled.

We visited museums and exhibitions, observed architecture and listened to speeches from

largest city in northeast China.

Bear in mind that present government estimates place the population of China at around 1.4 billion people – though the actual number is likely to be closer to 1.5bn, due to undeclared citizens (resulting from population control measures).

The city of Harbin boasts wholly unique Sino-Russian architecture, the legacy of a Jewish community that fled persecution during WWII, and enjoys a position as one of China's vital industrial manufacturing bases.

The New Synagogue was one of the more interesting sites on the tour. From the end of the 19th Century through the end of WWII, Harbin was believed to have the largest population of Jewish residents in the Far East, numbering 25,000 at its peak.

Jews in Harbin built manufacturing plants; contributed to the development of the arts and founded several charitable organizations. The New Synagogue, (that is now a museum) holds a letter from former Israeli Prime

Minister Ehud Olmert, whose grandparents are interred at the Jewish cemetery outside of the city.

Something I never realized, is the affinity common Chinese people have for Russian culture. The city has several Russian-made cathedrals built at the turn of the last century that now serve as museums for scores of interested local tourists.

Despite their admiration for Russian culture, Harbin's original Russian legacy was largely

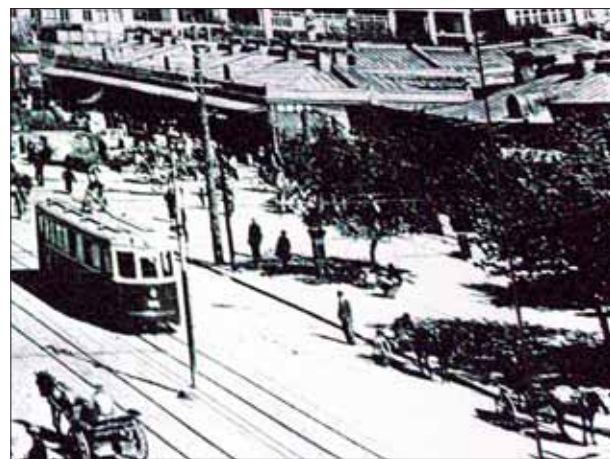


PHOTO OF A PHOTO: The Middle Eastern Railway and Harbin's Central Avenue around the turn of the twentieth century.

various Communist Party officials.

We were treated to the very best hotels and fine dining – including shark fin soup and sea cucumbers. My new Singaporean friend tells me that it's a real honor (apparently common folk generally can't afford a whole sea cucumber).

Although it's not your typical tourist destination, the city of Harbin did have real charm at times. With nearly 11 million residents it is almost as large as Bangkok and only the second

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People's Republic



GOT MILK? A worker performs clinical trials at the Nestlé plant in Harbin. The plant manufactures powdered milk-concentrate, which is used in baby formula. Public relations director Nancy He said Nestlé was unaffected by the 'tainted milk' crisis of 2008, when the chemical melamine was found in several of China's major milk manufacturers.



An image of Jesus Christ over the altar of the Saint Colas Orthodox Christian Church in Volga Manor, outside Harbin City. The picture of the steeple on the facing page reveals something different about Orthodox Christianity. Notice that the cross has two extra braces meant to represent heaven and hell.



A wax mannequin of a factory worker stands in the museum of the Harbin Electric Machinery Company. Aside from this display, the museum houses turbine assemblies used at the Three Gorges Dam, not available for photography since they are considered industry 'trade secrets'.

torn down during the Cultural Revolution of the Maoist era.

One tour guide told us that in some cases it literally took the Red Guard several days to figure out how to destroy many of the buildings, since they were so well constructed.

The legacy of the Great Leap Forward (China's rapid industrialization period) and the Cultural Revolution under Mao, has influences that persist to this day.

The next day we awoke to the realization that we had been hit by a typhoon during the night. This was a historical moment, according to one of our guides, as it had been almost fifty years since the city of Harbin had been hit by a similar storm.

In spite of the weather we made stops at several manufacturing plants including Nestlé, Airbus and the Harbin Electric Machinery Company (which played a significant role in the construction of the Three Gorges Dam).

The turbines used at the dam were in part developed by the Harbin Electric Machinery Company and are kept a trade secret to this day, thus there was no photography allowed.

Although visiting manufacturing plants doesn't appeal to your average tourist, thousands of locals visit these facilities daily, often with great reverence.

This is, I think, one of the longest-standing legacies of Chairman Mao. The emphasis China places on production in service to the nation is overwhelming at times.

Posters of a fictional man

named Lei Feng are commonplace, and they serve as an example [of an ideal worker] from the Party to the people.

Despite recent and rapid industrialization, China is beginning to feel the effects of the global recession. Liu Yuqiang, President of the Workers' Union at the Harbin Electric Machinery Company said this slowdown has had impacts, especially on their assembly line workers.

The factory in which Mr Yuqiang works was visited by

programs to investors such as a "one-stop service," for licensing, "a certain amount of tax exemption", and "safety guarantees".

Retiring from business in favor of pleasure, after our meetings we went on a social excursion to the city's entertainment district.

The 'walking street' was a place where we could interact with the public in a more organic way. We watched a rooftop performance by a beautiful Russian woman given to highly enthused locals.

Moving a little way past the balcony performance we came upon the USA Bar – probably the closest thing to a pub to be found in Harbin. There we were greeted by a five piece polka-style band wearing kilts. The man wearing what looked like beer funnels was the owner of the bar.

He welcomed us in and we sat about drinking and doing what we do. The best part of the USA Bar was the bar food: pickles, smoked sausages, onions, dried nuts, fish and host of other options. It was good.

This brings us to the less formal part of the tour, the moments that gave the trip real character, when everyone let their hair down. On the whole our schedule was filled, with the happy exception of regular after-dinner "gatherings of the journos". Our most notable gathering came on the final night.

After retiring from dinner we spent the last night celebrating, as members of the media often do – sharing stories over drinks.

On this particular occasion we were graced by the presence of an eccentric Chinese millionaire



UNEXPECTED GUEST: In Harbin's New Synagogue is a framed letter from former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert (pictured), whose parents were among those that sought refuge in the city of Harbin during the lead up to WWII. Olmert makes regular trips to visit the gravesites of his grandparents, which he describes in the letter.

famed Premier of the PRC, Zhou Enlai. It was also part of a personal directive under Chairman Mao during the 1970s.

Even considering the global slowdown, China is a place many foreign businesses are looking to invest in. Speaking through a translator, Zhang Lixin, chief director of Harbin's Publicity Department said that the city would offer incentive

who had funded the Russian-themed park we were staying in.

This was a man who knew how to speak his mind. When being introduced to the media he said, "you're tall", "you're handsome", and "you look Chinese. Are you Chinese?"

With half a dozen nationalities represented across two tables, we commenced a sing-off. That's right. It was what it sounds like.

For the first hour or so there were some really talented voices. But, by the time the alphabet song was brought out (some of our group lost their way around "G") all semblance of order was gone.

We had the most unusual cultural exchanges through song, from traditional Chinese to K-Pop's latest craze *Gangnam Style* (it's catchy) and The Beatles.

With the night air nipping at

us we said our goodbyes and everyone prepared for their departure the next morning.

What a fitting end to my trip that I should sit in a plane packed full of Chinese tourists on their way to Phuket to do what I had done in reverse.

As I sat on the plane, surrounded by mostly young couples, dressed as if they would hop off the flight and onto a beach (despite our 2am landing time), I couldn't help but suppress a quick smile.

As helpless as I often felt in China – unable to communicate my most basic of needs – so too would they feel in my adopted home away from home, the Land of Smiles.

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Phuket's authentic Kopi

By Nanthapa Pengkasem

IF YOU happen to be in downtown Phuket and want a respite from the heat and a quick bite with refreshing drinks, you'd do no better than dropping at *Kopi de Phuket* on Phuket Road.

Kopi, a Hokkian Chinese term derived from the English word "coffee," is used up and down the Malay Peninsular to mean either coffee or coffee shop. *Kopi de Phuket* is the brainchild of Jakkapan Jitsomboon who opened the first Kopi de Phuket – an internet café – in the premises of the historic On-On hotel in Pang Nga Road.

The second Kopi de Phuket, opened eight years ago, is more spacious and offers more dining choices. This one-up-one-down establishment has been refurbished in the style of 'contemporary Chinese,' whose props include paper lanterns, hardwood chairs and marble-topped tables.

A few padded and cushioned sofas fill the small downstairs room, made cozy by the dark wood wall shelf and counter lined with an array of cookie jars and tea canisters. Upstairs is a little more spacious with larger tables which are enough for a party of six or more.

Judging from the menu, which offers a variety of one-dish meals (salmon fillet with rice, roti with Indian curry, noodles in herb soup, noodles with Yunan ham) the place seems to cater to luncheon affairs. The menu has strong Chinese overtones, but Jakkapan includes many pub-style dishes, such as fish and chips and a few salad plates, to please all types of palates.

We try monk fish with lemongrass slices and love its tangy tamarind sauce. Fish on its own can be... er, fishy, and the pungent lemongrass is traditionally used to counter that effect.

Crispy bacon adds a slight smoky taste to stir-fried kale, making this dish a real comfort food.

We also order *gian*, (a deep-fried local sausage of minced pork and mushroom) and prawns with basil leaves which get a thumbs up from our Thai friends for the choice of fresh succulent prawns and the copious amount of chili used.

A friend wants to go her separate healthy way and orders a fillet of salmon with jasmine rice and is happy with the large helping of fish. Perfect for this figure-conscious lady.

To round up the meal, you really must try the gems of the establishment – its hot and cold beverages. Apart from the usual variety of brew coffee, *Kopi de Phuket* offers old-style blends (combining Robusta and Arabica beans) in three concoctions: black; with condensed milk; and mixed with an equal amount of tea. This last drink takes the Chinese yin-yang concept and applies it to food: coffee, which has strong yang energy, is counterbalanced by the softer more feminine yin of the tea.

Kopi de Phuket is also famous for its selection of local cakes and cookies. We highly recommend the delicately spiced pepper cake and slightly savory *sai gai*, literally 'chicken entrails', which is really a deep-fried thin coil of pastry.

The overall verdict is: good, tasty food and quick service even during the busy lunch hours. The price is also reasonable. Our lunch works out around 300 baht each including coffee and cakes.

As an additional note, you may want to engage the services of the resident fortuneteller who will be here until 30 September. At 500 baht, she will feed your birth date into her laptop and map out your fortune for the next 12 months. Rumor has it that she is very good.

Located at 61 Phuket Road, besides 'The Books', *Kopi de Phuket* is open from 11:30am to 9pm, Mon - Sun, Tel: 076 212225. Visit: kopidephuket.com.



CHINATOWN: The cozy interior complete with lanterns, cookie jars and various teas.



FISH DISH: Perfect for figure-conscious ladies, unlike the Chinese cookies (below). Photos: Nanthapa Pengkasem



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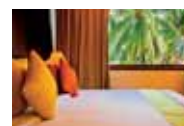
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Fishing till the seas run dry



By Patrick Campbell

THERE are certain indisputable facts about fish. With very few exceptions, they look good, taste good and they do you good. Dietitians recommend at least two fishy portions a week. So-called “oily fish” – herring, mackerel, salmon, tuna and sardine – are especially good for you since they contain omega 3 fatty acids that help keep immune systems healthy and prevent cardiovascular problems.

Fish and chips, usually battered and wrapped in yesterday’s newspaper, used to be the favorite fodder of working class Britain. Not any more. Wild fish, even the humble cod, has become scarce and consequently expensive.

Why this parlous state of affairs? The over-riding reason is

over-fishing. True, there are other factors such as pollution, global warming, and the loss of habitat. But, the insatiable greed of the industry, coupled with the sheer efficiency of modern commercial methods, is to blame.

The herring and mackerel shoals of the North Sea are a thing of the past. It was estimated in the late 1960s that the herring population was down to one per cent of its former numbers and fishing was banned completely in 1977.

Across the Atlantic, the cod industry of Newfoundland collapsed, another victim of over-exploitation on a grand scale. A vast natural resource vanished, whole eco-systems were changed and the cod have never returned.

Closer to home, the commercial fishing of tuna – up from one

million to four million tonnes a year – has reached such a pass that a BBC documentary, “South Pacific” – estimated that the continuance of fishing at current levels may see a collapse of stock within five years. And not just yellow-fin, but blue and black fin, albacore and big eye tuna as well. The story could be repeated about other species and habitats.

In Thailand, one estimate leads us to believe that the kingdom has about 40,000 fishing vessels, with the number of trawlers – the worst offenders – at just over 2,000. For some crazy reason, the fishing industry wants to up these numbers to 3,619 vessels.

Both figures are almost certainly ludicrous underestimations anyway. And in any case, there must already be more than enough trawlers, since there is a severe and measurable decline in the numbers of fish being caught. If you don’t believe the figures, ask any sport fisherman.

A sailing friend, who regularly fishes by rod and line on extended trips around the islands, told me he is now lucky to catch three tuna a day. And the largest weigh less than three kilos.

But it is not just the sheer numbers of boats, it is the methods they employ. Trawling is the most annihilative of all techniques for catching fish. A trawl is a huge, bag-shaped affair with a closed end dragged for miles along the sea bed behind a powerful boat. Its maw is weighed down with heavy metal bars to ensure it scours the sea bed.

And scour the sea bed it does, divesting of everything that lives down below: fish and squid, crus-

taceans (such as crabs, shrimp and lobster), even the plants (such as sea grass) that grow there. Any coral that happens to be in its path is unceremoniously ripped from its watery home. The process has been likened to total deforestation, a technique known as “clearcutting”.

Remorseless and cruel, trawling ensures that fish trapped in its maw are often already dead before the net is lifted several hours

you will see trawlers sailing well within that boundary. Judged by their snail-like speed, they may already be trawling.

Indeed, it is estimated that the same furrow of sea bed may be ploughed three times a year. Especially around Phuket, where the water is shallow enough and the bottom smooth enough to enable dredging to continue unchecked. Under these circumstances, what chance is there for the re-establishment of marine life?

There are of course other methods used by commercial fishermen. Gill nets are long panels of netting, set at any depth and supported by headline floats at the top and weighted foot-ropes at the bottom. Sometimes these small monsters can be several kilometers in length. Like trawls, they do not respect aquatic life: they catch fish by wedging their bodies and gills, or by tangling their fins in the mesh. They also ac-

cidentally ensnare cetaceans, especially whales and dolphins.

Seines and purse seines are another weapon in the fisherman’s armory. Seines nets were used, as were gill nets, by artisanal fishermen the world over, long before the advent of huge vessels and sophisticated equipment such as radar, sonar, high-powered winches and high-wattage lighting.

Purse seines are more sophisticated: they operate by encircling shoals of fish and then preventing them from ‘sounding’ [going deep] by using a draw string to close the base of the net, thereby forming a purse from which the fish cannot escape. Often used for tuna or marlin fishing, or to catch varieties of pelagic fish which shoal near the surface, they can be used in deeper water where the bottom is too rocky or



GONE FISHING: A typical Thai trawler. Photo: Gerry Pollestone

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uneven for trawling. Even fishing by hook and line is more damaging than one might think. After all, some of these lines, baited at regular intervals, can stretch fifty miles behind a ship.

Nylon or polypropylene materials are bad news since they are virtually indestructible. Probably more responsible than any other single invention for the appalling efficiency of modern-day commercial fishing, mono-filament nylon nets last for years: they resist abrasion by rocks, tear coral to pieces, entrap, throttle and cut fish, and ensnare marine mammals. And these nets are practically invisible in sea water.

Some, have a mesh so fine that they allow almost nothing to escape. Melancholy mountains of tiny fish in any Thai fresh market, maybe millions in number, are testament to that.

A visitor to Ranong fish market recently observed that, inexplicably, about 95 per cent of the fish on sale there consisted of juvenile barracuda. None of them had been given the chance to grow to adulthood, to reach a size where they might help replenish depleted stocks.

And not only hatchlings are killed: the impact on other species dependent on any small fish for food is incalculable. In temperate waters, huge catches of sand eels are made. Most end up as fish meal, while larger fish such as haddock or cod and birds such as kittiwake gulls or puffins are deprived of their main source of food. A crucial link in the ecological food chain is broken.

There is a human cost to all this piscine carnage. People suffer as well as fish. In the southern Thai provinces of Pattani and Narathiwat, many small fishermen in coastal communities have been driven out of business.

One fisherman interviewed said he no longer used his boat: he was only able to support his family by buying bulk shrimp from commercial vessels, and re-selling batches for a small profit.

And those fishermen who do work on trawlers often suffer appalling hardship. Often recruited illegally, it is estimated that up to 90 per cent are migrant workers who are virtual prisoners on these boats.

Captains often rule by the gun: the environment on board gives new meaning to the expression "slave ship". Indeed, many have reported slave-like conditions. And a recent newspaper editorial succinctly observed that "cheating, fraudulence, debt bondage, [even] abduction" are used to supply the nation's fishing workers.

Thailand's two largest export markets, the EU and the USA are both so concerned, that they have threatened to boycott the importation of seafood and fish from Thailand unless the industry cleans up its act.

In this doomsday scenario, what steps can we take?

One thing we can all do is eat less fish, or at least avoid buying fish fry (whitebait) or pre-breeding juveniles. Maybe we should all agree to give up eating fish for a week or a fortnight. Let's encourage all our Thai friends to help create a much greater awareness of these key environmental issues in schools.

Consuming "farmed" fish, or stock from known sustainable sources, is another important way in which we can help.

But what is most needed is greater governmental awareness and action; the exercise of better control over a greed-driven and short-sighted industry; the elimination of fake licenses and fishing permits; the prosecution of those captains who regularly and cynically violate protected coastal waters, or use ultra-fine mesh nets.

The dive industry, dependent for its survival on the preservation of coral reefs and fish species, should be allowed more influence.

Only last week, two readers' letters in the *Phuket Gazette* commented on how the world famous dive areas near the



CATCH OF THE DAY: Scene at a Thai fish market after the catch has been brought in. Photo: Magnetic Globetrotter

Similan Islands, are only surviving because scuba diving allows the sites to recover from the illegal and destructive inshore fishing on and around the reefs during the low season.

On the positive side, the farm fishing industry is flourishing. Asia leads the way in aquaculture. Prawn farming has been practiced here on the island for many years: in fact Thailand is the world's largest producer of cultured shrimp. Tilapia and fresh water catfish, widely farmed

here, are a staple of the Thai diet. Barramundi are increasingly seen as a valuable and delicious species that can be farmed.

In cold oceans there is open-water production of sea-bass and salmon. Of course, there is always a downside. To produce one sizable farmed salmon requires several times its own weight in food, much of it probably live. Farmed fish are much more prone to disease, and have been known to infect wild stocks. Prawn farms regularly release stale or

polluted water into rivers and seas.

But we have no choice; it is the way we have to go. The world's palate for fish is insatiable and rising: it now stands at 38 pounds per person per year. So called "wild" stocks are vanishing worldwide with a finality that permits no regeneration, no renewal...

This annihilation has already happened to many fishing grounds in the Western hemisphere: it will as surely happen here too unless something is done – and done fast.



TRAWL: The huge nets used by trawlers. Photo: NOAA

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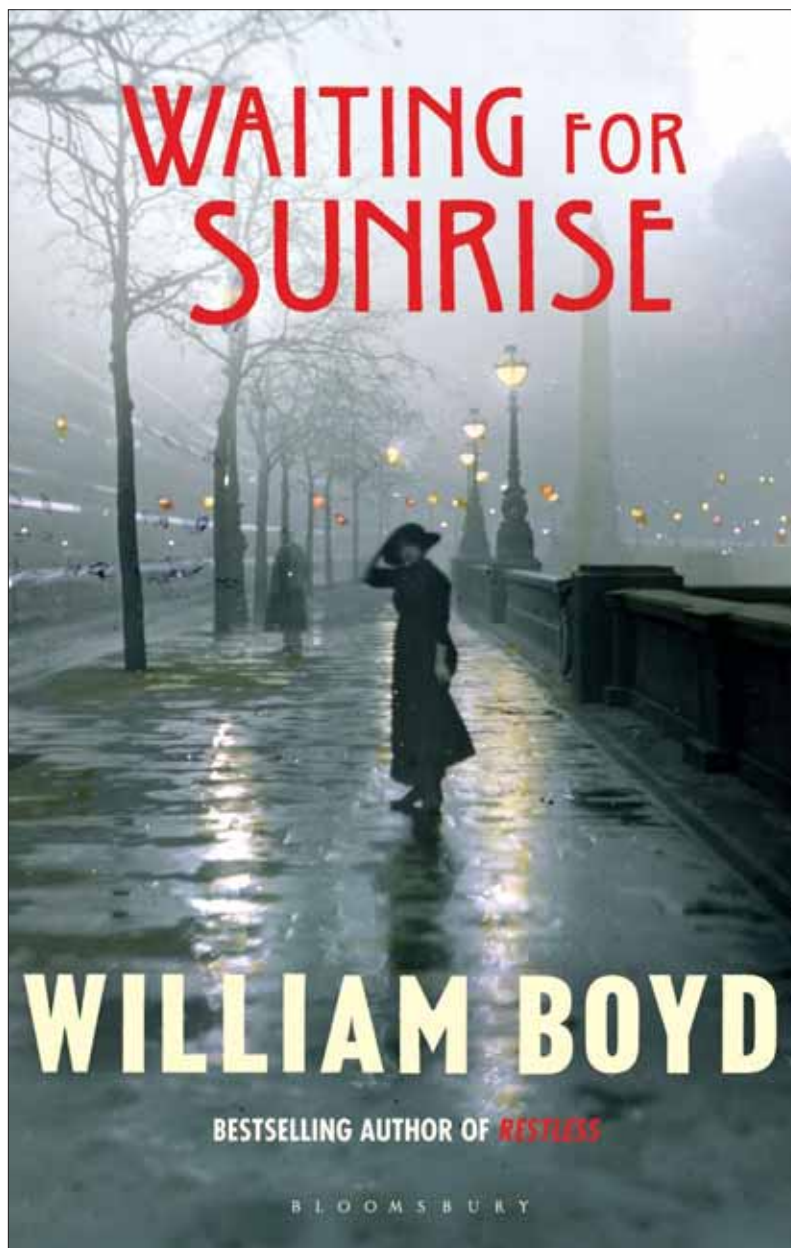
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SEX AND INTRIGUE: William Boyd offers plenty of both.

Waiting for a river of sex and intrigue

Books

By James Eckardt

AMONG the novelists of the British postwar generation – all in their sixties now – two have gone from strength to strength and stand out from the rest: Martin Amis for his extravagant use of language and William Boyd for his sheer power of storytelling.

Born in 1952, Boyd grew up in Ghana and Nigeria and three of his early novels are set in Africa. A master of plot, the spy genre is a natural stage for him and account for some of his more recent novels, including his latest, *Waiting for Sunrise* (Harper, New York, 2012, 353pp). You don't realize that this is a spy story, however, until you're way into the second third of the novel. The initial intrigue is more psychological.

The novel opens on a day of "lemony sunshine" in Vienna in 1913. A young English actor named Lysander Rief is on his way to a

psychiatric consultation with John Benisimon, one of Sigmund Freud's new disciples. His problem is sexual: the opposite of premature ejaculation, an inability to ejaculate at all.

On his way to the office he notices several defaced advertisements for an opera, showing a young woman "almost naked, cowering, hands pressed to her sizeable breasts, cupping them protectively, a semi-visible flimsy swirl of self-supporting veil protecting her modesty at the plump juncture of her thighs". Threatening her is a huge dragon with a forked tongue and orange eyes.

In the doctor's waiting room, Rief meets Hettie Bull, a distraught young Englishwoman who insists on seeing the doctor immediately – for cocaine, as it turns out.

The doctor emerges from his office with a military-looking British diplomat named Alwyn Munro. These two new acquaintances will prove pivotal for the young actor.

As part of his treatment, Dr Benisimon sets Rief the task of keeping a journal called "Autobiographical Investigations". These sections serve as a first-person counterpart of the third-person narrative. He recounts his blooming infatuation for Hettie Bull.

Hettie is a sculptor who invites Rief to an exhibition of paintings by her live-in boyfriend Udo Hoff. Here Rief finds the undamaged original of the poster for the opera, *Andromeda Und Perseus*, drawn by Huff and modeled by Hettie.

She invites Rief to her studio to pose for her, nude. Rief soon finds that his sexual problem is cured. In love with Hettie, Rief breaks off his engagement with an actress back in London.

This is as specific about the plot as I want to get. Let's just say that misfortune lands Rief in an Austrian jail from where he's sprung by Alwyn Munro and spirited out of the country.

The novel's next section opens in London, 1914. The Great War is on and Rief has settled into

drunken boredom as a private serving as an interpreter for German aliens in an internment camp in Wales.

Again he is sprung, again by Munro, for his German and French language skills to train as a spy in London. His mission is to ferret out the mole at headquarters who is leaking military secrets in code to the Germans about the sites of every big British offensive.

In Geneva, that nest of spies in neutral Switzerland, he learns that the key to the code is none other than the libretto of that obscure Austrian opera *Andromeda Und Perseus*. What is going on here?

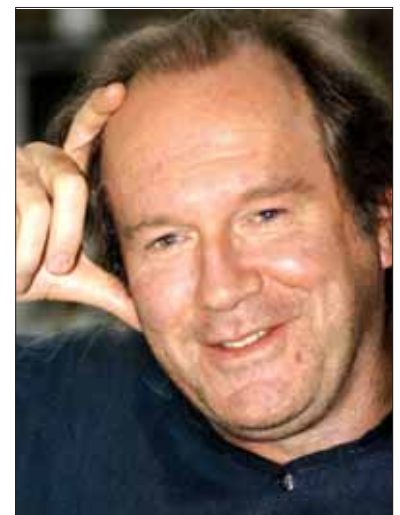
Next it's back to London to find the high-ranking officer sending the messages. Underage sex and blackmail are thrown into the mix and Rief must step very carefully. Is Rief's Austrian mother involved in the plot? Murder cuts the

Gordian knot.

Still questions nag. "Maybe this is what life is like – we try to see clearly but what we see is never clear and is never going to be. The more we strive the murkier it becomes." Take your pick."

Finally, he concludes: "The more we know the less we know. Funnily enough, I can live with that idea quite happily. If this is our modern world I feel a very modern man."

The reader can live happily with this uncertainty too, in this fast-paced novel of constant surprises.



William Boyd. Photo: Michael Fennell

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Benjapa Tubthong

CHIEF of Phuket Passport Office, Benjapa Tubthong, has wanted to work as a diplomat for as long as she can remember. For her, it's part of a personal quest to explore new cultures, learn exotic languages, meet interesting and powerful people and most of all to serve and represent the nation.

A gifted linguist (she now speaks three European languages), Benjapa studied Liberal Arts at Thammasat University and earned a Master's in Linguistics and Literature from the University of Nottingham, England.

She joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1994 and embarked on varied and engaging postings with the Royal Thai Embassies abroad.

Her diplomatic career has continued to enrich her life and bring new experiences everyday. "Working as a diplomat can be surreal. One day you eat on the roadside, the next day you are at a banquet welcoming visiting dignitaries," she said

Benjapa's first posting took her to Bucharest, Romania, when the country was leaving behind its socialist past and surging into a new democratic Romania.

"It was a very exciting and unforgettable time. Romania still held its old-world charms and there was so much to explore," says Benjapa

Not only did she revel in the experience, but she also fully immersed herself in it and did what



no Thai diplomat has ever done and enrolled in a doctoral study at the Bucharest National School of Public Administration. Five years later, when her tenure there was up, she had earned her PhD in Political Science and International Relations.

"A local language is always useful in any posting to help the Embassy a little bit more and to work together with local staff without any language barriers. Studying in Romanian was far from easy but luckily, I was allowed to write my dissertation in English. My Romanian friends still send me emails and press clippings in Romanian so that I won't forget," she said

After Romania, Benjapa worked as a radio producer for the Information Department at the Ministry in Bangkok before her subsequent posting at the Royal Thai Embassy in Denmark. There, she noticed the difference between Denmark and Romania.

"Romania and Denmark are like two books written by authors who have totally different attitudes and mindsets. I learned from them both, and feel lucky to have experienced both extremes," she said.

After her term at the Ministry in Bangkok, Benjapa moved to Phuket to become the chief of the passport office here. As the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs she was required to work with foreign Honorary Consulates in Phuket and to liaise with provincial officers.

Heading a small regional office has allowed Benjapa to practice her leadership skills as a civil servant "All under the framework of the Ministry, of course," she added.

A busy diplomatic career has never dampened Benjapa's childhood passion for writing and has inspired her to share her adventures. She has penned many articles about life in Romania, Denmark, New York and other places she has had the chance to visit, mostly on official functions. These articles are printed in the Ministerial magazine *Saranrom* or "UN Associations of Thailand".

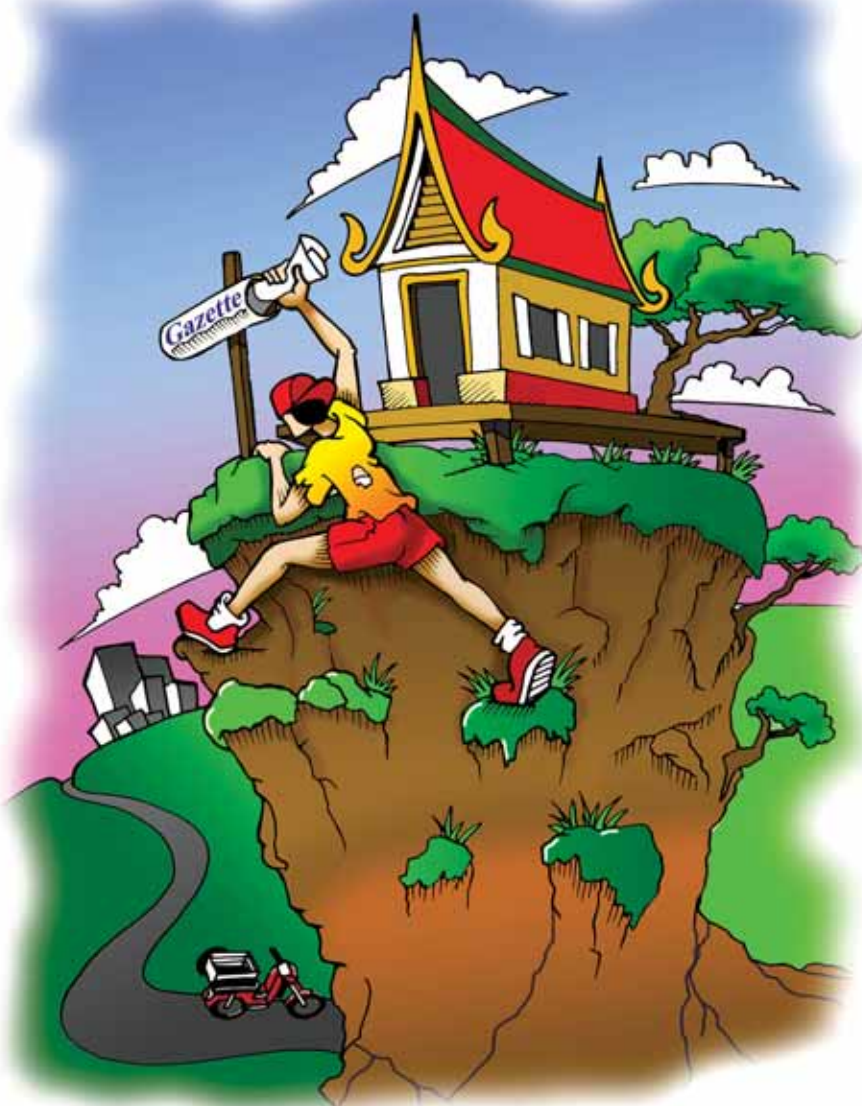
During her short 11-month tenure here, Benjapa has written articles about old Phuket culture, festivities and architecture. "I don't want to be a stranger in my own, or any country for that matter. If I find it impressive or useful to other diplomats, I will write about anything that reveals to me the psyche of the local people," said Benjapa.

Benjapa is completing her tenure here and returning to Bangkok soon to continue her work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The *Phuket Gazette* wishes her every success.



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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LAUNCHED: Stuntman Ian Jamieson (above with Emily, and left with Neill Campbell and Howard Wilson) was called in to officially open the club using a razor sharp pair of scissors and no other protection except for his Evel Knievel jacket.



HELLO SAILOR: From left: Hathai Kan, Phuket Gazette events manager Kanchana and P.I.S.T. organizer Uwe Schitteck.

Let the Game Fishing begin

THE Phuket Game Fishing Club held its grand opening at their new Clubhouse next door to the Ship Inn Bar and Restaurant on Ao Yon Beach last Friday. This purpose built venue now houses the IGFA (International Game Fishing Association) club, who promote the sport of tagging and releasing all 'Bill Fish' (Marlin and Sailfish). Geared towards the younger generation, the club has ten rods and reels that children can borrow for the day in return for picking up rubbish on the beach. The club is co-sponsored by The *Phuket Gazette* and PGTV. Photos: Marc Mulloy



PLAYTIME: The club emphasizes its child friendly atmosphere and even brought in a clown to entertain the kids while the adults enjoyed the fabulous food on offer.



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OVER TO YOU: The Phuket International Women's Club Annual Scholarship Presentation took place at Satree Phuket School on Wednesday, September 12. From left to right are Ketsara (Ploy) Sukhom from Srinagarindra the Princess Mother School Phuket, Maggy Wigman, Sarat (Voy) Kantanon from Satree Phuket School, Juree Smulders Wongprom and Sii Eawsakul.



WE DO: Many 'honorary couples' took their wedding vows again in a traditional Baba Peranakan wedding held in front of the Hongyok mansion on September 9. Among those taking part were (from left to right) Dr Sataporn sangkawsuthiraks; Vice Governor Somkiat Sangkawsuthiraks; Mrs Wasna Tipayapongthada, Vice Governor Jamrean Tipayapongthada, Mrs Chalermkwan Tawrith, Colonel Naruedon Tawrith; Mrs Prathana Augkaradacha and the governor's son, Mr Nandaharith Augkaradacha.



ALL SMILES AND TILES: Miss Kanyarat Hirunyanitiwatna (third from left), CEO of Western Décor Corporation officially opened the WDC Showroom in Phuket while Mr 'Willie', CEO of Niro Indonesia (second from right) came to congratulate her.

YOUR Phuket

CADDY CAMERA: The 'Amazing Thailand - MBK Golf Tournament' was held at Loch Palm Golf Club on September 8 (right). In the photo (from left) are Mr Michael Brasier, GM of Loch Palm Golf Club; Mr Teerapong Chodchoiy, MD of MBKR; Ms Aranya Sirikul, hotel manager of Tinidee Hotel, Mr Pongsak Saddhasen, also MD of MBKR; Mr Teera Wongsawanon, GM of MBKR and Mr Nattapol Thubphuttra, VP of Riverdale Golf Club.



KEEP YOUR LID ON: A child receives a free blue motorcycle helmet at the recent 'Decade of Road Safety' campaign.



STOP FOR A PINT: The Phuket Regional Blood Center (PRBC), together with Honda Anuphas Phuket held a recent mobile donation clinic at the Honda Anuphas Phuket office. Phuket Red Cross representatives and Honda Anuphas Phuket Assistant Managing Director Montri Hongyok (center) are seen here with Anuphas customers and other donors.



YOU'RE WELCOME: The Marriott Vacation Club has a new Sino-Portuguese themed welcome center at the airport.



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* The China Daily's mass-circulation newspapers employ more than **500** journalists, including **70** senior expatriate editors from the UK, the United States, Europe, India, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. In the *Asia Weekly*, they feature news and commentary from authoritative writers across the globe.

TOUCH OF FEEL-GOOD

Spa business is getting better in Asia, P12-15



BOLD STATEMENT

Singaporean entrepreneur offers beauty biz tips, P24



CHINA DAILY

中國日報

ASIA
WEEKLY

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September 1 to 15: Por Tor, "Hungry Ghost" Festival

Por Tor Festival started the first day of this month and runs through the last week of September. The festival originated in ancient Chinese folklore. Every seventh lunar month of the Chinese calendar, the gates of hell open and hungry ghosts roam around the Earth in search of gratification. It all started with a modest monk named "Mahayana", who, after his transcendence, searched endlessly for the souls of his two dearly departed parents. You can see the festival in Sapan Hin or in downtown Phuket near the central market, next to the *Phuket Backpacker* hotel.

September 1 to 15: Phuket Adventure Mini Golf

A challenging 18-hole miniature classic championship golf course surrounded by palm trees, stones, water, bamboo and bushes. Whether you're living close by, or you're here on a fabulous holiday, this is the place for the whole family. Putter and golf ball are included in the price, but if you have your own favorite putter, bring it with you. Even for the "real" golf player, this is a perfect place to practice your putting technique. "Off Course" is an open-air restaurant where you can have full view of the mini golf park. Our signature thin crust homemade pizzas are served directly from the pizzaiola station. The menu includes a wide range of international and Thai food, as well as featuring a great children's menu.

September 13, 27; 6 to 11:30pm: Martini Manicure

WHAT'S ON in Phuket

Ladies Night at RE KA TA

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

September 15, 3 to 6pm: Phuket Flying Club Annual meeting

The agenda will include Phuket Flying Club board elections and new member sign-ups and renewals. Everyone with a passion for aviation is cordially invited. Contact Pat James: 085-258 0006.

September 20, 11:30am to 2pm: Phuket International Women's Club Monthly Lunch

The Phuket International Women's Club monthly lunch will be held at The Mövenpick in Karon. All are welcome but prior registration is essential. Members 500 baht, guests 650 baht. Contact info@phuketiwc.com.

September 20, 7:30 to 10pm: BBQ Dinner at Les Anges

BBQ Dinner Buffet with live music every Saturday. Special promotion for just 500 baht ++. Reservations recommended. Call Mr Murat at 081-797 3364.

September 28, 6 to 9pm: Indian Dinner Buffet at Les Anges

Phuket's best Indian buffet is back with a new chef and a new

menu. Special promotion at just 449 baht. From 6-9pm. Buy one, get one free drinks. Reservations recommended. Email: events@royalphuketmarina.com or call Khun Mai at 084-306-6729.

September 29, 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 by ourselves, and in the bakery we bake all our bread. With very well trained chefs and a Swedish head chef, we can promise you that you won't leave hungry or thirsty. All this for only 395 baht, and if you add an extra 300 baht you can choose what you want from our free flow alternatives. Visit: twochefs.com

September 30, 8am to 5pm: Dive Against Debris

Come and join the largest underwater cleanup of its kind in Thailand. We'll be Diving Against Debris, removing hazardous rubbish and surveying the rubbish. This will be the biggest volunteer effort to protect our ocean that Phuket has ever seen. Want to get involved? Contact your local PADI Dive Center. This event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*, *PGTV* and the *Phuket Today* show on UBC/True Visions (Channel 99).

October 5, 7 to 11pm: Curry Fridays Phuket

Curry Fridays at Navrang Mahal Indian Restaurant. Here is your chance to enjoy an authentic and



Curry Fridays Phuket September 21

WE present curry Fridays at Navrang Mahal Indian Restaurant. Here is your chance to enjoy an authentic and lavish Indian curry buffet. Dishes like 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. Draught beer by the glass: just 50 baht nett. Special discount on beverages. Located at Navrang Mahal Indian Restaurant in Karon Sea Sands Resort & Spa. From 7 to 11pm. For reservations, please call: 076-286464, ext 4.

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October 23, Chulalongkorn Day Commemorating the reign of Rama V, who is best remembered for abolishing slavery in Thailand.

Phuket Afternoon Computer Clinic

Is Windows driving you nuts? Looking for a good internet connection? Need to know how and where to get your PC repaired, or your confounding questions answered? Drop by the new Afternoon Computer Clinics, hosted by Woody Leonhard and Seth Bareiss. Bring your computer. Bring your questions. Bring your sense of humor and let's see if we can solve your PC problems. Second and fourth Wednesday of every month, 1-3pm, at the Sandwich Shoppe Chalong. Sponsored by Woody's Sandwich Shoppes and the

Free Computer Clinics at:

Sandwich Shoppe Chalong - September 26, 1-3pm

Sandwich Shoppe Chalong - October 3, 1-3pm

Contact at 076-282403, Woody@KhunWoody.com or visit KhunWoody.com

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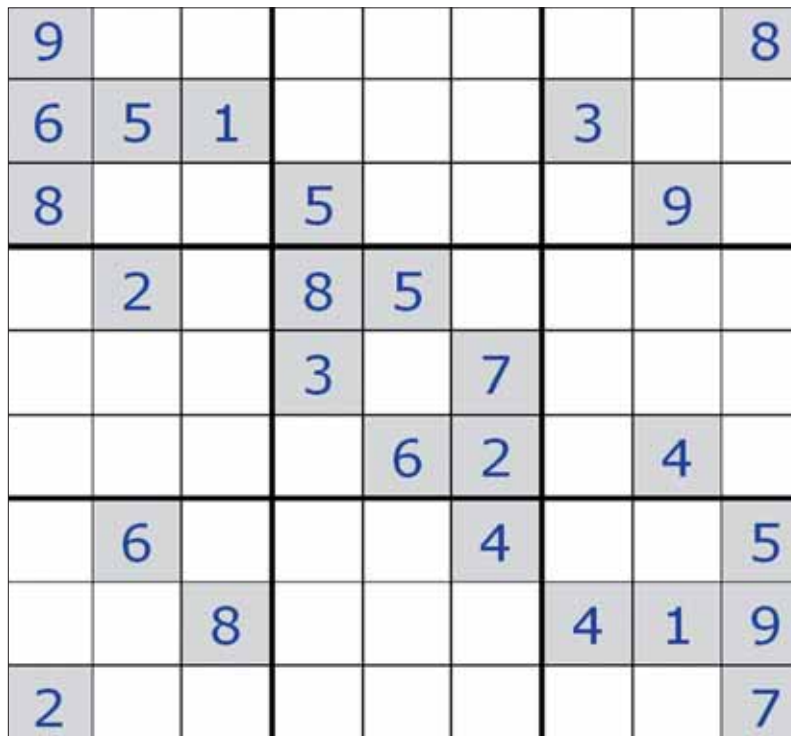
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COFFEE break

Across

9. Almost agitates freely to criticize (9)
10. Steelmen modified the components (8)
12. Kicked to editor! (4)
13. Routed around deviation (6)
14. I manage Ian, a man from the Middle East (7)
15. Rebel to rest gun in tumult (9)
17. Size of timber fine, our next couple shows (3,2,4)
18. I lost, he proves most sacred (7)
20. Stop little Desmond first (6)
21. A royal opening shows Thai good taste (4)
24. Account possibly secures without a note for those who

charge (7)

26. No charge, wolf back unrestricted drinks with a restaurant meal! (4,4)

28. Keen on, maybe not I (4)

29. For rats, it might be a narrow passage (6)

31. Fridays shortly, son, will give a feeling of excitement (7)

34. Of great significance to bring in worker (9)

36. Aiming to get at, grin broadly (9)

38. Gay in an unusual way for a Phuket beach (3,4)

39. Rolling acres East of the fold (6)

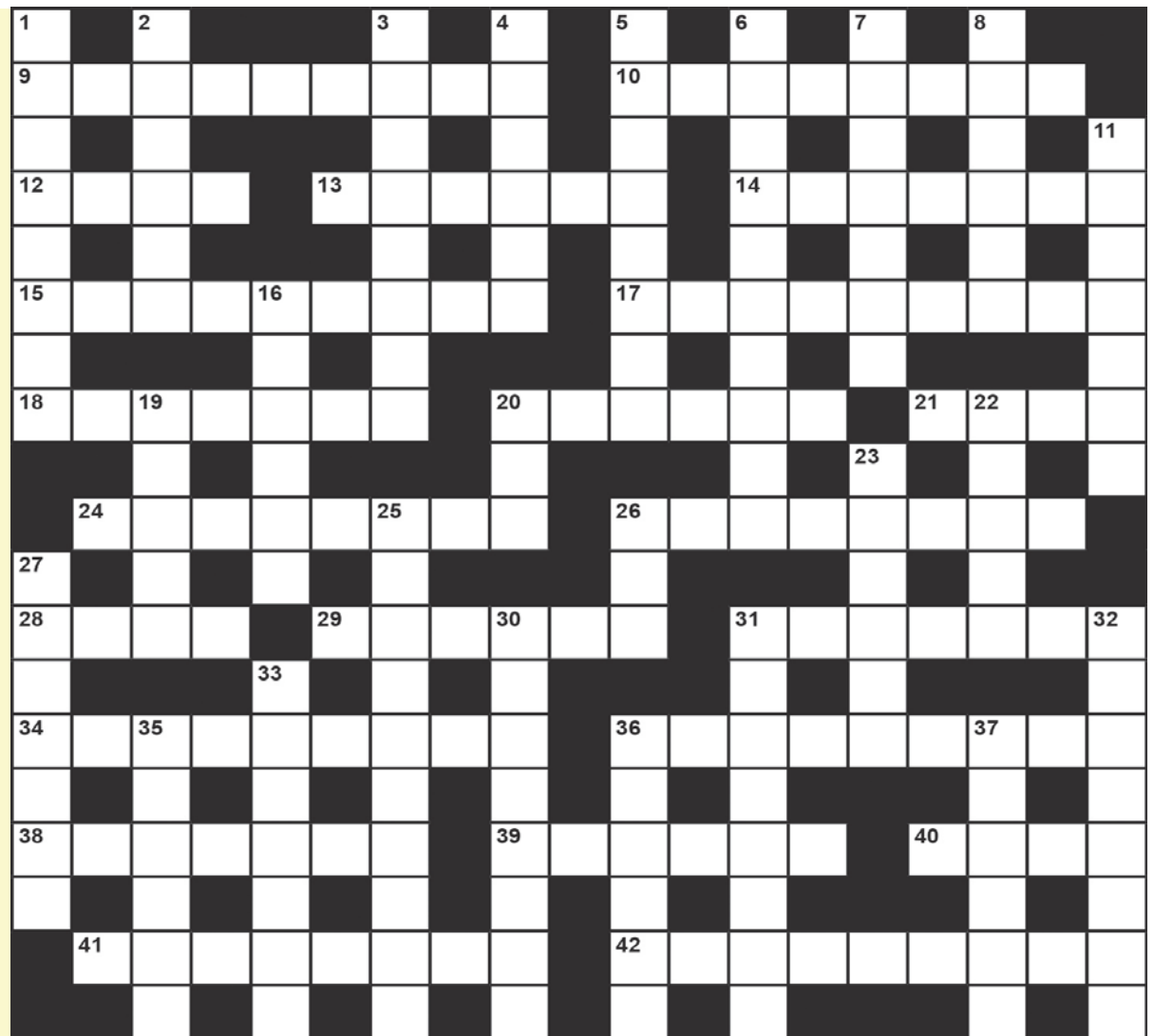
40. Father, I left the lower house in Ireland (4)

41. Daughter, one point of view is coldness of manner (8)

42. Order the way to follow (9)

Down

1. Maybe it costs hard to be from Northern Britain (8)



2. Idiots, son, estimate the cost (6)

3. Cement as used to make window! (8)

4. Intend from the start to leave (3,3)

5. Again makes plans to color flat floating structures (8)

6. Melt away from mixed up dice sequel (10)

7. Brother abused badly in smears (7)

8. Good man right! Island court is severe (6)

11. Many not able to show the opposite meaning (7)

16. Monkey mixes us with hers (6)

19. Licentiate, not a teen, could be legal (5)

20. A man of the French (3)

22. So for a change covers the building (5)

23. Position away from frost (6)

25. Note good man roaming around, keeping no longer close (10)

26. Loud, it is suitable (3)

27. Holds immovable in the gears (7)

30. Describing legal clerk liberal in the arrangement of a credit (8)

31. In favor of directions to test

sustainable woodmanship (8)

32. Turning in childrens' horse on heather is a bit worrying (9)

33. Touches finishing tape first, maybe sets bar (6)

35. British prince gets a stimulus, we hear (6)

36. In the end, try to be fashionable (6)

37. Inclined character to make a licit move (6)

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

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept 23):



This week you could have too much contact with people who prefer to receive, rather than give. A water sign is highlighted to expect you to do more than your fair share at work – Tuesday is the most auspicious day to put this person in their place. Those with a birthday in the week ahead are forecast to find more job satisfaction in the coming year. Number one is lucky for Virgoans this week.

LIBRA (Sept 24-Oct 23):



The second half of September will mostly be plain sailing for Librans, but an offer out of the blue this week could put you in an awkward position. The stars suggest that an earth sign's advice should help your work prospects to improve. Where romance is concerned, it may be time to put the brakes on a fire sign partner's spending. Your lucky number this week is eight.

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22):



Those born under the sign of Scorpio who feel that good luck is passing them by should be cheered by events this week. There are signs that you will have the knack of being in the

right place at the right time. Expect a midweek meeting with an air sign to have hidden advantages. Sparkling days for romance are Wednesday and Thursday. Number seven stands out this week for Scorpions.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21):



Your outlook is positive during the second half of September, with focus on faith in another fire sign being restored. Finances are well starred and those who have been hoping to relocate should now see this as a viable option. Love is in the air this weekend – a water sign's reaction to your advances is forecast to be more than you hoped for. The number nine can bring good fortune this week.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20):



There are hints that an air sign's attitude could be deceptive in the world of work. Capricorns who are looking for a reliable colleague are advised to set their sights on those who have proved their worth in the past. Romantic contentment could be compromised by interference from a blast from the past; the stars recommend a zero tolerance policy. Number two can bring good fortune this week.

YOUR horoscope By Isla Star

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19):



The middle of September is predicted to be an important time for those born under the sign of Aquarius. Choosing to head in a completely new direction is well starred and your intuition can be relied upon. In the realm of romance, one disagreement too many in a relationship with a fire sign may be the final straw. Love with other air signs is well starred. Your special number this week is three.

PISCES (Feb 20-March 20):



A project that you thought could be safely left on the back burner will require immediate attention this week. There are indications that another water sign has not kept their part of a bargain and you may want to reconsider your trust in this person. The stars advise that this is an auspicious period to make positive changes to your lifestyle. Pisceans' lucky number this week is six.

ARIES (March 21-April 20):



Your communication skills can be shaky around the middle of the month and the stars suggest thinking twice before scheduling serious discussions. Simple pleasures bring the most satisfaction, particularly within the realm of romance. An air sign appreciates a thoughtful gesture this weekend and an earth sign becomes interested when you say what's really on your mind. Finances are lucky on Monday. Number five comes alive this week.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21):



Time spent wondering why a situation is the way it is will be wasted. Those born under the sign of Taurus who know they need to move on are advised to do so without glancing backwards. Where work is concerned, a water sign's problems can become yours if you allow this to happen. Romance is hot on Tuesday and Wednesday. The number four can open a lucky door for Taureans this week.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):



Your chances of getting where you want to be increase during the second half of September. The stars will support those Gemini who are prepared to admit their mistakes and try new

approaches. Leaving space in your schedule for last minute appointments is recommended, with Wednesday being a particularly unpredictable day. An earth sign partner's need for solitude this weekend should not be misinterpreted. Your lucky number this week is seven.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):



The stars suggest that money matters become less stressful for those born under the sign of Cancer. Accepting an offer previously rejected will pave the way towards a more secure future. In the realm of romance, your energy is likely to attract another water sign this weekend. Those already spoken for will be pleased when a partner's promise is kept. Number eight is forecast to be important this week.

LEO (July 24-Aug 22):



The stars advise being careful what you wish for during the second half of September. There are signs that reality will not match up to fantasies, especially where work is concerned. Your romantic outlook is mixed; those who have been attempting to impress an earth sign could feel that they are going round in circles. Love with another fire sign is better starred. Your lucky number this week is nine.

PROPERTY Gazette

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Land art made from the heart

PHUKET has participated in a project entitled 'The King's Land Art Project' using *Niwet Silpa*, or 'Land Art' inspired by nine different national artists and erected in nine provinces around Thailand.

Each of the nine designs across the Kingdom represent His Majesty's talents and projects and range in size from four to 20 rai.

The Phuket project was taken over by At Panta Resort after the original location in Ayathuya withdrew its bid.

The exhibit in Phuket, designed by Mr Tawee Ratchaneekorn, is the eighth part of the iconic *Chronicle of the Land Project*.

Nationally renowned artist Tawee Ratchaneekorn completed *The Chronicle of the land No 8*, on four rai of land at At Panta Phuket Resort.

Inspired by the prestige His Majesty the King has throughout Thailand the composition is formed in the shape of a compass and is comprised of Pho leaves, a heart-shaped leaf, which represent Dhamma and the virtues of the King, pointing outwards in many directions.

The work reflects His Majesty's royal speech in which he is quoted as saying "We shall reign with righteousness for the welfare of the Siamese."

The design team managed to gather a group of around 300 volunteers from the Thalung area, made up of resort staff, TV representatives, local teachers and school children, members of various rescue foundations, staff from public organizations and local business people, to build the project over five days.

The completed works used over 4000 bricks and 700 square meters of grass during its installation and was launched with the assistance of the Tha Rakbanker Foundation along with the CSR Club, Humming House company and Thai PBS.

The Land Art is free to view by all visitors, everyday from now until December 31, open from 9am to 6pm.

For more information and photos please visit: atpanta.com or [facebook.com/AtPanta](https://www.facebook.com/AtPanta) or nitarnpandin.org

– The Phuket Gazette



BIRDS EYE VIEW: Mr Tawee's Land Art seen from above. This exhibit is located at the At Panta Resort in Thalung.



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A tale of two islands



SUNDAY morning often brings a decided blur to the tropical island landscape outside my window in Phuket. It's 9am, and even two large lattes can't shake off the ever so slight after effects of one too many drinks. Or perhaps two, but who's counting anyway?

Shaking the sleep from my eyes, I find myself talking to a nearby empty chair in latter day Clint Eastwood fashion. Why oh why Clint? You could've been anything – just not a Republican. The mighty C's are rolling out of my mouth like tiny toy soldiers on attack – *Confusionism* (my current state of mind) turns to Confucianism.

Chinese culture has given us those defining symbols of shadow and light, Yin and Yang. While it's common wisdom to easily dismiss these as exact opposites, in fact they are closer to kissing cousins – second cousins say – in Jerry Lee Lewis fashion.

Flicking on Wikipedia – the source of all knowledge – they are referred to as interconnected, interdependent and dualities.

In the more local context of our own island, we could compare the Yin and Yang to Rawai and Bangtao, same same but so very different. Adjusting our Google Earth view outward, we arrive at Thailand's two leading



DOUBLE VISION: A view of Phuket's iconic Patong Beach (left) and Koh Samui's famed Chaweng Beach. Photos: Thorfinn Stainforth and Jacques Herremans

resort destination islands: Samui and Phuket.

Having just wrapped up our most recent 'C9 Hotelworks Samui Mid-Year Hotel Market Update' the cover catches my eye. Figures that even Barack Obama would not have to spin in his quest for a second term jump off the page.

Market-wide hotel occupancy is up 8 per cent compared to the first six months of 2011. Airport arrivals surged 16 per cent and international flights rose 23 per cent to the island, with new services from Singapore, Malaysia and Greater China (this includes Hong Kong).

Comparing the two islands, it's not really apples to apples. Phuket has nearly 43,000 registered

accommodation units with Samui coming in at just over 15,000. As for the main travel indicator, total airport passengers to the former weighed in at 4.74 million in the first half of the year, and the latter at approximately 456,000.

The two tribes have started to separate over the past few years as our distant neighbor in the Gulf of Thailand has seen a boom in the upscale and luxury hotel market, with international brand names including Four Seasons, Starwood's W, Conrad and InterContinental playing starring roles.

Oddly, investor sentiment went into a deep freeze in what has become a blessing in disguise.

New hotel development of major hotel projects is now just three hotels with 371 rooms.

Switching to Phuket, the number is over 5,000 in waiting, which will be an 11 per cent increase to existing supply.

Of course, my own favorite buzz phrase for tourism remains,

"you can't stay there, if you can't get there", and this underpins the tale of the two markets. Phuket's airlift continues to pump up on steroids the way Lance Armstrong allegedly did. Our own airspace is starting to resemble that iconic scene from the Hitchcock thriller *The Birds*. Those images gave me nightmares for years as a kid.

As for Samui, this scene has been played out many times on these very pages, detailing the private airport, controlled by Bangkok Airways, which continues to lord over Samui. A runway too short for widebody aircraft, few low-cost airline carriers servicing the destination, and environmental restrictions on the total number of flights allowed are creating barriers to growth.

Going into the numbers, airline seat capacity is increasing as more Airbus' are taking over from the smaller ATR-72s, and a slow but sure growth in the international network reaching some key regional

hubs. I was on a tourism panel last week with the President of Bangkok Airways Puttipong Prasarttong-Osoth, who said the airline was looking at revisiting flight restrictions imposed under the airport environmental permit. Given a fleet of newer, less noisy Airbuses, the possibility exists that traffic numbers can potentially be increased.

For now, many Samui hoteliers find themselves humming the innocuous 80s MTV hit *The future's so bright, I gotta wear shades*.

Even the much maligned luxury property market is waking up, with two multimillion dollar sales this year at The Estates, which is part of the Four Seasons resort. I'm not quite sure who is Yin and who is Yang in our story, but I am certain that if Confucius were around today, he might be heading to Samui for a little me time.

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



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Bluepoint unveils new show unit

The eagerly awaited preview of Bluepoint Condos' show home was unveiled on Wednesday September 5 to an invited party of estate agents, media, contractors, suppliers, friends and investors.

Some sixteen months after the initial groundbreaking of the project, the developers were excited to reach this important milestone. Owner Kjetil Oiseth addressed the invitees and thanked them for their support and patience in the construction phase of Bluepoint.

"We have reached a happy moment with the completion of the show unit," he said. "Bluepoint Condos offer true quality and great design, and you can now see and touch it. We believe that excellence in property development is the right way forward and would like to see more of the same in Phuket."

Roland Bleszynski, Bluepoint's development manager, added, "We are now in a position to show Bluepoint's award-winning architecture in its stunning location.

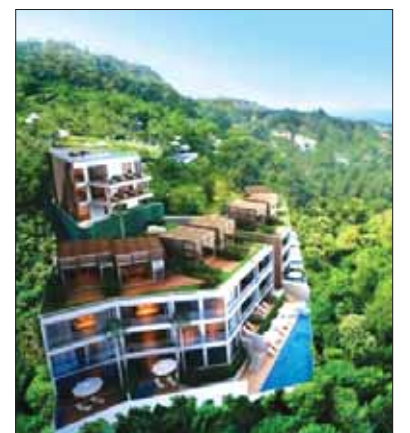
"There's nothing like seeing a product with one's own eyes and experiencing the interior design and luxurious aesthetics to appreciate the superiority of Bluepoint's design."

Bluepoint Condos overlook Patong Beach and the Andaman Sea, and are located on one of the last available sea view plots on Phuket's desirable western coastline.

Surrounded by stunning beaches including the quiet southern tip of Patong, Bluepoint Condos have embraced modern technologies and are also fitted with 'Lutron' lighting controls. These replace traditional wiring and offer the most advanced smart technologies for an owner's enjoyment.

Each condo comes with a lighting control system that will enhance the ambiance by providing control over audio-visual devices, in-room entertainment systems, blinds and shades.

Mobile devices can control all the above. Each condominium has also been designed to capture an opti-



Bluepoint's latest show-model.

mum sea view with floor-to-ceiling widescreen windows that fully fold away for uninterrupted views.

Building materials and all engineering systems have been chosen to reduce operation and maintenance costs and minimize negative effects on the surrounding ecosystem.

For more information on Bluepoint Condos, visit bluepointcondos.com.

The past and future of Central Festival

By Orawin Narabal

CENTRAL Festival celebrated its eighth anniversary over the weekend and the *Phuket Gazette* met with Deputy Managing Director in Business Development of Central Retail Cooperation Co, Ltd, Mr Lertwit Bhumipitak, and General Manager/Marketing Director of Central Festival Phuket, Ms Wilaiporn Pitimanaaree. We asked them some questions about the past and future of Central Festival.

Phuket Gazette: What are your plans for the expansion of Central on the 30 rai of land across Wichit Songkhram Road?

Lertwit Bhumipitak: We are going to renovate some parts of the mall and we are planning to expand Central Festival to the opposite side of Chaloeprhakiat Road (HomeWorks).

And, as our business keeps growing, we plan to expand, but we cannot confirm yet where it will be and what the plan will be. We are considering it [expansion]. When we gather all the information, we will let the public know.

PG: How will the AEC affect Central?

LB: The number of tourist arrivals in Phuket is expected to increase and this will benefit Central, as more customers will visit the mall.

PG: What other investment opportunities do you have on Phuket?

LB: I would say that the largest business under Central Pattana Public Company Limited (CPN) is Central Festival Phuket. We might expand our construction materials stores, HomeWorks, and Thai Watsadu or our supermarket line, Tops Daily.

Wilaiporn Pitimanaaree: Centara Group sees the potential of Phuket as a famous tourist destination, so it is possible that there might be the expansion of the Centara Group too.

PG: How do you view Phuket as a retail hub?

LB: Using the term hub, I think is too big and broad. In my opinion, I see Phuket as a shopping paradise and it attracts tourists from all over the world.

Central Festival Phuket supports this and makes tourists realize that besides the beautiful island, Phuket is still an international shopping destination.

WP: After the AEC in 2015, I think Phuket will start to compete against cities such as: Singapore, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur.

Central Festival Phuket will be considered a magnet that draws large numbers of tourists here, and provides more opportunities to help it compete.

Moreover, in Phuket, we have 5-and 6-star hotels under Central Pattana Public Company Limited (CPN), so I can say that we have nothing less than [they have].

PG: How has Central evolved over the last eight years? And, where do you see it going in the next eight years?

WP: For the last eight years we have considered ourselves a part of Phuket. Central Festival Phuket started at the same time the tsunami hit the island.

That period of time is considered a low point for Phuket, but soon after Phuket recovered quickly and Central Festival has been growing together with the province ever since. We see and we listen to customers' demands. We have offered what they want and develop ourselves to meet their needs all the time.

Central Festival embraces change and we learn how to fulfill our customers' needs. I am certain that we will continue to offer what is best for them.

LB: Eight years ago Phuket was one of the world's most popular tourist destinations with the concept of sun, sand and sea, but after Central Festival started we brought a change to people's lifestyle. We created one more concept, shopping.

When the tsunami hit in 2004, we were unlucky because among other things it affected business in Phuket.

Fortunately, Phuket had strong potential and was able to go back to normal very quickly. So a year after that, Central rebounded and started to develop again. Several years after the opening of Central Festival, we continue developing and we promise that we will keep making it better and better.

PG: What does Central give back to the local community?

WP: When Central Festival first stepped into Phuket, we provided job opportunities to more than 2,000 local people in retail fields, the mall, hotels and all the shops under Central Pattana Public Company Limited (CPN). We continue to offer jobs to local people today.

Moreover, when the organizations in Phuket want to promote the province to attract more tourists, we are certain that they will mention Central as one of the famous shopping destinations in Phuket.

Generally, when tourists visit Phuket, they usually stay about 4-7 days, and if they spend their time only on the beach, it will be boring.

This is why we offer them services such as shopping, lifestyle activities and a wide variety of food. This helps tourists stay in Phuket longer.

LB: We also cooperated with government organizations to establish the project "Save our Planet". It is a campaign to help decrease the use of plastic bags on the island by giving our customers cloth bags instead. We have conducted this project for the past eight years and during the recent Seafood Festival at Central, we handed out free cloth bags.

This year we plan to distribute around 10,000 cloth bags.

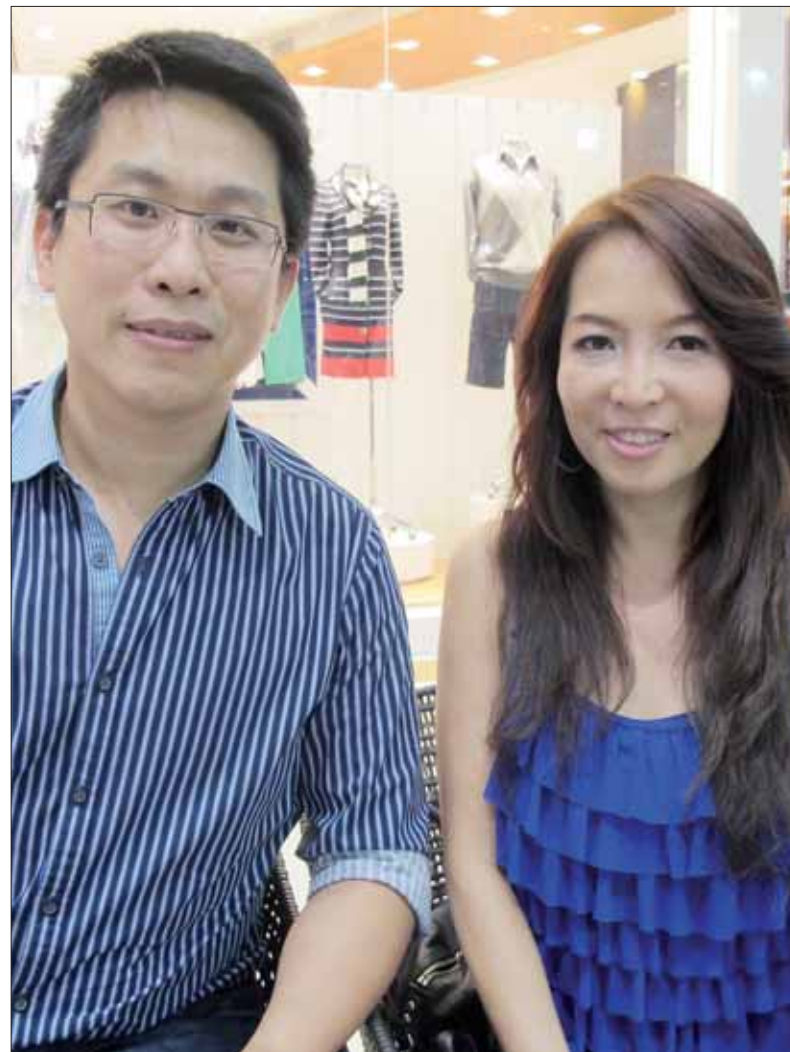
We have a project planting mangroves, which we do every year.

PG: Do you have any plans to fix the parking problem at Central?

LB: We are planning to expand the parking lots. To solve this problem in the short term, we suggest people park their cars at the opposite side of the mall [HomeWorks side].

Furthermore, at the beginning of the year we issued a measure to control the number of cars in the parking lot. In the past there were many cars parking in the parking lot because at that time it wasn't controlled, so some people parked their car all day and all night, some even parked for a week or two. Now we restrict the parking at Central Festival for the customers who use the services in our mall and we also set a time limit of three hours free parking.

If someone parks longer, they have to pay. This has helped to partially fix the problem.



A FESTIVE EVENT: Central Festival Phuket's business development Deputy Managing Director Lertwit Bhumipitak (left), and General Manager and Marketing Director Wilaiporn Pitimanaaree. Photo: Orawin Narabal



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Red for danger

TODAY'S piece was intended to focus on shrubs, beautiful and not armored, but still unlikely to find a place in a garden frequented by children due to their poisonous qualities.

But, another small tree has temporarily upstaged them. I was on a trip around Phuket, and ended up, literally, in a small soi which, as they often do, terminated abruptly.

As I reversed out of the *cul-de sac*, my partner noticed a spectacular plant growing in someone's front garden. It was a red jade (*mucuna bennetti*) about ten feet tall with the most spectacular racemes of scarlet flowers fully a foot long.



Gardening
By Patrick Campbell

But what was odd was that the spikes were pointing straight up, unlike the pendulous posture they normally adopt, perhaps twenty or thirty beak-shaped, flowers on each raceme.

This plant is, moreover, normally a vine, but this specimen was a conventional tree with a gnarled trunk and an open crown. As a member of the *leguminaceae* family, it also had a number of ripe brown seed pods.

And here's the point. My

partner reached up, and pulled a couple from an overhanging branch, then promptly swore in Thai. The branches were armored with fierce spines, hardly visible, but offering a potent defense. A thorny reminder...

Switch back to England some years ago, and another cautionary tale. Lucky enough to have a good-sized London garden, I planted a row of castor-oil shrubs against a wall outside the back door.

Normally used as a house-plant, these flourished, and their beautiful palmate leaves shone as though newly varnished. They also produced clusters of dark purple berries.

One day, I found our Persian kitten lifeless on the paving stones nearby. How or why she died remains a mystery, but I subsequently learned that the castor-oil plant is, according to *The Guinness Book of Records*, the deadliest of all known plants. A few berries can kill. Thank God, my children never sampled them.

Though all parts of the castor-oil plant are toxic, it is always those with poisonous berries or fruits which pose the biggest threat.

Such plants may provide lessobvious reminders of their power, but they are capable of inflicting far more than a bloodied finger.

Most of them are unpleasant to the taste, but alluring colors can be a magnet. And Thailand, which has a cornucopia of delicious and highly edible fruits and vegetables, also has more than its fair share of potentially dangerous plants.

The biggest family of toxic shrubs, is the *apocynaceae* brigade. Take the oleander, or to use its correct botanical name, the *nerium*.



THORNY: *Mucuna Benneti*, also known as red jade. Photo: Makuhaie

Oleanders are popular because they are sturdy and drought-resistant, tolerant of poor soils, have attractive, narrow-leaved, leathery, evergreen foliage and can,



Nerium. Photo: William Franklin

according to the cultivar (and there are more than 400), bloom in a range from white to deep pink and cerise. But in my experience, it is an erratic bloomer, and besides, all parts are poisonous.

The milky sap can irritate the skin and there are even stories of families being hospitalized after inhaling the smoke from the burning branches.

The culprits are cardioactive glycosides which, as with so many ingredients in dodgy plants, can be medically beneficial in small quantities. For example, they are effective in treating some forms of cancer and some heart conditions.

The nerium oleander has nothing much in the way of berries, so it is unlikely to be ingested by children.

On the other hand, the equally popular yellow oleander (*thevetia peruviana* or *ram phoei*) has large, green, glossy drupes, which might attract the curious.

Personally, I find it more appealing than the nerium.

It is a much faster grower, and produces yellow or apricot, trumpet-shaped flowers with great consistency.

As they say in Thailand, "Up to you."



The trumpet-shaped flowers of the *thevetia peruviana*. Photo: Tatters

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Tip of the week

Pottering with palms

A RECENT query from a reader concerned the suitability of palms for containers.

Many varieties are simply too big to pot, but there are some exceptions.

Indeed, some are tolerant enough of indoor conditions to have been used as house-plants for many years.

The commonest patio palm to be found in containers is probably the golden cane palm (*dypsis lutescens*).

It grows vigorously in clumps, and can attain two meters in a suitably large pot.

In full sun, its feathery fronds will turn yellowish; in semi-shade, they will remain green.

The fishtail palm (*caryota*) has a single slender trunk; atypically, it has dark green, densely produced leaves, which give the tree its name.

Particularly useful in darker areas or as a screen, it needs plenty of water.

Licuala, an attractive species of fan palm possesses huge, pleated leaves: rather delicate, it dislikes direct sun and strong winds.



The golden cane palm.
Photo: Scott Zona

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Residences/Phuket Condo unit, half of a deluxe twin house, fully furnished and equipped, set direct on the picturesque lagoon with balcony right over it. 3 bedrooms, each with shower/bathroom roof terrace. Long-term rent or sale. Tel: 081-737 0365. Email: utaipan@yahoo.com

POOL VILLAS FOR RENT

1,2,4 bedrooms, fully furnished, ADSL, SAT TV. Bangtao area. Tel: 090-156 7927.

KAMALA CONDO FOR RENT/SALE

Peaceful but convenient, 5 minutes walk to beach. Well kept and clean, fully furnished. 28,000 baht per month for long term. Sale: 6.5 million baht o.n.o. Tel: 089-780 4568. Email: taareel@gmail.com

7 BEDROOMS GOLF VIEW

7-aircon bedrooms, swimming pools, furnished, nice and quiet villa. 10 mins to Big C, Central, Headstart, 5 mins to Tesco, QSI. Please call 081-271 3228 or email: info@procarpentering.com for more info.

CONDO IN PATONG

Located at Phuket Palace. 1 bedroom, 54sqm with pool, parking, wifi. Rent in long term now and get good rate. Tel: 081-892 1621.

URGENT SALE/RENT



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

MANGO HOUSE
Seaside Villas • Cafe • Bar
Escape to Lanta Old Town, Thailand's most charming fishing village.
Weekly from 10,000 THB
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5 BEDROOMS FOR RENT

At Khoktanod area, near Bangtao and Layan Beach. 5 beds with big garden. Special rent: 35,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-795 6363.

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.

THE POINT CONDO

2-storey loft in Phuket town opposite Big C, fully furnished, free swimming pool, fitness, internet and cable. Special discount. From 35,000 baht to only 22,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-795 6363. Email: vicky_grc@hotmail.com

NEW HOUSE FOR RENT, PATONG

1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, living room with full western kitchenette. All extras. Aircon, internet, LCD, IBC. Modern furnished, quiet setting near Nanai. Rent: 13,000 baht per month. Tel: 084-185 8536.

FURNISHED SEAVIEW CONDO RENTAL

In Phuket Town, 1 bedroom, 1 living room, kitchen, terraces. Top facilities: fitness, pool, guard. 28,500 baht per month. Tel: 081-895 3628.

TOWNHOUSE IN KOH KAEW



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

HOUSE FOR RENT

3 bedrooms, fully furnished. Near Tesco shopping center, international school. Surin Beach, Bang Tao Beach, Phuket International Airport, Ao Por Marina. Tel: 089-724 2787 (English & Thai), +61-43-035 8567. Email: sar_seal@yahoo.com

CHAOFA GARDEN HOME, 2 BEDS

Fully furnished, 2 beds, 2 baths, 2 aircons, living room, kitchen, fridge, dining and washing machine. Long-term rent: 16,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-048 6906 (English & Thai). Email: j7chin@gmail.com

LUXURY APARTMENT, PATONG

1+2 beds, seaview, pool, wifi. Rent: 20,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-279 0837. Email: bricothailand@hotmail.com

PHUKET VILLA 5 VILLAGE



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

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

LARGE KAMALA HOUSE

Furnished, 300sqm, 2 bedrooms, office, 3 bathrooms, aircon, carport, sundeck. Rent: 32,000 baht per month, minimum 6 months -- or buy for 3.65 million baht. Includes use of pool near beach. Tel: 084-716 0502.

LONG-TERM RENT

1-2 bedroom, furnished houses, beautiful garden, Chalong area 10,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-892 4311.

2-BEDROOM HOUSE, BANG TAO



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

ORCHID KATHU HEIGHTS

Stylish serviced apartments. Studio, 1 bedroom, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Rooftop pool, Free WiFi. Also beachfront condo. Tel: 081-892 0038. For further details, please see our website at www.orchidkathuheights-phuket.com

LUXURY POOL VILLA FOR RENT

Located just outside Laguna, this large 5 bedroom, 5 bathroom- pool villa is available for long & short term rent. Tel: 081-892 0534 (English), 081-597 6911 (Thai). Email: barrett.damian@gmail.com

APARTMENT THALANG

1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, living room, kitchen, near Tesco Lotus. Rent: 4,500 baht per month. Tel: 081-826 7287.

700,000 BAHT YEARLY RENT



Rawai Bar Hotel, 9 bedrooms, 650sqm land, 100m to pier. Available now. Tel: 081-416 1072. Email: rawai4@yahoo.com

NICE HOUSE IN CHALONG



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

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OAKMEADOW INT'L SCHOOL

We are looking for a qualified Thai female teacher. Tel: 076-521550, 084-847 0732 (English). Email: info@oakmeadowphuket.com

HEAD OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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

SKILLED TRADESPEOPLE WANTED

For very busy handyman company. Thai or farang. Good salary. Contact www.farang-handyman.com

ACCOUNTING BOOKKEEPING

Thai CPA knowledge of English. Dive knowledge a plus. Pay 20k working Mon-Fri. Send CV to phuket@sssnetwork.com

2 NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS

Required for Rainbow Land, Fisherman's Way, Chalong, to teach a mixed group of 2-5+ year olds. Call, text or email for more information. Tel: 082-812 3610. Email: turnery5@gmail.com

EXPERIENCED YACHT CAPTAINS

Applicants must hold valid license or permit. Duties include repositioning of corporate & private yachts within the SEA region. Attractive salary package for those with the necessary qualifications & experience. Tel: 080-078 3731. Please send your resume to blackwall88@gmail.com or contact Shaun for further information.

THAI STAFF MANAGER
With good spoken and written English. Salary from 20,000 baht. Tel: 080-879 6058.

URGENT CHEF INT'L CUISINE

High salary + service charge + bonus and all benefits. Tel: 089-908 7486.

IT OR AV ENGINEERS

Thai nationality, can speak English. Please send CV to Email: info@techworx-project.com

TOUR GUIDES NEEDED

For popular speedboat charter and events company. Thai nationals only. Tel: 076-383125. Email: info@coralseekers.com

MALE WEDDING STAFF

- Hair and makeup.
- Flower arrangement.
- Dress maintenance and customer service.

Thai male with multiple skills more than two of above required. Driver's license, good command of English and computer are also needed. Email: info@sa-mer.com, for further details, please see our website at www.samerwedding-thailand.com

SALES EXECUTIVE

Jagota Brothers Trading Co., Ltd. Long-time, well-established food importer and supplier to hotels and restaurants welcomes applications from experienced salespeople. Must be fluent in written & spoken English. Background in food industry preferred. Must have own car to visit customers. Tel: 082-790 5143. Please forward resumes and references to George. Email: george_d@jagota.com

EZYSTAYS CO LTD

Ezystays (Travel Club), located in Patong, is looking to recruit a Thai Admin Assistant for its busy sales office. Candidates must have a good command of the English language and be able to work efficiently with Word and XL, and basic knowledge of accounts. Salary is negotiable depending on experience. All applicants must apply with a cover letter and CV in English with photo. We offer an excellent working environment and a 5-day work week. Tel: 076-34421. Email: clientliaison@ezystays.com

LIVEABOARD OFFICE

Thai, fluent in spoken and written English, good computer skills, marketing, at least 2 years experience. CV wanted! Tel: 088-500 6150 (English). Email: info@nauticadiving.com

HUMAN RESOURCES

Group of companies operating in the property and F&B market, is looking for a Human Resources Manager with experiences in recruitment and evaluation to support the organization's business goals. The ideal candidate is a Thai national, organized, and confident. Tel: 076-383 435. Email: info@obiettivothailandia.com

BARISTA/CAFE MANAGER

1-2 persons needed for April start, at the re-opening of the Trees Club Resort Cafe. English speaking required. Tel: 086-268 3238. Email: billyanthony6@hotmail.com

COOK NEEDED (FEMALE)

Cook (f) needed urgently for only morning shift (Breakfast/Thai/Europe). Tel: 082-270 6385 (English). Email: tkoschig2000@hotmail.com

SALES ADMIN INTERIOR DESIGN

We are hiring a motivated person with a passion for sales/admin to join the team at our furniture showroom in Bang Tao. We offer an attractive salary and benefits. Tel: 076-325 419, 081-400 4678. Email: orientalsamui@gmail.com, for further details, please see our website at oriental-living.net

SHOP STAFF NEEDED

Need more staff for our shops in Kamala and Patong. Rent out motorbikes. English speaking Thai. Tel: 085-158 7638 (English). Email: pierrehammar@yahoo.se

NEW HOLIDAY CLUB IN SAMUI

Infinity Vacation Club is opening soon in Koh Samui. We are in need of a sales manager, good salespeople, OPCs and receptionists. If you are a proven performer, we want to talk to you. Our commissions and bonuses are the best in Koh Samui. We are looking for top people who want to grow with us in Southeast Asia. Contact James. Tel: 086-690 6977 (English). Please send your CV to tjrgolfer72@gmail.com

EXPERIENCED YACHT CAPTAINS

Applicants must hold valid license or permit. The position is based in the Philippines and duties include repositioning of corporate & private yachts within the SEA region. Attractive salary package for those with the necessary qualifications & experience. Tel: 080-078 3731. Please send your resume to blackwall88@gmail.com

WEB DEVELOPER WANTED

Siam Real Estate require a web design and developer competent with PHP, MySQL, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, jQuery, XML. Must be capable of quality work and be able to meet deadlines. Can be company or individual. Tel: 076-288 908. Apply to jobs@siamrealestate.com, for further details, please see our website at www.siamvillarentals.com

EXPERIENCED ELDERCARE NURSE

Nurse/helper for older person or invalid. Two years experience with alzheimers patient. Reliable, hard-working, excellent references. Some English. Tel: 089-196 0940. Email: woody@khunwoody.com

RECEPTIONIST KATA

Reliable female staff is required. 2 days off per week. Tel: 081-892 1621.

LOOKING FOR STAFF

Need 1 Chef, 1 Sous Chef, Help Cook, Waitress and Waiter for Thai and International Restaurant. Please Contact K. June 081-970 5830 or Laurent 081-693 3940. Email: alain.laurent8@gmail.com

WORK CS @ HOLYCLOTHING!

Customer service agents needed for expanding internet fashion retailer. Are you CS experienced, Thai, hard working, computer savvy and fluent in English? Salary of 17-27,000 baht per month. Tel: 076-289472. Email: grahamkay@mac.com. For full details see our website www.holyclothing.com/htmlx/work.html

SALES & MARKETING POSITIONS

Available with successful sales company based in Phuket. High earning potential on offer, full training and ongoing support. Send your CV to jengore@inspire.net.nz highlighting which position you are applying for.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

Irish Pub at Jungceylon: Wanted Thai female, fluent in speaking and writing English, good computer skills, accounting, preferably at least 2 years experience. Tel: 076-366085, 081-788 4078.

EXPATRIATE MARINE MECHANICS

Looking for experienced expatriate marine mechanics. Duties include general and preventive maintenance of corporate and yachts positioned within the SEA region. Attractive remuneration package for those with the necessary qualifications and experience. Tel: 080-078 3731. Please contact Mark Jones and send resume to markjones288@gmail.com

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@imedageconcepts.com

NEW ESTATE OFFICE PHUKET

Require 2 persons: 1 experienced and 1 keen to learn. Tel: 081-958 3830.

**RED PLANET HOTELS LIMITED**

Red Planet Hotels (Thailand) Limited (RPHL) is a regional hotel investment company focused on Asia's emerging markets. RPHL is developing a portfolio of budget hotels in the following key countries:

- Thailand
- Philippines
- Indonesia
- China

The company is an asset owning company that operates its own hotels under a franchise agreement from TuneHotels.com

We are looking for a pre-opening team

1. **Hotel Manager** (1 position)
2. **Guest Service Supervisor / Guest Service Executive** (9 positions)
3. **Engineering Supervisor** (1 position)
4. **Technician** (1 position)

For Tune Patong, Phuket which will be opened by the middle of December. Team (Front Desk and maintenance):

Qualification:

- Thai Nationality
- Bachelor's Degree
- Good command of English. Experience of the hotel or service industries, or retail sales is most preferred in a guest or customer facing role
- Good attitude, 'Can Do' approach and excellent appearance
- Basic computer skills and knowledge of MS office
- Able to work on a shift pattern with a team or work independently
- Ability to upsell to guests or customers
- Confident
- Assertive
- Hotel experience is desirable but we will consider all candidates with previous retail sales experience who have not worked in the hospitality industry previously.

Interested applicants please send details to:

hr@redplanethotels.com or aree@redplanethotels.com

The Offices at Central world, Unit 1901

999/9 Rama I Road, Pathumwan

Bangkok 10330, Thailand

THAI STAFF MANAGER

With good spoken and written English. Salary from 20,000 baht. Tel: 080-879 6058.

MAID FOR APARTMENT NEEDED

Maid needed for apartment in Karon. Full day. Salary 14,000 baht. Age 20-37 years. Tel: 083-640 0616 (English), 084-734 0122 (English). Email: likhovro man@mail.ru

CHEF WANTED

Wanted for the Ao Chalong Yacht Club.

- An English speaking chef. Must be Thai national.

- Would prefer a young person experienced in Thai cooking and willing to learn Western style.

- Great opportunity for right person to learn from award-winning Australian chef.

- Salary negotiable.

Please contact Kim Mitchell. Tel: 090-705 9466, or email resume to kim_a_mitchell@hotmail.com

SENIOR TEACHER

Phuket Has Been Good To us require a senior teacher for the English education program. Leading a small, dynamic team of ESL teachers in 2 Thai schools in Phuket, you will be an experienced educator with strong leadership and ESL skills. Experience in the Thai educational system and the ability to communicate in Thai is advantageous. Salary 65,000-70,000 baht/month. Full position descriptions at www.phuket has been good tous.org. Please submit a 1 page letter of application, CV and a recent photograph by August 31st to info@phuket hasbeengoodtous.org

IT OR AV ENGINEERS

Thai nationality, can speak English. Please send CV to Email: info@techworx-project.com

PRIMARY TEACHER

International School in Chalong is looking for a native English speaking primary teacher to join our dynamic team. Tel: 082-323 1188. Please send your CV to Email: phuketinternational@asia.com

BARTENDER REQUIRED

Full-time position. Good salary and great fun. Accommodation if needed. Thai national only. Please call Russell: 089-587 9112. Email: sunsetbarphuket@yahoo.com

A leading Home Automation and MEP Engineering company in Chermg Talay is looking to fill:

- Secretary
- M&E Engineer
- Autocad draftsman

Good Salary. 5 day week.
Email: info@avcpuket.com
Fax: 076-615811

NEW HOTEL OPENING
Opening 01 October in Patong. Staff required in all areas: House-keeping, Front Desk, Security, and Bar Hosts. Men preferred. Tel: 60-16-974 6968 (English). Email: LouisLovestrand@yahoo.com

ACCOUNTANTS/BOOKKEEPERS
Experienced Thai staff for immediate openings in a fast growing company with very positive working environment. English, written and spoken, are preferred but not mandatory except for senior management positions. Salary based on qualifications. Email resume to hr@freshgardenfarms.com

YACHT HOSTESS WANTED
We are a market leader in luxury yacht and speed-boat charters. For this coming season we are looking for a motivated Thai female to work on our yachts and boats as a qualified hostess. Good English language skills are essential and knowledge of the Phang Nga Bay and its surroundings are an advantage. The contract will be for the high season only. If you are interested to work in a professional team please email your application including your CV at bosch.michael@gmail.com

IRANIAN PR STAFF NEEDED
The Absolute Group is currently looking to recruit an Iranian national to work in their promotions department. For more information contact Neda. Tel: 089-724 1935.

MANDARIN TOUR GUIDE
Tour guide for Chinese tourists. Must be fluent in Mandarin and English. Tel: 084-415 0546(English). Email: careers@gojitravel.com

Mechanical/Structural Engineer
Thai National required for Phuket office.
For an interview please contact:
thamersley@australiancad.com.au

For our offshore software development company **Nobuzane Ltd.** based in Phuket, Thailand we are looking for:

4 (four) medior level Software Developers

Young growing international software company looking for intelligent, English-speaking Software Developers to join our team. Your main responsibility will be to work with the chief software architect to design and develop web-based custom business applications.

General skills:

- Good communication skills (English) for information exchange and technical documentation
- Experience diagnosing & debugging problems

Job specific skills:

- 2 to 5 years experience with ASP.NET/C#
- 2 to 5 years experience with MS Visual Studio development environment

Skills considered an advantage:

- Knowledge/experience with SQL Server
- Knowledge/experience with Javascript

For enquiries and/or job applications please contact nobuzane@live.nl

CAD DRAFTER
Required for new Company Setting up an office in Phuket.
Multi-discipline drafting using Autocad and Microstation.
MUST SPEAK ENGLISH WELL
Contact Trevor via email:
enquiries@australiancad.com.au

BARTENDER
A bartender with experience to a new nice bar in Kamala. Tel: 083-634 5772 (English & Thai). Email: pierre_hammar@yahoo.se

PHILIPPINE STAFF
Please send CV at cc@bayshoreprojects.com Contact Carla. Tel: 081-968 5963. Email: cc@bayshoreprojects.com

SHOP STAFF NEEDED
Need more staff for our shops in Kamala and Patong. Rent out motorbikes. English talking Thai. Tel: 085-158 7638 (English). Email: pierre_hammar@yahoo.se

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER WANTED
We are looking for a native English kindergarten teacher to join our team to teach 10-12 children aged 3-6 years. Must have a minimum Bachelor's degree or equivalent. Tel: 076-383150, 084-5204978. Fax: 076-383150. Email: info@cravensnurseryphuket.com

ASSISTANT HOTEL MANAGER
To assist GM in maintaining a successful and profitable hotel - 42room boutique hotel in Karon
- Bachelor's degree in Sales or Hotel Management or at least 2 years management experience
- Managing 32 staffs
- Thai national, fluent in English
- Knowledgeable in MS Word, Excel, Photo Shop
- Salary 18,000 baht per month plus service charge
- Tel: 086-604 1333 (English). Email CV to sales@ccbloomshotel.com

OFFICE TOUR STAFF
Spoken and written English. Salary 7,000-10,000 baht. 1 day off a week, medical insurance. Tel: 076-510 393. Email: julietta512@yahoo.com





We are looking for dynamic individuals to come and join our expanding team in:

- Front Office Department
- Engineer Department
- F&B Department
- Accounting Department

For more information, please contact **076 396 690-91** (ext. 25/Personnel) during 09:00 am – 04:00 pm, Mondays to Saturdays.
Or submit your resume/CV together with recent photo and expected salary to eam@phuketheritage.com. We welcome walk-in candidates.

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Boathouse on Kata Beach and RE KÁ TA, Beach Club at Boathouse are now seeking the following positions:

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Boutique • Boutique Attendant		
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Interested applicants, please e-mail full resume and a recent photograph to hroffice@boathousephuket.com

Boathouse
182 Koktanode Road, Kata beach, Phuket 83100 Tel: 076 330 015
www.boathousephuket.com

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PATONG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taurus Travel (Aroonsom Plaza) Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe (Aroonsom Plaza) Deli Supermarket (Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd) 	Tel: 076-344521-2 Tel: 076-290468 Tel: 076-342275
PHUKET CITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earth Language Training Centre School (Phang Nga Rd) Sin & Lee (Thalang Rd) iTree complete printing service (Tesco Lotus Phuket Town) bank zone 	Tel: 076-232398 Tel: 076-258369 Tel: 076-255425
CHERNG TALAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chaba Supermarket (at the Laguna gateway) 	Tel: 076-325586
RAWAI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Network property office (Saiyuan Rd) 	Tel: 076-613173
KARON <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EuroStyle Tailors (Luang Por Chuan Rd) 	Tel: 076-396911

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Articles For Sale

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Includes:
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- Touch screen panel.
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- Telephone receiver.
- Back massage jets.
- Foot massage machine.
- Background lights.
- Rain shower.
- Soap dispensers.
- Mirror.

3 models. Price: 46,000 - 69,000 baht.
Safeway - Main Highway
Thalang (next to Shell gas station). Tel: 081-125 1873, 081-892 4804.

FARANG SELLING
WASHING MACHINE

Samsung, 9kg, 6 months old, security. Price: 5,000 baht. Tel: 083-635 2414.

2ND HAND GOODS
FOR SALE

Shelves, executive tables and more. Prices negotiable. Tel: 081-978 2725.

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WASHER

7.5kg. Cost: 6,000 baht. Sale: 4,500 baht o.b.o. For more information please contact: 080-881 2169.

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FOR SALE

Hayward 55kw pool pump with filter, 200-liter sand filter with valve, and electrical box with switches. 2 LEED lights and more. 3 years old. Make an offer. Tel: 081-893 7068.

ITEMS FOR SALE

Bar chair, counter, table, sofa, TV and much more. Tel: 088-765 0886.

RESTAURANT SALE

40 chairs, 90x90cm 15 tables in aluminium-weave. Cost: 560,000 baht. Sale now: 150,000 baht. Tel: 082-803 0356.

Bar &
Restaurant
EquipmentCAPUCHINO,
COFFEE MACHINE

2 coffee stations with steam and hot water, Brasilia with Saeco coffee grinder. Price: 200,000 baht. Tel: 089-964 2188.

FORCED LIQUIDATION
SALE

Kata-Penthouse 7th floor seaview, 3 apartments, restaurant and bar, pool. Management company, land, building. 16.5 million baht. Tel: 081-828 0972 (English). Email: sbolls@hotmail.com

GUESTHOUSE,
PATONG

Rent: 12 guest rooms, 4 shops, good location at Nanai Road, very cheap rent at 1.15 million baht per year. Sale: 1.5 million baht. Tel: 089-728 4005. Email: thamad17@yahoo.com

MASSAGE AND BAR

9 beds, 5 chairs, 3 years lease. Include bar, fridges, stock, all equipments and extras. Well set up. Must See! Sale: 900,000 baht. Tel: 081-061 6412 (English), 081-055 0579 (Thai).

RESORT FOR SALE

Nai Harn, 2 rai, fully functional, bargain at 25 million baht. Contact Vince. Tel: 087-892 6204.

TAX-FREE
INVESTMENTS

And bank offshore investment and banking in UK, HK, Canada, Singapore for HNW investors. Tel: 081-970 2887 (English). Email: chrissawtell@gmail.com

COMMERCIAL
BUILDING PATONG

Excellent location in the heart of Patong (close to Jungceylon):

3-storey shophouse under construction, 13m of street front.

Ground floor with 155sqm sales area, and 1 storage room (25sqm).

2nd floor: 1 apartment (125 sqm + 70sqm terrace).

3rd (top) floor with 1 apartment (50sqm + 30sqm balcony).

Chanote title deed, company included. For sale by owner. Email: thai-live@web.de

SALE BAR
BANGLA ROAD

Very good location on main road, 66 months on lease, 19.5 million baht. Tel: 085-784 1213. Email: christopher.007@hotmail.com

RESTAURANT
FOR SALE

Nai Harn Beach, Phuket. This represents a fantastic opportunity. The restaurant ticks all the boxes. Established 7 years. One of the best locations in Nai Harn. Very reasonable rent for size and location. New 3-plus 3-year lease. Realistically priced at 1.8 million baht. Tel: 081-580 9240.

Bulletins

Alcoholics
Anonymous

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that is your business
If you want to stop
that is ours
Daily Meetings

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Chalong, Surin, Karon
& Cape Panwa

081-895 4763
081-956 4031

email: phuketaa@yahoo.com

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The Phuket International Women's Club is a volunteer organization raising funds for educational scholarships. We rely on the goodwill of donors and sponsors - small and large. If you would like to put something back into the community in which you live, contact us to find out more about giving a prize or being a sponsor. Contact Carol. Tel: 087-417 8860 or contact Sue. Tel: 087-277 6948. For more information please email us at info@phuketiwc.com

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12	O	E	D		13	D	E	T	O
14	I	R	A	N	I	A	N		
15	I	N	S	U	R	G	E	N	T
16	F	O	U	R	B	Y	T	W	O
17	T	E	S						
18	H	O	L	I	E	S	T		
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23	O								
24	A	C	C	U	S	E	R	S	
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37	I	N	G						
38	N	A	I	Y	A	N	G		
39	C	R	E	A	S	E			
40	D	A	I	L					
41	D	I	S	T	A	N	C	E	
42	D	I	R	E	C	T	I	O	N
43	P	S	G	D					
44	Y								
45	Y								
46	C								
47	G								

A golden British summer

By Patrick Campbell

"A GOLDEN summer". So said David Cameron, the British PM, in a recent tribute to the nation's sporting successes.

The Olympics, masterminded by Sebastian Coe, himself a former 1,500-meter gold medal winner, were impeccably organized and dazzlingly staged, with venues bursting with enthusiasts.

Images of derring-do, etched in the memory, will differ from person to person, but those gold medalists who combined god-given talent with oodles of skill, endurance and the sheer will to win, stick in the memory.

For example Brownlee's lung-bursting win in the triathlon, Jessica Ennis's multi-skilled triumph in the heptathlon, the achievement of Bradley Wiggins in the cycling time-trial, weeks after an epic win in the Tour de

France, and the unbelievable double of Mo Farah, whose long-distance victories were widely described as the greatest ever by a British track athlete.

Britain won medals in sports at which they had never been much good—in gymnastics, in whitewater canoeing, in dressage. And, in sports where they have always been there-or-thereabouts—cycling, rowing and sailing. If there was a hiccup it was in swimming, where the legendary American Michael Phelps became the most decorated Olympian of all time.

The Paralympics, in danger of being a damp squib after the fireworks of the main Games, turned out to be the most successful ever, with attendances far in excess of anything achieved before.

Eleven million people watched the opening ceremony, millions were glued to their TVs, from Madrid to Melbourne, to watch



PRIDE: Fireworks spray from the Queen Victoria Memorial outside Buckingham Palace at the end of a parade celebrating Britain's athletes who competed in the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Photo: AFP

blade-runner Oscar Pistorius provide a fitting finale by winning the 400-meters. London, it was generally agreed, had taken the notion of paralympic sport to a new level.

By coming third in the global medal table in both competitions; Britain might justifiably argue that, in per capita terms at least, we are

currently the most successful sporting nation on the planet. Lets hope that this legacy will not turn to lethargy, that the watchword "inspire a generation" will live up to its promise, that grass-roots participation will burgeon. So far the signs are good...

We have just witnessed the

first tennis Grand Slam victory of Andy Murray, a see-sawing, nail-biting five hour marathon, which tested every nerve and every sinew of the Olympian, and we waited nearly eighty years for it.

Maybe "Made in Britain", as Lord Coe averred, is regaining some of its luster.

Not all is fair in love and football

THE 'financial fair play' concept was approved by UEFA's Executive Committee in September 2009 as a way to look after the well-being of the game.

The concept was introduced into the game in the summer of 2011 when UEFA started monitoring the accounts of all the clubs that qualified for the Champions League and Europa League, with its main objectives being: to introduce more discipline and rationality in club football finances; to decrease pressure on salaries and transfer fees and limit inflationary effects; to encourage clubs to compete within their revenues; to encourage long-term investments in the youth sector and infrastructure; to protect the long-term viability of European club football and to ensure clubs settle their liabilities on a timely basis.



Man City owner Mansour bin Zayed. Photo:AFP

Clubs who are monitored are required to break even on their football-related business, and those who fail to meet these requirements will be barred from the Champions League and Europa League from the 2014-15 season onward.

This season, UEFA is investigating 23 clubs, whose payments from this season's Champions League and Europa League could be stopped by UEFA because they failed to meet the requirements laid down by the June 30 deadline. Malaga and Atletico Madrid are among those being investigated.

The Premier league last week looked at ways to bring the financial fair play model into its league, but any rule change needs to be agreed by 14 of the 20 clubs in the league.

Teams like Manchester City, who spent vast sums of money on their way to winning the league, claim they aim to break

PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES	SATURDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2012		18:45
	Norwich	VS	West Ham
	SATURDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2012		21:00
	Arsenal	VS	Southampton
	Aston Villa	VS	Swansea
	Fulham	VS	West Brom
	QPR	VS	Chelsea
	Stoke	VS	Man City
	SATURDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2012		21:00
	Man Utd	VS	Wigan
	SATURDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2012		23:30
	Sunderland	VS	Liverpool
	SUNDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2012		22:00
	Reading	VS	Tottenham
	TUESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2012		02:00
	Everton	VS	Newcastle

even one day but they also see the benefit of having an owner who can personally look after any losses the club makes.

A number of other clubs, including Newcastle United, do not like the idea of the club's affairs being dictated by a third party.

A salary cap has also been discussed as a way to control the finances of teams in the league but with wages spiraling out of control, it might be too late.

In the 2001-02 Premier League season, clubs spent 1.1 billion pounds sterling, 62

PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE			
TEAM	P	GD	PTS
1 Chelsea	3	6	9
2 Swansea	3	8	7
3 West Bromwich	3	5	7
4 Man City	3	3	7
5 Man Utd	3	1	6
6 Everton	3	1	6
7 West Ham	3	1	6
8 Arsenal	3	2	5
9 Wigan	3	0	4
10 Newcastle	3	-1	4
11 Fulham	3	1	3
12 Stoke	3	0	3
13 Sunderland	2	0	2
14 Tottenham	3	-1	2
15 Norwich City	3	-5	2
16 Reading	2	-2	1
17 Aston Villa	3	-3	1
18 Liverpool	3	-5	1
19 QPR	3	-7	1
20 Southampton	3	-4	0

per cent of their income, on players' wages. In 2010-11, income grew to 2.5bn pounds sterling but players' wages amounted to 1.8bn pounds sterling, 70 per cent of the clubs' turnover.

With a majority vote needed in the Premier League to instigate any change, UEFA may be restricted to monitoring their financial fair play model in the Champions League and Europa League for the foreseeable future.

— Andrew Scott

SPORTS briefs...

RUGBY: The Southern Hemisphere Rugby Championship continued last weekend with Australia defeating South Africa 26-19 and New Zealand beating Argentina 21-5.

This weekend, Argentina coach Santiago Phelan has kept faith with the forward pack that played New Zealand and made two changes to his backline for their clash against Australia on Saturday.

The other game on Saturday is New Zealand, who are currently top of the table, vs South Africa.

WEIRD: The World Alternative Games were held recently and one of the most popular events was carrying your wife down a 225-meter course, navigating a bog, beer barrels and jumping hurdles.

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Other events included a woosack run, mountain bike chariot race and the world famous bog snorkeling.

FOOTBALL: World Cup Qualifier results:

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Islanders shot down

A 3-0 away-loss to Airforce United last Saturday puts Phuket FC back into relegation threat as the team prepares for a high-stakes Southern rivalry match against Pattalung this Sunday

By Steven Layne

THE Islanders, reduced to 10 men following the dismissal of defender Wutipong Sittitanyakit, conceded two back-to-back goals in the final minutes of a 3-0 away loss on Saturday evening against Airforce United.

The late afternoon match, both sides' 26th fixture of the season, was played under clear blue skies at North Bangkok University's Rangsit campus stadium in Rangsit, just north of the Thai capital.

The official turnout of 531 included dozens of diehards who had made the trek from Phuket.

The Airforce United "Blue Eagles" came out all guns blazing, with their leading scorer, Kouassi Yao Hermann driving the ball home in the 6th minute.

The Ivorian import capitalized after a ball played into the box was not cleared properly by the Islanders' last defender.

Although Phuket enjoyed decent possession with a number of set-play opportunities to level the score, it was the home side who had more convincing chances on goal.

Phuket keeper Kampon Phtomakul was put to the test on a number of occasions, mostly by the speedy Hermann, who continually broke through Phuket's defensive line.

Herman would have doubled the lead midway through the first half, but to the dismay of home fans, his effort was disallowed at the final moment with an off-side flag being waved.

Phuket's defense and midfield were kept under constant pressure, working hard to repel sustained Airforce attacks to keep the scoreline 1-0 through to half-time and much of the rest of the match.

All of the Islanders' efforts to find an equalizer were effectively denied by a solid Airforce defense, commanded smoothly by Thai league all-star goalkeeper and American national, Gorrick Devela.

Phuket defender Wutipong Sittitanyakit was sent off after collecting his second yellow card for bringing down Hermann in the penalty box on a breakaway attack in the final minutes of the game.



CHANNEL CHURNING: Kouassi Yao Hermann (right, blue) scored twice in Saturday's match.

The subsequent penalty kick did not miss its mark, with the Ivorian recording his 12th of the season.

Hermann is now tied with three other players for third in the 'Golden Boot' race – currently led by Suphanburi's Pipat Thonkanya with 14 goals.

A few minutes later, in the second minute of added time, the Blue Eagles sealed the match with a final goal, this time by their second leading scorer, Nigerian national, Ononiwu Chukwuma, who scored his 9th of the season after outrunning a stretched Phuket back line.

The result sees Phuket lose their 10th place standing, dropping down into 12th, while Airforce maintained their 8th place standing.

Phuket's next match will be a tense southern rivalry match against 13th placed Phatthalung FC, who are only one point behind Phuket in the table.

Both sides are level in terms of goal difference (-10), and like Phuket, Phatthalung will be striving for points in Sunday's game to escape this year's relegation pot of five teams. With only eight fixtures remaining, stakes are high. Kickoff at Surakul Stadium is scheduled for 6.30pm.

Fans looking to stay dry should arrive an hour early to secure covered seating.



Nonthapan Jiensathawong (right) was under constant pressure. Photos: Steven Layne.



YAMAHA ONE LEAGUE TABLE

	TEAM	P	GD	PTS
1	Ratchaburi	26	41	61
2	Bangkok Utd	26	16	55
3	Suphanburi	26	30	53
4	Sriracha	26	22	52
5	PTT Rayong	26	27	49
6	Krabi	26	17	47
7	Royal Navy	26	8	39
8	Air Force	26	5	39
9	Korat	26	-5	37
10	Saraburi	26	-4	30
11	Khon Kaen	26	-9	30
12	Phuket	26	-10	30
13	Pattalung	26	-10	29
14	Songkhla	26	-9	28
15	Bangkok FC	26	0	25
16	JW Rangsit	26	-25	21
17	Rajpracha	26	-20	19
18	Chanthaburi	26	-75	3



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Futsal arena officially opens

FUTSAL fans who packed the brand new 4,000-seat indoor sports complex at Saphan Hin last Saturday to watch the finals of the Democrat Cup futsal tournament, were treated to thrills and excitement.

In the 15 and under age group final of the tournament, commonly referred to as the Phuket Futsal Cup, Muang Thalang played Muang Phuket, while The Hulks, Phuket FC's main fan club, played Lenchien in the 15 and over general public group final.

The final between Muang Thalang and Muang Phuket was a high tempo game that allowed the skillful youngsters to show those in attendance what they can do, and they certainly did not leave anyone disappointed. See right for more info.

The Village prove they're no idiots

ICC and the Village met in their second round match of the Outrigger T20 league on Sunday, September 9, at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG). The ICC were looking to join Laguna at the top of the table and the Village were looking to secure their first win.

On a sunny day at the ACG and the outfield looking fast, Village captain Kevin Quilty won the all important toss and chose to bat.

This proved to be a good decision with the Village showing some of the form that took them to the Senior League final, scoring an impressive 157 for the loss of 5 wickets from their 20 overs.

This was largely due to a match-winning 98-run partnership between Divan Mydeen (71) and Craig Murphy (41).

In reply, ICC, who were depleted and missing some of their regular players, could only manage 98 runs before running out of batsmen in the 16th over.

The Village got off to a shaky start losing captain Kevin Quilty (1) in the first over and fellow opener Chris Gordon (4) in the third over.

Lucas Nolan (19) and Craig

Murphy (41) steadied the ship with a 43-run partnership and both players looked comfortable playing some elegant shots around the ground.

Nolan was eventually clean bowled in the ninth just before the drinks break. The Village had made good progress by the time they ventured back to the club house with their total on 66 runs for the loss of 3 wickets after 10 overs.

Divan Mydeen (71), the next batsmen, didn't show any signs of nerves despite having a run of ducks in his two previous outings.

Mydeen's 71 runs came from just 33 balls (50 from just 20 balls) including four 4's and six 6's, which included one that sent the crowd running for cover as it hit the clubhouse railing.

Murphy played a significant supporting role pushing the ball into the gap for singles to rotate the strike. Mydeen lasted until the 19th over with the score on 152.

At the end of their 20 overs, the Village reached 157 runs leaving a target of 158 for ICC. Pick of the bowlers for ICC were Paresh Borkar (2 for 22) and Pawan



RUN: The Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) has seen plenty of tremendous cricket action this year.

Kothari (1 for 18).

ICC knew they had a match on their hands and would require at least one of their batsmen to make a big score.

Their innings got off to a bad start, losing opener Pawan Kothari for a duck in the second over.

The Village then suffered a loss of their own when keeper James Firth left the field after colliding with Mydeen after both men went for a catch towards square leg.

The key breakthrough for the Village came when they dismissed ICC captain, Anand Chand (16), in the seventh over to a good solid catch by newcomer Chris Hart at deep mid-wicket.

The ICC only had three other

batsmen, Darshan Vaigankar (16), Paresh Borkar (14) and Naeem Ul Haq (10), who managed to reach double figures.

The battle was eventually won in the 16th over when ICC ran out of batsmen and their innings finished on 93 runs for the loss of 7 wickets.

Pick of the bowlers for the Village were Craig Murphy (3 for 8) with Divan Mydeen, Tom Gordon, Chris Gordon and Martin Platts each picking up a scalp.

Both teams have two matches remaining, the results in their next match will prove crucial to their claim for a finals berth.

Next weekend's action in the Outrigger T20 league will see

Patong take on ICC at the ACG on Sunday, September 16.

The Senior League will commence on Sunday, November 18.

Anyone interested in joining a team or entering a full team should contact Martin Foster at clubaffairs@phuketcricketgroup.com

For more information and the full T20 league schedule visit: phuketcricketgroup.com

ISLAND FURNITURE CRICKET LEAGUE			
TEAM	PLAYED	WON	POINTS
Laguna	4	3	6
ICC	4	2	4
Patong	4	2	4
Village	4	1	2



Phuket Futsal

MUANG Phuket took the lead through a well taken goal by their striker placing the ball into the bottom right corner from outside the box. Thalang immediately went on the attack looking for an instant reply, but the Phuket goalkeeper was in fine form and it took a penalty towards the end of the first half for Thalang to equalize.

Thalang continued their assault on the Phuket goal in the second half, but Phuket managed to get a lucky break, scoring with the help of a long throw from their keeper, which hit a Phuket player on its way into the goal.

Phuket were forced to defend for the remainder of the game and they pulled out a number of fine last ditch tackles. With the last kick of the game, Thalang scored an equalizer shrouded in controversy. Phuket players and coaches screamed for handball, but their protests fell on deaf ears as the referee allowed it to stand and the game finished 2-2.

After the final whistle, a Phuket player was shown a second yellow card and sent off for dissent. The match was decided by penalties, with Thalang winning the shootout 4-3 and claiming the under 15 Democrat Cup.

In the 15 and over final, Lenchien laid down an early marker by rattling the Hulks post within the first few minutes.

The match was end-to-end with Lenchien controlling the early play, until the Hulks number 20, Parinya Thungsukkasam, used a wonderful piece of skill to roll the ball past the Lenchien goal keeper and roll the ball into an open goal.

Lenchien continued their frantic attack and once again hit the post. The Hulks were calmer in possession and played a patient passing game building from the back moving the ball around Lenchien on the other hand, tried to capitalize on quick counter attacks whenever they got possession.

The second half saw some wonderful passing from both teams and great inter-play between players in such a compact space – highlighting the thrill of the sport. Lenchien hit the bar and their number 9 was a constant threat with his skill and movement but it was not to be his or Lenchien's day. The game finished 1-0, seeing the Hulks crowned Champions.

Phuket Soccer School starts

PHUKET Soccer Schools (PSS) ran their first sessions for new academy teams at Thanyapura Sports & Leisure Club Saturday, September 8.

The opening session gave the under 8 and under 10 teams their academy kit complete with name and squad number. The second session allowed the under 12 team to meet their new teammates and train together for the first time.

The first day's practice was a light affair, with passing and movement work followed by fun shooting practice. To finish off the session the teams played a small-sided game.

On Sunday, Phuket Soccer School took a select team to play in its first ever tournament at Patong Football Club. PSS played Patong in the first semifinal.

The PSS team took into account the blistering afternoon sun and made the ball do the work early on, but they found the Patong goal keeper in fine form.

The first half finished 2-2. Patong played a more direct style of football in the second half, which PSS struggled to deal with, and Patong won the match 6-3.

PSS played a team from Kathu to determine who would finish third and fourth. PSS ran out eventual winners 5-3 to claim third place.

Goalscorers were: Bobby Small (2), Joe Hunter (2), Siam Yapp (2), Ivan Emelianova (1) and Micah Dochovny (1). Siam Yapp was awarded a man of the match award.

PSS said they would like to thank all the players for trying their best and the parents for coming out to support the team.

Phuket Soccer School will be hosting its third Youth Cup at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club (TSLC) in Thalang Phuket on February 9 and 10 2013. Competition is



TALENT: Action from Patong tournament.

from 9am to 2pm both days

Age groups being offered for the Phuket Soccer School's tournament are as follows: Under 8's-5 a side (squads of 8), Under 10's-5 a side (squads of 8), Under 12's-6 a side (squads of 9), Under 14's-6 a side (squads of 9).

If anyone is interested in coaching or academy programs, please contact Head Coach Martin Hill at:

m.hill@phuketsoccerschools.com

– Phuket Gazette

Let's go Phuket let's go

Phuket's own
Anissa Flynn
is ranked #1 in
the ASC



Photo: Tim Hain

THE Quiksilver Open surf contest is back in town with surfers streaming in from all over the world. Patong Beach, the most popular in Phuket, will host professionals from throughout Asia, Wednesday September 12 to Sunday September 15.

Asian surfers are expected to turn out in force – they're hoping to earn points on the Asian Surfing Championship (ASC) and Coca-Cola Indonesian Surfing Championship circuits.

Since the Quiksilver Open is the final stop of the ASC circuit, the 2012 ASC champions will be crowned on Sunday.

Last year's winner Raditya Rondi, from Indonesia, has a strong hold on first place in the rankings and a good result will see him crowned the 2012 ASC Men's Champion for the second consecutive year.

"I'm really looking forward to coming back to Phuket," said Raditya. "With the ASC championship on the line, all the crowd watching on the beach, and waves

2011 ASC
Longboard
Champion Arif
"Mencos"
Nurhidayat



similar to my home break of Kuta Beach, I'm going to go all out."

In the ASC Women's Division, Phuket's own Anissa Flynn is sitting in the #1 spot. She needs to finish ahead of last year's ASC Women's Champion Yasnyar "Bonne" Gea from Indonesia to capture the 2012 ASC Women's title.

Current ASC Master's champion and Patong Beach local Decha Sithidej will no doubt pull out all the stops to ensure a podium finish so he can raise the ASC Master's trophy in front of his family and friends.

It remains to be seen if Indonesia's longboarder Arif "Mencos" Nurhidayat can defend his 2011 ASC Longboard title against Filipino Luke Landrigan.

Asia's best surfers will battle it out for more than 300,000 baht in prizes.

A star attraction of this year's event will be current five-time ASP Women's

World Champion Stephanie Gilmore, who will be at the beach during the event to meet and greet fans.

Quiksilver Thailand's General Manager Surached Munhtong said, "This event is to promote the sport of surfing among the general public and encourage Thai surfers to improve their skills by participating in international events."

The competition will be held at the north end of Patong Beach, where sandy-bottom beach breaks offer a variety of wave options, according to the swell conditions. If a sizable swell should arrive, Kalim Beach will be used.

Kalim has a right hand reef break that can produce 100-meter long rides at an optimum 3-4 feet.

This week's forecast looks to be on the smaller side, despite last weekend's waves. If the swell stays smaller as predicted, it may give local competitors the edge they need.

Holly Monkman, Quiksilver's Marketing Executive for Southeast Asia said, "The growth of surfing in Thailand since our first event here four years ago is amazing, and is testament to the importance of the ASC to the surfing industry in developing the sport throughout the Asian region."

For more information, contact Surached Munhtong at surached@quiksilver.in.th.

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