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■ 'I WILL BE HONEST... I FEAR LOCAL TAXI OPERATORS'

Public bus plan breaks barrier

■ Phuket's struggle for
public transportation
starts to yield fruit

By Chutharat Plerin

AFTER decades in the planning, a new bus service will launch on the island in March. The new route will connect Phuket International Airport and the popular tourist beaches of Patong, Karon, and Kata via Tesco Lotus on the bypass road.

For safety reasons, Phuket Land Transportation Office (PLTO) chief Teerayut Prasertpol asked the *Gazette* not to name the operator willing to launch the bus route, but he disclosed that the company had signed a seven-year contract with the government to provide the long-awaited service.

The new service will offer "hop on, hop off" bus stops at a maximum cost of 120 baht for the entire route.

"We are not targeting tourists with the new bus service," Mr Teerayut said. "We are pushing to develop more public transportation options for everyone..."

Continued on page 5



COMING SOON: The buses have been ordered and the new service is slated to start in March. Photo: PLTO



Ae Inside wasn't the first man Tossapol Ketkaew killed. Photo: Cha-am Police

Ae Inside assassin caught

The trigger-man in the slaying of Phuket news man Ae Inside was arrested on last Sunday.

However, Tossapol Ketkaew will have to face justice for another killing in 2004 before Phuket Police will be able to take him into custody.

Full story on Page 3

Royal Thai Police boost numbers for high season

AN ADDITIONAL 400 police officers are on Phuket for a 30-day tourist-safety campaign.

The campaign aims to slash the amount of crime in Phuket by 50 per cent and boost tourists' confidence in the ability of officers to protect them.

Full story on Page 2

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This Week



Business

The Government is looking to trap MICE tourism. **Page 11**



Finance

Advice on opening and maintaining a Thai bank account. **Page 16**



In Focus

The Phuket Airpark's biannual flying club meet. **Page 39**



Charity

Phuket's first Family & Gourmet Festival sets the bar. **Page 41**



Humor

Getting rid of that pesky houseguest who just won't leave. **Page 42**



Sport

Phuket FC adds to their list of growing new signings. **Page 51**

Saturday



Sunday



Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Royal Thai Police bombard island for 30-day campaign

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

A 30-DAY safety campaign aimed at slashing the criminal activity in Phuket and Pattaya saw an additional 400 Royal Thai Police, sourced from every division of the force, stepping foot on the island on January 10.

The desperately needed extra "troops" on the ground came days after Ambassadors to Thailand from Canada, the Netherlands (See pages 4-5) and UK visited Phuket Governor Maitri Inthasut to voice their concerns about tourist safety.

"We expect the project to decrease the criminal activity in Phuket by 50 per cent, and significantly increase how safe tourists feel on our island," Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Arun Kleawwatee said.

By making a significant effort to boost safety in both Phuket and Pattaya, the Royal Thai Police hopes to improve the overall image of these two important tourist destinations, Col Arun said.

Issues to be addressed included a crackdown on drugs, prostitution, burglary, sexual assault and any illegal operations by local government officers, Deputy National Police General Pansiri Prapawat said.

"We will also be patrolling the high-risk areas, as well as checking restaurants and entertainment



The Royal Thai Police organized the parade on Soi Bangla to increase the awareness of their 30-day safety campaign. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

venues for drugs, prostitution and teen gangs," he added.

Gen Pansiri said solving problems surrounding tourism safety was paramount.

"In order to move toward the Asean Economic Community we have to start resolving issues tourists are facing and boost tourists' confidence in our effectiveness," he said.

In addition to beefing up police presence on the island, an 89 million-baht-CCTV-installation

project presented by the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (PPAO) is being considered by the Cabinet.

The project aims to increase the government's 242 CCTV cameras across the island by 2,400 cameras. If approved, it will be a scaled-down version of the 10,000-CCTV-camera project originally proposed by PPAO President Paiboon Upatising in response to the Michelle Smith slaying in June.

Beach turf war leaves car gutted by flames

POLICE believe a Honda Jazz belonging to a beachfront seafood restaurant owner was maliciously set ablaze on January 14 as part of an ongoing conflict between vendors in the Surin Beach area.

Police declined to name the owner of the car for safety reasons.

The owner parked the car in front of the restaurant at about 3pm. Just over 12 hours later, the car was consumed by flames.

It took Cherng Talay firefighters about 30 minutes to extinguish the blaze.

"Though we haven't ruled out other possibilities, we suspect



Police suspect arson.

arson," Cherng Talay Police Inspector Rassada Kluengwong said.

"The car owner also owns a seafood restaurant near the mini-mart that was set on fire last month," Lt Col Rassada pointed out.

— **Thawit Bilabdullar**

Tourist's body found off Patong Beach

POLICE investigating the death of a Dutch tourist whose body was discovered floating off Patong Beach last Sunday have sent the man's body to Bangkok for an autopsy.

The body of Stephan Buczynski, 26, was discovered at about 9:30am by a tourist riding a jet-ski some 500 meters offshore from the north end of Patong Beach.

Mr Buczynski had suffered a deep gash to the back of his head, leading police to believe that he was struck by a boat propeller while swimming or was viciously attacked from behind by an assailant.

"We believe he died about four hours before his body was found," Capt Patapee Srichai of the Patong Police said.



Locals swim out to the body of Mr Buczynski. Photo: Chaichana Keowkaow

"He was dressed only in black swimming trunks... A waterproof bag was still looped around his neck, containing his passport, as well as cash totaling 5,200 baht and 1,850 euros," he added.

Also in the waterproof bag were nine pills of Alprazolam, better

known by the trade name Xanax.

"He might have been hit by the blade of a passing boat while swimming or he may have been beaten to death and his body thrown into the sea. We just don't know," Capt Patapee explained.

— **Thawit Bilabdullar**



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An open boat of Rohingya who were attempting to flee Myanmar, but were taken into custody off Koh Bon. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

Hundreds of 'boat people' just offshore

THE *Gazette* on Tuesday confirmed reports of hundreds of Rohingya in open boats in the Andaman Sea off Phang Nga, north of Phuket.

The news comes as thousands of ethnic Rohingya flee the violence in Myanmar (see page 9).

"We have heard there are about nine boats containing hundreds of Rohingya, but they have yet to land anywhere along the coast," a local source in Phang Nga told the *Gazette*.

Local police were unable to confirm or deny whether any assistance, medical or otherwise, had been given to the refugees.

"We are aware of the issue, but at this point we cannot give any statement about how many of them there are, or what condition they are in, as we have yet to receive a report of them having landed on Thai soil," an officer at Tai Muang District Police Station told the *Gazette*.

The sighting of hundreds of Rohingya "boat people" off Phang Nga followed 73 Rohingya being taken into custody off Koh Bon, southeast of Phuket, on January 1.

— *Phuket Gazette*

Ae Inside's assassin

After a year on the run, assassin of Phuket newsman faces justice

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

THE confessed trigger-man who assassinated Phuket newsman Wisut "Ae Inside" Tangwitthayaporn was taken into custody on January 13.

However, Phuket Police will have to wait for their counterparts in the Thai tourism town of Cha-am to close their own murder investigation before taking the confessed killer back to the Phuket to stand trial.

Police from the Crime Suppression Division headquarters in Bangkok, along with local Cha-Am Police, moved in and arrested Tossapol Ketkaew, 36, at a house in Cha-am last Sunday for the 2004 murder of Kra Aromdee.

Tossapol, also known as Sanya "Noo" Klinchum, was additionally arrested for pulling the trigger in the shooting that left Mr Wisut dead in Phuket morning rush hour traffic last year.

"Tossapol confessed [to police] that at around 9am on January 12 last year he, along with the help of Noppadol 'Pae' Praisri and Somkuan 'Boy' Deepan, used a 9mm gun to shoot Ae Inside dead," case investigator Lt Col Pattanapong Sripinproh said.

"He claimed that Somkuan was the one who arranged the gun for the killing and Noppadol was the one who drove the motorbike, allowing Tossapol to ride pillion as the gunman," he added.

Tossapol's confession to police concurs with that of Noppadol, who made his confession immediately after his arrest in January last year.

"Tossapol said he was paid 13,000 baht to be the gunman. He claimed that he received a mes-



Tossapol Ketkaew, 36, was arrested for shooting dead Kra Aromdee in 2004, as well as 'Ae Inside' last year. Photo:Cha-am Police

sage from Somkuan, but does not know who hired Somkuan to organize the assassination," Col Pattanapong said.

"Somkuan is still at large. Police are searching for him," he added.

Col Pattanapong said that while conducting their investigation into the killing of Kra Aromdee police discovered that Tossapol and Sanya were different aliases used by the same man.

"Tossapol confessed that he was involved in both killings. He said that on August 1, 2004 around 4pm, he and Yuenyong Uangjean used a .38-caliber gun to kill Mr Kra in front of a house

in Tambon Khao Yai, Cha-am, in Petchaburi.

"Tossapol confessed he was the one who pulled the trigger," he added.

Phuket City Police chief Sermphan Sirikong told the *Gazette* that his officers will have to wait for the Cha-am murder investigation to close before they can get their hands on Tossapol.

"We are preparing our official request to detain Tossapol. However, we have to wait for Cha-am Police to close their investigation first," Col Sermphan said.

"The application will be filed under Phuket Court arrest warrant number Jor 39/2555 dated January

24, 2012. He is charged with co-premeditated murder," he added.

"The search for Somkuan is ongoing. This is not the only case we're following up on. Police are making a serious attempt to close every case on the island," chief Sermphan said.

Watchara Malikaew, Mr Wisut's best friend and co-worker on Mr Wisut's *Inside Phuket* newspaper, said, "I was so delighted to hear that the suspect who pulled the trigger was arrested. The case is one year old. It shows that police did not abandon the case.

"However, I would like to see police arrest the other suspect who is still at large as I believe he is the sole connection to the person who hired the killers," Mr Watchara added.

Phuket Police in February last year arrested and brought in for questioning Phuket businessman Atsadakorn "Pod" Seedokbuab on allegations of him being the mastermind behind the assassination of Mr Wisut.

Mr Atsadakorn, owner of KPP Cable TV in Phuket and at that time a vice president of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, surrendered to police.

He denied knowing Noppadol "Pae" Praisri before Noppadol's name was splashed across newspaper headlines, but confirmed he did know fellow suspect Somkuan, 48, before the killing.

"I know Khun Boy [Mr Somkuan]. He is a friend and even I hired him to operate a digger at a construction site at one of my developments," Mr Atsadakorn said.

"But I do not know where he is now," he said at the February 16 press conference.

Hot-headed somtam vendor slays man

POLICE are on the lookout for a somtam (spicy Thai salad) vendor following a local building supplies shop staffer being shot in the head at point-blank range with a homemade zip gun south of Phuket Town on January 10.

Somjit Chueajan, 21, was taken to hospital that night. However, he died from his wound on January 16, Vachira Hospital Phuket hospital staff confirmed

on Wednesday.

He was drinking beer with workmates at about 7:30pm when the attack occurred.

"Somjit was in the store taking a beer from the fridge when a man entered the store and shot him in the head with a homemade gun. The assailant then fled the scene," Wichit Police Superintendent Chaowalit Petchsripia explained.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*



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Envoys target tourist safety across the bay

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

THE British, Canadian and Dutch Ambassadors to Thailand met with the Krabi police chief last week to discuss tourism-safety measures and to follow up on several prominent police cases.

The visit on January 9 came two days after the three ambassadors spoke with Phuket Governor Maitri Inthasut to discuss their chief concerns for tourists' safety in Phuket.

Speaking with Krabi Provincial Police Commander Nunthadej Yoinual, Ambassadors Mark Kent of the UK, Philip Calvert of Canada and Joan Boer of the Netherlands highlighted issues with how several high-profile cases were handled in the Andaman coast province over the past year. "The ambassadors asked

specifically about the rape of a Dutch model; British tourist Jack Daniel Cole being assaulted; and the deaths of the two Canadian sisters on Phi Phi Island," Maj Gen Nunthadej told the press.

"They suggested that some information related to these cases should not have been revealed to the public because it might have affected the victims' families and friends," the general added.

The request for police to respect relatives' concerns about the release of information follows a clampdown amid the investigation into the deaths of Canadian sisters Noemi and Audrey Belanger on Phi Phi in June last year.

"We have been asked by the Canadian Embassy and the [Belanger] family to not reveal anything about the case. We are standing by that. The cause of



Canadian Ambassador Philip Calvert (left) joins Dutch Ambassador Joan Boer (right) in talks with Krabi Police over high-profile cases that have rocked the tourism province over the past year. Photo: Thawit Bilabdullar

death in the police report to the embassy is 'Unknown'," Lt Col Jongrak Pimthong of Krabi City Police told the *Gazette* in October.

However, Lt Col Jongrak's statement did not give any indication as to whether or not other members of the public might be in danger of coming into contact with whatever caused the sisters' deaths, which was initially reported as poisoning.

"Ambassador Kent also said that in many cases the officers involved

faced problems with communicating in English. The ambassador said he would send officers from the British Embassy [in Bangkok] to help teach English to the police," Gen Nunthadej added.

The offer to provide English tutoring of Krabi Police follows a similar offer from the Tourism Authority of Thailand Krabi office in the aftermath of the police response to the *Evil Man From Krabi* YouTube video, which accused the Krabi authorities of

allowing a man charged with the rape of a Dutch model to walk free on bail.

Gen Nunthadej explained, however, that some of the "mis-understandings" about the handling of the rape case were due to differences in Thai criminal law and criminal law in other countries.

Following their meeting with Gen Nunthadej, the ambassadors visited Krabi Governor Prasit Osathanon to discuss further tourist-safety measures in the province.

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CLEAN SWEEP: Police confiscate 557,000 baht seized in the arrest of former Phuket maid Ratchanee Klunma. Photos: Kritsada Mueanhawong

Maid caught after cleaning out Phuket boss's bank account

POLICE have charged a maid in Phuket with stealing a debit card and using it to take 700,000 baht from the bank account of her female employer.

Karon resident Ratchanee Klunma, 43, reported the theft after her 34-year-old housemaid Somjing Chumuang disappeared on the same day the debit card was stolen, Lt Col Sophon Borirak of the Karon Police explained.

After the theft was reported, Karon Police contacted officers in Trang to check whether Somjing was hiding at her family home in Huay Yod District, he added.

"On January 10 we were informed by Trang Police that they had found Ms Somjing at her house.



Ratchanee Klunma

"We arrested her on the morning of January 11 and seized 557,000 baht.

"She confessed to stealing the debit card and to taking 700,000 baht from the account because of financial problems," Col Sophon explained.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

Bus service ready to roll

From page 1

on the island who cannot afford to keep using taxis and for Phuket residents who often need to travel to the airport."

"We are planning to install bus stops in Thalang Town, at the Heroines Monument, in Koh Kaew and at the Tesco Lotus shopping mall. There will be only one stop each at Patong, Karon and Kata," Mr Teerayut explained.

Under the terms of the government concession, the buses must be air conditioned, seat no more than 30 passengers and have room for travellers' luggage.

"At this stage the buses are set to run every 40 minutes, starting around 6am when the first flight arrives at the airport and ending at around 1am. However, the schedule is flexible. It depends on traveller demand. It is possible the buses may run every 30 minutes. We will see," Mr Teerayut said.

"We are also considering allowing higher fares to be charged for night buses, but they will not be much more expensive, only about 50 baht more," he added.

Mr Teerayut stressed that the new bus service will deliver a breakthrough for public transport in Phuket.

"Think about it: If you had 1,000 baht and you were in another province, it could pay for your transport, hotel and food. In Phuket, you need that much for the taxi fare alone.

"But with the new bus service, if you have 100 baht in your pocket, you can now travel in Phuket," he said.

MAFIA CONCERNS

Critical to getting the company to launch the bus service was gaining investors' confidence the route will be safe to operate.

"The new route operators have expressed their fears in providing the new service. They asked me what we can do to protect them from being attacked.

"I will be honest in saying that I fear local taxi operators might act as they have done in the past," Mr Teerayut said.

"However, the situation in Phuket has changed. We cannot take it anymore. People need another option and taxi operators must accept it."

To allay fears of violent reprisals by taxi drivers on the island, the PLTO had to call in support from nearly every major government office in Phuket.

"The work cannot be done by us alone. Therefore, the PLTO is working with Phuket Governor Maitri Inthusut, police officers and local administration organizations. We have even talked to local taxi operators to make this route happen," Mr Teerayut explained.

"Phuket needs to prove that it can provide public transportation for local people and tourists," he added.

Gaining investors' confidence that they will recoup their initial investment also took time, about three years.

"I believe the operators will recover their initial investment in about 18 months with this new route – and they believe so too, that is why they applied to provide the service," Mr Teerayut explained.

"As I said, we are not targeting tourists. I believe people who prefer the convenience of using taxis will still use them, and they will be willing to pay more for the extra convenience. Public transportation is just another option to support the island's tourism industry.

"At least tourists will not think that public transport on the island



The operator of the new bus service is expected to set the timetable for the first bus to depart Phuket Airport at 6am each day and continue every 30 or 40 minutes until 1am the next day. Photo: Phuket Land Transport Office

is just one big scam and that they do not even have a choice.

"This time the situation is different. People are more aware of the need to create a good

reputation for Phuket. With the new route, we are sure that the kinds of problems we have had in the past will not happen again.

"I personally believe that every-

one – even airport limousine drivers and taxi operators in Patong and Kata-Karon – all want to see Phuket's reputation shine," Mr Teerayut said.

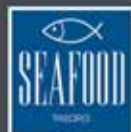


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Police suspect drug overdose in Australian tourist death

PATONG Police believe an Australian tourist who was found dead in his hotel room last Friday died from a drug overdose.

The 45-year-old, whose name has yet to be released to the public by police, was staying at a resort in the Patong beach area.

Capt Teerasak Boonsang of the Patong Police told that the *Gazette* the man's body was discovered at about 4pm.

Officers attending the scene believe the man died about two days before his body was discovered, Capt Boonsang said.

The police examination of the room uncovered an empty bottle of medication for preventing seizures and convulsions.

"There were also blood stains around his nose," Capt Boonsang added.

The man's family, who arrived in Phuket last Saturday, confirmed the man had no health issues that they were aware of.

— *Orawin Narabal*

Karon Police: easy on ball sales

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

THE Karon Police do have balls, but heavy-handed tactics in selling the tickets will stop, the Karon acting police chief confirmed to the *Gazette* on January 11.

The news follows a mob of angry residents gathering at Karon Police Station last Thursday.

Their complaint: the "strong tactics" used to sell tickets to a policeman's charity-ball function to be held in Phuket Town.

"Four men claiming to be 'assisting' officers of the Karon Police have been selling charity concert tickets to beach vendors, sunbed rental operators and restaurant owners. The men said that the tickets are being sold under orders from Karon Police Superintendent Sirisak Wasasiri, who is now on vacation," Karon Kamnan Winai Chidchiew said.

The tickets are being sold for 1,000 baht apiece, which the vendors said would be used in the Royal Thai Police effort to

'If anyone forced you to buy a ticket, you can return it to the organizers and register your name with us'

— *Col Narong*

suppress drug and tourism-related crime.

"Each beach operator was forced to buy five to 10 tickets. Once they bought the tickets, they noticed that some of them had numbers on them, and some didn't," Kamnan Winai said.

Karon Police Deputy Superintendent Narong Laksanawimon explained that though the ball is being held by the Karon Police, they passed off many responsibilities to an event-coordination company. The company was responsible for organizing the evening's entertainment and selling tickets.

"The organizer will give Karon Police Station 300,000 baht after the event to support our crime and drug-suppression project," Lt Col Narong said.

However, the organizers have now been told that they must stop forcing people to buy tickets.

"If anyone forced you to buy a ticket, you can return it to the organizers and register your name with us before January 16 for a full refund," Col Narong said.



Karon Kamnan Winai Chidchiew holds a ticket (inset) to the Karon Police's ball between his fingers. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

"You can also file a complaint with us against the individual that forced you to buy the ticket," he added.

Tickets for the ball are still up for grabs for those interested in supporting the event, which will feature performances by Thai

country music singers Sam Sao SilverGold, O Apisit and Thep Thoonjai. Tickets for the ball include food and drink.

The event will be on January 25 at 6pm at the Pitak Grand Ballroom on the third floor of The Metropole Hotel in Phuket Town.

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Locals enforce 'money tree' robber-monk defrocking

A MONK chose to be defrocked at the main temple in Phuket Town, Wat Wichit Sangkharam, after being caught stealing a temple donation "money tree" and running off with 1,000 baht in cash on Tuesday.

Wichit Police were alerted to the theft at 11:30am after local residents near Wat Nakaram reported a monk absconding with a merit-making "tree" from a local mom-and-pop store.

"The monk went into the store and asked to use the restroom. When he came out he grabbed the money tree and bolted out of the shop," Sub Lt Sakorn Naklert explained.

A group of local villagers caught the 56-year-old in the act of discarding the money tree, now stripped of its cash-filled envelopes.

"After searching his few possessions, we found that the monk was named in his identification book as Phra Boonmee Pasanajitto.



Phra Boonmee handed in his robes to once again be Boonmee Wichaisuek.

He was ordained as a monk at Wat Potan in Chaityaphum province in 1999," Sub Lt Sakorn said.

"We also found eight empty donation envelopes and 1,000 baht cash in his bag," he added.

As Mr Boonmee denied to police that he stole the tree, the officers took him to Wat Wichit Sangkharam, where senior monks deliberated

whether or not Phra Boonmee should be disrobed for his conduct.

"At first he denied the allegations. However, he eventually agreed to leave the monkhood as the people who caught him said they would not let him go until he was no longer a monk," Sub Lt Sakorn said.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Hong Kong tourist 'mysteriously' dies

A TOURIST from Hong Kong died in Bangkok Hospital Phuket on Tuesday after slipping into unconsciousness while in the pool of a five-star resort in Mai Khao on Monday.

Manhoe Lai, 31, was swimming in a pool at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa just after midday when for an unknown reason he lost consciousness, Lt Thanom Thongpan of the Tah Chat Chai Police told the *Gazette*.

"He was pulled out of the pool by guests who were in the water at that time. Hotel staff immediately reported the incident to police," Lt Thanom said.

Mr Lai's wife reported that her husband was not

known to be suffering from any pre-existing medical condition.

"[She said] they always have a yearly physical checkup and they just had one before coming to Thailand," Lt Thanom said.

"At this stage we have no idea what caused the incident," he added.

A staffer at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa told the *Gazette* on Tuesday, "Right now we are working with police to collect more information relevant to the case. We will issue a statement later when we have more information."

— *Orawin Narabal*

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Family members had already removed the heart broken man's body from the noose by the time officers arrived at the scene.

Lovesick sailor found hanged at family home

A ROYAL Thai Navy sailor was found hanged in his Phuket garage, just days after he discovered his girlfriend was having an affair.

The body of Wanchai Sripangmol, 23, was found hanging from a rafter in his Kathu garage by his parents on the morning of January 11.

"He took leave over New Year to visit his girlfriend in Kalasin Province only to find she was seeing one of his close friends," Mr Wanchai's father, Teera Sripangmo, said.

Mr Wanchai returned to Phuket after the discovery. On arrival he went to his mother and went down on his hands and knees in a traditional gesture of respect known as "grab".

"After that he spent the whole day drinking alcohol in front of his house," Mr Teera said.

When police and Kusoldharm rescue workers arrived at the dead man's house, his body had already been taken down by his family members, Capt Wittaya of the Thung Thong Police said.

"We did not find any wounds on his body, only bruising around his neck from the rope," Capt Wittaya said.

— **Thawit Bilabdullar**

Health Office digs deep to end the 'Sweet Life'

By Irfan Jamdukor

THE Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) is serious about tourists' dental health, to the tune of 300,000 baht.

And it all began with school children.

A PPHO dental health survey in 2010 discovered that almost 40% of 12-year-old students in Phuket had tooth decay and 48% had gingivitis, an inflammation of the gums, which can lead to periodontal disease.

Health officials coincidentally found that almost 33% of Thai primary schools in Phuket sold sodas and that students drank it on average 2.5 times a week.

This prompted the Sweet Enough coalition of medical professionals, academics, nutritionists and public health officials formed in 2011 to launch a public-awareness campaign of the dangers of consuming sweets, aiming to reduce sweet consumption and encourage schools in Phuket to stop selling sodas.

Despite this, the PPHO found in its dental health survey last year, checking the dental health of 3,380 12-year-olds at 58 schools in Phuket, that nearly 40% of those children had tooth decay and more than 40% had gingivitis.

However, the Sweet Enough campaign yielded positive results, with 58 schools no longer selling soft drinks on campus.

"Many schools in Phuket have stopped selling soft drinks and sugary snacks and we have found that overall the dental health of



Nearly 40 per cent of 12-year-olds checked last year had tooth decay, said the provincial Health Office. Photo: PPHO

children in Phuket is improving," PPHO dentist Sathian Suravisamskul explained.

Motivated by the program, the PPHO turned its attention to tourists in the Andaman region, signing an MOU with Phang Nga and Krabi provinces for the 300,000 baht "Less Sweet For Your Healthy Life" campaign, which encourages tourists to drink water instead of sodas.

Under the program, tourists will receive free bottles of water with a sticker attached, saying: "Less Sweet for your Healthy Life".

Officials from the three provinces, along with operators of The

Royal City Phuket Hotel, Phuket Merlin Hotel, Honey Resort, Phuket Simon Cabaret and PN Mountain Resort from Krabi, gathered at The Phuket Royal City Hotel on December 25 at a launch event chaired by Phuket Governor Maitri Inthasut.

Governor Maitri presented certificates to the five operators who have agreed to give away the bottles of water with the campaign sticker attached.

Dr Sathian expects the Less Sweet campaign to have multiple benefits: not only encouraging tourists to improve their diets, but also reflecting positively on the

hotels and resorts that participated.

However, Dr Sathian strongly advised parents to take a leading role in the dental health of their children. "Do not rely on campaigns such as this to ensure your children have good dental health. It also requires parents, teachers and the children themselves to have the right attitude and take a proactive approach," he said.

"As everyone knows, soft drinks are not good for your health, especially your dental health. Children and adults should avoid them because they contribute to tooth decay, gum disease as well as obesity," he added.

Man dies in reservoir after sacrilegious 'wicky leak'

THE death of a man who apparently went insane and dove into a reservoir is the talk of a village in the province of Roi Et, in the northeast of Thailand.

Villagers of Nonrang, in Muang District, believe the cause of the strange death of 32-year-old Daorueang Chaayahong was his sacrilegious antics at a company party on New Year's Eve when he reportedly urinated on a spirit house.

Mr Daorueang's lifeless body was pulled from Nong Ya Ma Reservoir, close to the village, on the morning of January 13.

There was blood coming from the corpse's nose, but the body didn't appear decomposed at all — strange, considering he'd been in the water for two days.

Mr Daorueang's father,



Phaisan Winthachai, told police that his son worked in Bangkok but was back in his hometown to celebrate New Year.

Earlier, he had told his parents that during his company's New Year party in Bangkok, he had gotten drunk and urinated on the spirit house next to the venue.

Disturbed by what their son had done, on the evening of January 11 they took him to a temple

to have water blessed by monks poured on him in a bid to gain forgiveness for his mistake.

But when they got to the temple, Mr Daorueang suddenly went crazy and started running away towards the reservoir two kilometers away.

His family followed him, but couldn't keep up, and he managed to jump into the deep water. They went in after him, but couldn't find him.

A local rescue foundation sent in divers and two days later pulled Mr Daorueang's lifeless body from the deep.

The family remains convinced their son had been punished by the spirits for his New Year's indiscretion.

'He had gotten drunk and urinated on the spirit house...'

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Rohingya race for freedom

AROUND THE nation

MORE than 700 Rohingya migrants were discovered in the Deep South province of Songkhla over the past week, about 400 of whom were reportedly destined to be sold to Malaysian fishing boats virtually as slaves.

On January 10, Thai police discovered 397 Rohingya being held by men with guns at a rubber plantation in Sadao District, *The Nation* reported.

The Rohingya, who had been smuggled into Thailand from Myanmar via Ranong, had been kept at the plantation for three months.

The gang reportedly planned to traffic the refugees for 60,000 baht per head to clients in Malaysia to work on fishing boats.

The authorities raided the plantation in Tambon Padang Besar and rescued the Rohingya, who in-



Targets of vicious sectarian violence, many Rohingya are fleeing their homeland. Photo: The Nation

cluded five girls and 61 boys under the age of 15.

Police arrested five Rohingya men who were minding the group

and seized a shotgun, a homemade pistol and a laptop.

A police investigation found that the Rohingya had been

smuggled in 10-wheeled trucks to a temporary shelter on the rubber plantation, which reportedly belonged to a local politician.

The gang had transported a total of 2,000 Rohingya people in this way before, the police found.

The next day, another raid uncovered 307 Rohingya migrants hiding in a warehouse in Dannok, also in Sadao.

Maj Thanusilp Duangkaewngarm, an inspector at the Songkhla Immigration Office, said the 307 had travelled to Thailand voluntarily and hoped to use the Kingdom as a transit point to a third country.

The 307 Rohingya – 230 men, 30 women, 22 boys and 25 girls – would be deported because they entered Thailand illegally, he said.

Rohingya, who originate from Burma's Rakhine state on the border with Bangladesh, are among the world's most persecuted ethnic minorities.

Last year saw vicious sectarian violence between Rohingya and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists, resulting in many of the former fleeing the region as refugees.

Neither the Bangladeshi nor Myanmar governments are willing to accept the Rohingya as citizens, leaving them stateless.

Deep South violence flares up

LAST week insurgents in the Deep South killed two soldiers in a bomb attack, injured three children in another explosion, shot up a karaoke bar and set fire to electricity poles.

On January 9, five men opened fire on a karaoke bar in Narathiwat's Khoke Khian Subdistrict, injuring two adults, before the gunmen fled.

Shortly afterwards, explosives on a motorcycle parked nearby went off, causing injuries to a number of people, including the three minors.

One suspect, Kareeya Pi, 31, was subsequently arrested for the attacks, giving up the identities of other suspects whom the police are now seeking.

On January 11, two soldiers were killed and two others wounded in a bomb attack in Pattani's Yarang District as they headed out to provide protection for teachers and to deliver presents for children in advance of National Children's Day.



Officers inspect the remnants of a blast in the Deep South in March last year. Photo: The Nation

Police said the insurgents had placed explosives in a concrete water pipe under a road and hidden in a rubber plantation nearby. They triggered the explosives as the military pickup in which soldiers were travelling passed.

Then on January 14 in Yala, insurgents set fire to eight electric power poles in various districts of the province.

Activist set for Cambodian release

ONE of two Thai nationalist activists imprisoned in Cambodia since 2010 is to be released following a meeting between Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and Khmer premier Hun Sen.

The other, yellow-shirt leader Veera Somkwamkid, had his sentence reduced amid high hopes he too would soon be allowed to go home.

Earlier this month, Ms Yingluck confirmed that Ratre Pipattanapaiboon, Mr Veera's assistant, would be released imminently after Hun Sen agreed to give her

amnesty.

Ms Yingluck added that the Cambodian government had informed the Thai foreign ministry that Mr Veera's prison term would be reduced by six months.

Mr Veera was sentenced to eight years in prison and Ms Ratre to six after they were arrested for illegally entering Cambodia along with five other Thais on December 2010.

The group were apparently surveying the area in a bid to prove Thai ownership of disputed border territory.

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NATUZZI ITALIA

In brief...

Death toll from Syrian university explosions rises

AT LEAST 52 people were killed and dozens wounded on Tuesday in two explosions that rocked the university in Aleppo, Syria's biggest city, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Two explosions hit the university during the day while students were sitting exams. The cause of the explosions was not clear, but the government and opposition activists blamed each other.

Indian troops kill Pakistani soldier

INDIAN troops killed a Pakistani soldier in a disputed area in Kashmir late on Tuesday, the Pakistani army said. It was the fifth fatality in hostilities between the nuclear-armed neighbors since new year.

Couple accused of spying for Russia

A MARRIED couple went on trial in Germany on Tuesday accused of handing hundreds of sensitive NATO and European Union documents to Russia during a two-decade spying career.

Federal prosecutors accuse the couple of entering West Germany in 1988 with forged Austrian passports and fabricating a suburban middle-class existence to cover their espionage.

Japanese airlines ground Boeing 787s after fright

By Mayumi Negishi and Tim Kelly

JAPAN'S two leading airlines grounded their fleets of Boeing 787s on January 9 after one of the Dreamliner passenger jets made an emergency landing, heightening safety concerns over a plane many see as the future of commercial aviation.

All Nippon Airways (ANA) said it was grounding all 17 of its 787s and Japan Airlines Co said it suspended all 787 flights scheduled for January 9. The two carriers operate around half of the 50 Dreamliners to date.

Wednesday's incident follows a series of mishaps for the new Dreamliner. The sophisticated plane, the world's first mainly carbon-composite airliner, has suffered fuel leaks, a battery fire, wiring problems, a brake computer glitch and a cracked cockpit window in recent days.

"I think you're nearing the tipping point where they need to regard this as a serious crisis," said Richard Aboulafia, a senior analyst with the Teal Group. "This is going to change people's perception of the aircraft if they don't act quickly."

The 787 represented a leap in the way planes are designed and built, but the project was plagued by cost overruns and years of delays. Some have suggested Boeing's rush to get planes built after those delays resulted in the



Passengers were evacuated from the damaged Boeing 787, which is the company's first new jet in more than a decade. Photo: Reuters

recent problems, a charge the company strenuously denies.

Both the US Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board said they were monitoring the latest Dreamliner incident as part of a comprehensive review of the aircraft announced late last week.

Australia's Qantas Airways said its order for 15 Dreamliners remained on track, and its Jetstar subsidiary was due to take delivery of the first of the aircraft in the second half of this year. Qantas declined to comment further on the issues that have plagued the new

lightweight, fuel-efficient aircraft.

India's aviation regulator said it was reviewing the Dreamliner's safety and would talk to parts makers, but had no plans to ground the planes. State-owned Air India has six of the aircraft in service and more on order.

United Airlines, the only US carrier currently flying the 787, said it was not taking any immediate action in response to the latest incident. "We are looking at what is happening with ANA and we will have more information tomorrow," a spokeswoman said.

— Reuters

Boeing 787 incidents in 2013

January 7 – A parked 787 operated by Japan Airlines catches fire at Boston Logan International Airport after a battery in an auxiliary power system explodes.

January 8 – A second 787 operated by Japan Airlines leaks fuel at Logan, forcing it to cancel its takeoff and return to the gate. The plane departs later.

January 9 – Japan's All Nippon Airways Co cancels a 787 flight scheduled for a domestic trip within Japan due to brake problems.

January 11 – A cockpit window on an ANA 787 cracks during a Japanese domestic flight. The plane lands safely with no injuries.

A separate ANA 787 springs an oil leak from its left engine, which is discovered after the plane lands safely.

January 13 – The Japan Airlines 787 that leaked fuel in Boston on January 8 experiences another, separate fuel leak while undergoing checks in Tokyo.

January 15 – A 787 operated by ANA makes an emergency landing at Takamatsu in western Japan after smoke appears in the plane's cockpit.

France to stay, fight in Mali

FRANCE pledged on Tuesday to keep troops in Mali until stability returned to the West African country, raising the specter of a long campaign against al Qaeda-linked rebels who held their ground despite a fifth day of air strikes.

Paris has poured hundreds of soldiers into Mali and carried out 50 bombing raids since last Friday in the Islamist-controlled northern half of the country, which Western and regional states fear could become a base for terrorist attacks in Africa and Europe.

Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said that, despite French air support, Malian forces had not been able to dislodge Islamist fighters from the central Malian towns of Konna or Diabaly, just 350km northeast of Bamako.

A column of French armored vehicles rolled northward from the dusty riverside capital of Bamako towards rebel lines on Tuesday, the first major northward deployment of ground troops. A military official declined to comment on their objective.

Thousands of African soldiers are due to take over the offensive. Regional armies are scrambling to accelerate an operation which was



A still image from video released by the French Army Communications Audiovisual office of French troops in Ndjamena. Photo: Reuters

initially not expected until September and has been brought forward by France's surprise bombing campaign aimed at stopping a rebel advance on a strategic town last week.

President Francois Hollande, on a visit to the United Arab Emirates during which he sought Gulf states' financial backing for the African-led mission, suggested France would retain a major role in its former colony

for months to come.

"We have one goal. To ensure that when we leave, when we end our intervention, Mali is safe, has legitimate authorities, an electoral process and there are no more terrorists threatening its territory," Hollande told a news conference.

Paris has said it plans to deploy 2,500 soldiers to bolster the Malian army and work with the intervention force provided by West African states.

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MICE to bring in ‘the cheese’

With corporate tourism projected to grow, the government reveals its three year plan to cash in

By Steven Layne

THE Kingdom's central planning authority for inbound corporate and organizational tourism expects to generate 180 billion baht from Asian and Oceanic MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) events over the next three years.

The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) recently drafted a three year MICE marketing strategy, and sent a summary to the *Gazette*.

The new strategy effectively replaces last year's "Seven Wonders of the Andaman MICE City", a Phuket-centered campaign that has now been discarded, the *Gazette* has learned.

"The TCEB will not be applying the Phuket Andaman MICE city concept [from] this year because [sic] we'll be pursuing a new campaign," TCEB Senior Public Relations Manager Ms Arisara Thanuplang said.

The drafting of the new plan follows the government's decision last October to shelve Phuket's decades-old plan to build an International Convention and Exhibition Center (ICEC) on the north of the island.

That ICEC, which had received tentative approval at a mobile cabinet meeting held on the island early last year, was the primary "wonder" outlined in last year's campaign.

However, since the project was finally shelved – the government citing the project's failure to pass its Environmental Impact Assessment – Phuket's positioning as a regional MICE hub ahead of the 2012 ASEAN Economic Community, became uncertain.

Instead of positioning Phuket



ENTICING INCENTIVES: MICE tourists from the ASEAN +6 region are the prime target group for organizational tourism through to 2015. Photo: TCEB

and the Andaman Coastal region as the centerpiece of Thailand's MICE industry, the government will now broaden its promotional efforts across four "MICE cities".

"The TCEB has developed marketing promotions for every [source] market and [Thai] destination we want to promote... including Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya and Chiang Mai," explained Arisara.

She added that like last year's strategy, the new strategy will continue to target event organizers in short-haul source markets.

However, instead of focusing solely on Oceania, TCEB's target will expand to ASEAN+6 markets, she said; in addition to the ten Southeast Asian nations of ASEAN, +6 includes Japan, China, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

With a three-year target of three million MICE tourists, the strategy consists of three primary

campaigns that offer considerable incentives to organizers of specified types of meetings.

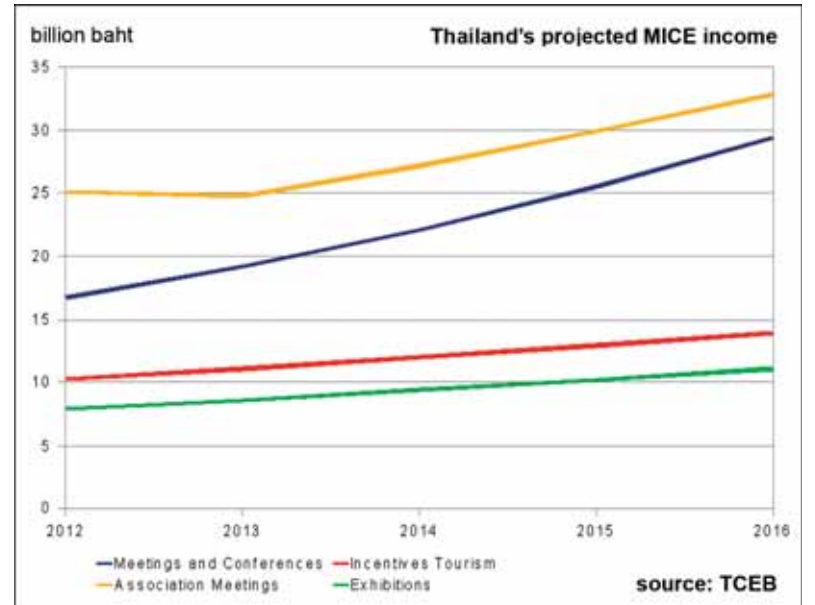
Reinforced with a budget of 90 million baht, the first two campaigns will look to lure corporate and incentives meetings that consist of no less than 1,000 participants.

The first campaign will focus on "mega event" corporate meetings that last at least three days, with the TCEB pitching a sponsorship incentive of a million baht per event to potential organizers.

The second campaign will promote annual stair-step marketing meetings that will be held in the Kingdom for at least three consecutive years, and yield an annual participant increase of 10%.

Target industries for such meetings include companies related to direct sales, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, banking, finance and insurance.

The final campaign, to be rein-



The graph shows Thailand's projected income over a five year period from four different types of MICE events. Photo: Gazette Graphics

forced with a budget of 10 million baht, will look to promote meetings for associations from ASEAN +3 (China, Japan and South Korea) nations.

Such meetings must comprise at least 20 members in order to receive sponsorship incentives from the TCEB in the amount of 1,000 baht per participant.

For this campaign, the TCEB says it has already selected 30 meetings comprising about 300 members or more each. These Association meetings are expected to rake in 800 million baht for Thailand in 2013.

TCEB Acting Director Thongchai Sridama commented: "The TCEB is organizing a number of 'fam' [familiarization] trips for target groups in Japan, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore and other target countries, to come survey and see the readiness for hosting incentives meetings in Thailand... we've

designated two key MICE cities – Chiang Mai and Pattaya – to take [the fam trip groups] from March to August."

In addition to sponsoring fam trips, TCEB will be taking promotion efforts abroad, with plans for nine "road show trips in India, China, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, England, France and Russia.

Moreover, the TCEB will be attending 10 MICE trade shows including the IT&CMA 2012 (Bangkok), IMEX America 2012, EIBTM 2012 (Spain), IME 2012 (Japan), AIME 2013 (Australia), IT&CM China 2013, IMEX 2013 (Germany) AIBTM 2013 (US), KME 2013 (South Korea) and CIBTM 2013 (China).

All in for 2013, the TCEB has a budget of 870 million baht, which includes a marketing promotion budget of 268 million baht.

For more information, see: tceb.or.th

Mass market tourism on rise, spending down

ALTHOUGH Phuket hotel business operators will not be affected in the short run by last year's minimum wage increase, the island's tourism industry as a whole will be negatively impacted in the long run from slumping tourist spending, the Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) has warned.

PTA Vice President Bhurit Maswongsa recently told the *Manager Online* that last year's minimum daily wage rise to 300 baht – made effective first in Phuket and the Bangkok in April, last year – would have little impact here since most Phuket employees in this industry had already been earning more than this amount before the increase.

Mr Bhurit was speaking in response to the situation in some other provinces that have started to see businesses moving out since the 300 baht daily wage was

made effective nationwide as of January 1, 2013.

Phuket's industries were informed of the wage rise a year in advance and adjusted their wage base accordingly, Mr Bhurit said, adding that service charges also helped to ensure wages were above the minimum.

However, Mr Bhurit stressed that even though it seems like the number of inbound tourists is on the rise, the per-head spending average has decreased. This is because most of the tourists are of the "mass market" whom have purchased cheaper package tours that have reduced length of stays, he noted.

Aside from this, the fluctuating value of the baht will also cause problems for the (tourism-dependent) economy in the long run, and thus everyone should prepare to adapt.

– *Manager Online*

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FDI shifting from China to ASEAN

RISING costs from higher wages and currency appreciation in China over the last two decades are prompting multinationals to look at expanding elsewhere, with ASEAN countries – particularly Vietnam – poised to benefit most.

A recent report published by HSBC Global Research, titled “The great migration – how FDI [Foreign Direct Investment] is moving to ASEAN and India”, outlined this trend.

The study highlighted Thailand’s competitive business environment, which it ranked second only to Malaysia, as well as its advantages over other ASEAN countries in terms of having strong links to regional markets, decent infrastructure and high labor skill levels.

And while Thailand is still considered an ideal destination for Japanese manufacturers, as the country is already an established manufacturing hub for investors from that country, the report warned that such companies are increasingly looking for ways to diversify due to risks posed by politics and flooding.

Moreover, the report noted that labor costs in Thailand are higher than in other ASEAN countries, although the country excels in skill levels, as well as ease of doing business.

This means that firms more sensitive to costs, or those which need less skilled manufacturing, may be less attracted to Thailand.

Moreover, Thailand’s working population age growth rate will begin to decline during this decade, which means that wage



MILKING CHEAPER LABOR: Michael Scuse, an American agriculture official, on a recent tour of a dairy processing plant in Ho Chi Minh City. Photo: USDA

pressure will continue to rise, adding to cost pressure.

As such, the report projected that Thailand is likely to concentrate on medium to high end manufacturing, leaving the low-end market to countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia.

In addition to India and Indonesia, the report particularly highlighted Vietnam as a country poised to continue to lead the region in luring an increased volume of FDI in the coming years.

Relative to Gross Domestic Product, Vietnam attracts the second-highest amount of FDI after Singapore among ASEAN countries.

The study attributed this to the country’s wages being the lowest among major ASEAN members.

Also, Vietnam’s business environment is more competitive than that of the Philippines and Indonesia, though it still trails significantly behind Thailand and Malaysia.

The country’s urbanization rate is still low at 30% and should continue to accelerate in the coming years.

More than 60% of its population is under 35, and the labor force is likely to expand in the next two decades, meaning more domestic demand and less wage pressure.

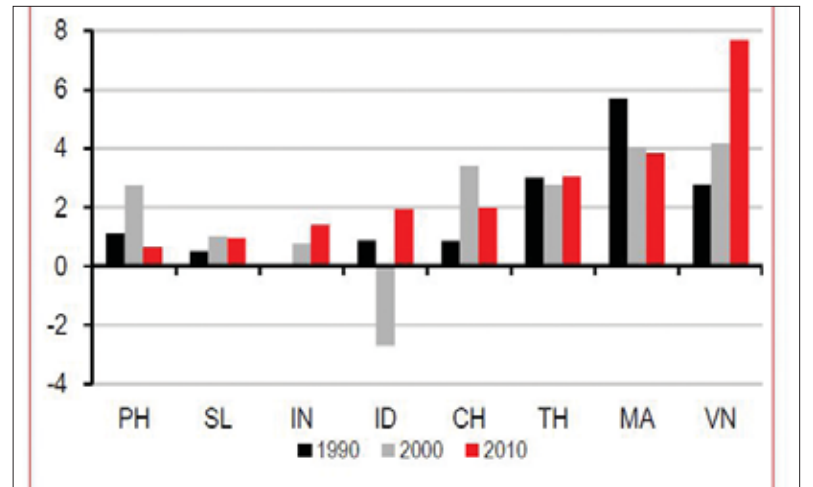
Due to high inflation and inefficient management of the economy in the past couple of years, the country has lost its luster as one of the best-performing countries in the region, the report said.

This has slowed FDI inflows, but they remain robust for a country of its size.

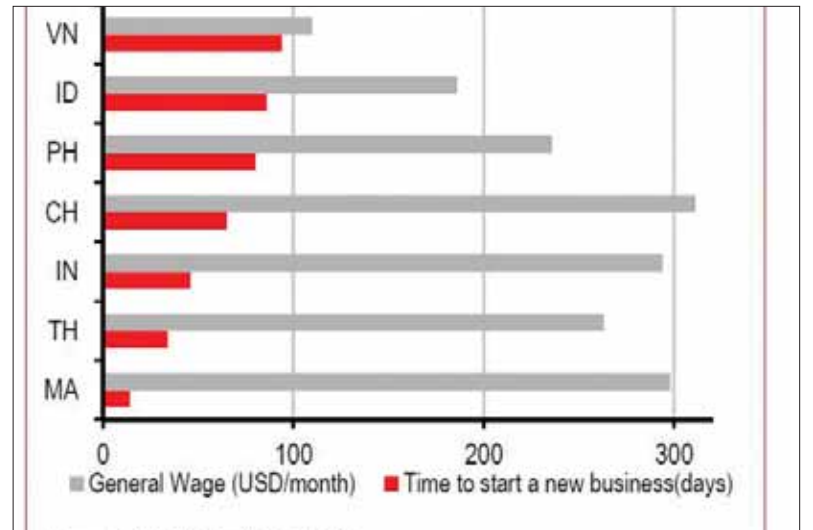
This has allowed Vietnam to gain considerable market share in low-skilled manufacturing such as clothing and footwear.

Its exports are also increasing in value, boosted by foreign investment in electronics by Korean and Japanese companies.

Notably, the country has seen a rapid rise in Japanese investment, a



The graph above shows FDI inflow for eight developing countries, as a percentage of nominal GDP over three decades. Source: UNCIAD, HSBC



Although it's easier to start a business in Malaysia; Thailand; India and China, the wages are higher than in Vietnam. Source: World Bank, JETRO, HSBC

positive sign for future productivity and growth in manufacturing.

In 2011, Japanese FDI made up 25% of total inflows to Vietnam and during the first ten months of 2012, this jumped to 58%.

According to a survey by the Japan External Trade Organization, Japanese investors find Vietnam attractive because of its low production costs, abundant labor force and political stability, considering it to be cheaper and more stable than Thailand or China.

But Vietnam lags behind the other two in terms of its links to regional markets and the performance of

Japanese firms investing there.

The appreciation of the Yen against the Dong is another driving incentive for Japanese investors, along with the Japanese government support for investment in Vietnam.

The survey suggests that should Vietnam keep improving its economic structure, FDI inflows are likely to accelerate.

Indeed, as production costs rise in China and Thailand in the coming decade, Vietnam looks well positioned to fill the gap and move up the value chain.

– *Phuket Gazette*

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Consumers value quick, good value

A RECENT study by GfK Global, one of the largest marketing research firms in the world, uncovered two key findings about modern consumers: the growing importance consumers place on “instant, convenient access” and “best value” in goods and services.

In its latest Roper Reports Worldwide consumer trends study, GfK polled over 37,500 consumers, aged 15 and above, across 25 countries about their attitudes, behaviors and values across a range of consumerism topics.

Among the 25 countries were eight from the Asia Pacific region – Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

Findings from the research revealed that over a third (36%) of the consumers from the Asia Pacific region, agreed that they want shops and services to be available at all times.

In addition, consumers in this region also said that those shops and services need to be reachable

constantly; while the Asia Pacific average was 55%, levels were significantly higher in countries such as India (68%), Indonesia (65%) and China (63%).

“Technology today is becoming very mobile, increasingly personalized and more on-demand, raising consumer expectations going forward,” said Jodie Roberts, Asia-Pacific (APAC) regional director for GfK Consumer Trends.

“APAC consumers are expecting to have access to goods, services and entertainment around-the-clock and on-the-go, delivered wherever and whenever they dictate and in a format they demand.”

According to the study, 58% of Asia Pacific respondents are in agreement that the most important thing about a brand is that it offers good value for money, and 43% said they prefer to own fewer but higher quality items.

In addition, consumers from this region are more likely to put time into researching brands before making a major purchase – Asia

Pacific average was 42%, but levels were significantly higher in India (66%), Taiwan (53%) and even Thailand (47%).

“In order to succeed moving forward, it is important for businesses to realize that consumers are becoming more selective in their purchases.

“They are emphasizing quality over quantity, and expecting their products and services to be readily available. In 2013, the continued diffusion of smart phones, tablets and the 4G network will ensure that more and more time-pressured consumers everywhere will get to enjoy an increased ability to stay informed and in touch [while] on the move – and they will consequently demand the products and services that they consume to keep up with their expectations,” concluded Ms Roberts.

The GfK Roper Reports Worldwide survey will be expanded to cover Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam as well in 2013.

– *Phuket Gazette*

Laguna Dusit Thani ready for influx of MICE

PROPERTY Gazette

THE Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket has re-launched its renovated and revitalized meeting space in response to an increase in demand for 2013.

The renovation cost 10 million baht and took two months to complete. The 2,408 square-foot Dusit Laguna Hall can now accommodate up to 300 people in a theater-style setting and is able to host 150 people for seated banquets.

Dusit Laguna Hall now features sophisticated carpeting, antique carvings, textured fabrics and furnishings complemented by state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment, including a 55 inch LED TV, ceiling and mobile projectors and white screen. Free WiFi internet is also provided throughout the resort.

The executive boardroom and or breakout rooms have been remodeled, including: *Suriyan* (Sun), *Chantra* (Moon) and *Dara* (Star). These rooms are located



Dusit Thani meeting space.

in the main building and offer panoramic views and natural sunlight.

The Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket also offers 2,275sqm of flexible outdoor 'team building' space at Columbia garden, where its lagoon and beach area add to the facility's ideal location.

The Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket, in cooperation with Dusit International, offers a special MICE program that includes a 'maximizing meetings' package that simplifies the budgeting process, and allows planners to book the Dusit Best Available Rate at Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket and receive 25 per cent off their first night. This program includes dining, cocktails, delegate packages, team building activities, spa treatments and an array of other services. — *Phuket Gazette*



SAFE AS HOUSES: Banks will only provide loans for condo projects with minimum pre-sales of 30 per cent. Photo: Chris Fischer.

Healthy developers

THAILAND'S leading property firms are maintaining their health by strictly keeping their debt-to-equity ratios below 2:1, making it unlikely speculators can cause a property bubble, experts say.

Prasert Taedullayasatit, Pruksa Real Estate director and chief business officer, said that after the economic crisis in 1997, most property firms kept their business growth in check with disciplined cost management, especially ensuring that their debt covenant ratios did not exceed 2:1.

Commercial lenders also have a policy of holding property as collateral until the firms show strong financial results.

"Our business is now controlled by commercial banks, which restrict the provision of loans for us. When a bank provides a loan for a condominium project, it has a rule that the project has to show presales of at least 50 per cent for small and medium property firms and at least 30 per cent for a top-10 listed company. This is to keep real-estate speculators under control," he said.

Sansiri president Srettha Thavisin said that in 1997, most property firms faced a financial crisis because they had bought land banks sufficient to serve at least three years' worth of new project launches.

This was in line with the Stock Exchange of Thailand's policy that a business needed

to ensure long-term growth.

But, such large land banks proved to be a burden for property firms when they were hit by the financial crisis.

Now, firms buy land in accordance with their development plans. This reduces their financial burden and provides business flexibility.

"We believe that most property firms now are more financially healthy than in 1997, and the demand to buy homes is real demand, not speculation," Srettha said.

He added that although some of Sansiri's customers bought its residential projects for rental, that was investment, not speculation, because such customers generated profit from rental income, not from sale of the contract or of the home itself.

According to a survey by *The Nation* last June, the top-10 listed property firms had debt-to-equity ratios of not more than 2:1.

For example, Pruksa Real Estate's ratio was only 1.36:1 as of September 30, but now is even lower, at 1.21:1. This is considerably below its debt covenant of 2:1.

Sansiri's debt-to-equity ratio of only 1.3:1 compared with its debt covenant of 2.5:1.

LPN Development managing director Opas Sripayak said the Thai property market is still stable and based on real demand rather than speculation. — *Nation*

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So near, and yet so far



Property Watch

By Bill Barnett

AS I write this, I can imagine the strange look of astonishment on my editor's face as this column arrives – one which is actually about property. Perhaps a virtual high five will be forthcoming. More likely a collective sigh of relief, which can be heard high above the din of rush hour traffic on Thepkassatri Road.

Worse yet would come sweaty palms, a fast heart beat and the inevitable rubbing of hand paddles that reminds you of those medical dramas. Shouts of “clear” just as one of Phuket's electricity disruptions kicks in. The stress of island living can be deadly given the current state of urbanization.

Slowly but surely, we're seeing property developers, and buyers, pushing the boundaries of Phuket proper and going over the fence.

Memories of the late, great Steve McQueen flick on in the mind's eye with scenes from *The Great Escape*.

A few years ago, Gene McCain, who was one of the original development partners in the luxury Cape Yamu development, decided that he wanted to get back to basics. What was born is the Jindaran Beach Club and Resort on Coconut Island. For those of you not familiar with the location, the proper name of the island is Koh Maphrao, located just a few minutes offshore, on the east

coast near Laem Hin.

What has become a three-phase development is located on a 14 rai site facing west and southwards to Phuket.

A total of 42 rustic cottages, which are suitable as holiday homes or residences, have been placed throughout the project, with sales reaching over 75 per cent.

Conceptually, the idea was to offer buyers options on sizes and add-ons, such as extra space and private pools, if they desired. So, a bit of a ‘buy what you need’ and if you didn't need it, you saved money.

‘A few years ago, Gene McCain, who was one of the original development partners in the luxury Cape Yamu development, decided that he wanted to get back to basics.’

Again simplicity was at the core, with added on components clearly priced at the onset, not unlike ordering a sandwich at Subway.

Standard unit pricing for a basic model is under 2 million baht. Property management fees have been geared to be affordable, starting at 7,000 baht a month.

Owners have the option to live in their home, otherwise Gene provides a full service, resort-style program of facilities, which includes a restaurant and pool.

One of the challenges of Maphrao Island is the lack of an electricity connection to the mainland. Hence, the contained footprint of the cottages is able to use green technology, such as solar power for hot water. There is also a generator situated at the resort.

Transport back and forth is a fairly easy affair with a regular service boat transporting home owners and guests to the popular Laem Hin Pier.

Elsewhere on the island, Chris Gordon's ‘The Village at Coconut Island’ has been a strong pioneering development, which has continued to evolve and grow.

Meanwhile, the owner of the upscale Burasari resort in Patong has a prime oceanfront plot on the north east tip, which they plan on developing into a luxury pool villa resort.

The conundrum of the lack of electricity infrastructure to an island that sits less than three kilometers from Phuket's Provincial Hall continues to baffle many. For all of the economic prosperity of its neighbor, the government has continued to cast a blind eye to the East.

Once Jindarin is complete, Gene intends to move there full time, electing to raise his family in island bliss while his children commute to Phuket daily to attend school.

‘So near and yet so far away’ is the best adage that applies to this laid back lifestyle.

Another popular island real estate personality, Red Graham, has been enlisted to assist on property sales for the project.

If the island traffic starts to get to your head one of these days, a trip over to Coconut Island might be just what the doctor ordered.

If you see a hammock under a tree, you might just find Gene McCain.

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

ERRATUM: In last week's Property Watch, a photo caption described The Naka Phuket as being on the East coast. It is of course on the West coast. The error was made in the Gazette office and is regretted.
—Chris Hudon, Editor, Phuket Gazette



BACK TO BASICS: Water is heated using solar panels.

Sansiri Launching Mai Khao Condo Project

PHUKET'S condominium property sector is continuing to gain momentum with news that Thai listed development firm Sansiri will launch a 206 unit project in Mai Khao this March.

Named Baan Mai Khao, the medium rise project, which sits on a 13.2 rai site, is situated between the Renaissance and Holiday Inn resorts.

While Sansiri has traditionally focused on inland properties, this marks the first time in Phuket they will target a large scale foreign market. The oceanfront site will command an average price of 120,000 baht per square meter.

Composed of nine buildings, these are configured into 3 storey and 5 storey blocks. Unit types kick off with one bedroom units at 60 square meters, and include two bedroom, duplex, 3 bedroom and penthouse units.

Unlike some of their previous Phuket offerings, these units have been upsized with a two bedroom unit ranging from 100 to 120 square meters.

Pricing points go from 7.3 million baht up to 35 mn baht.

According to market sources, Sansiri has a purchase option on additional land next to the site for future expansion. — Bill Barnett



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To Kamala

To Bang Tao

Singaporeans looking abroad

THE number of Singaporeans buying overseas property is likely to increase because of significant property cooling measures introduced by the government of Singapore, according to *PropertyGuru*, a leading Asian property website.

The measures, which came into effect on Saturday, January 12, include an immediate increase in stamp duties payable across the board between three and eight per cent. The government said it was introducing these "road barriers" now to slow the property market and avoid a crash in the future.

These measures are primarily designed to quell speculative demand and Singaporeans buying homes for their own use are largely unaffected.

Following the introduction of previous cooling measures, there was an immediate increase in inquiries from Singapore buyers at Malaysian developments. Over the following weeks that interest spread regionally and further afield.

Last year saw a record number of overseas property developers exhibiting in the city state.

Singaporeans were an increasingly important demographic in many overseas markets, especially in Malaysia, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Even less traditional property investment destinations such as

Brazil, Canada and the Philippines saw substantial numbers of Singaporean property buyers.

Steve Melhuish, co-founder and chief executive officer of *PropertyGuru*, said: "Property remains an attractive and secure investment class, and we expect that overseas property purchases by buyers from Singapore will increase over the coming days, weeks and months."

With Singapore property prices at an all-time high, overseas property investments seem like a good value – even in places like Australia and London.

Melhuish added: "The declining growth in property price rises in Singapore, combined with the large supply coming into the market and what is close to recessionary GDP growth, means there is a definite downside risk for Singapore property investments versus overseas. These latest measures could well be a tipping point for a property market correction in Singapore."

Last year, *PropertyGuru* held 15 property exhibitions throughout Southeast Asia and in Hong Kong. These country-specific events featured up to 10 developers and included informative speaker sessions.

In Singapore, *PropertyGuru*'s Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and International Property Showcase events saw strong interest



LION STATE: Singaporeans are an important demographic in many foreign markets. Photo: holengsiong

and equally strong sales.

"In Singapore we saw strong demand from locals and foreigners at our events, and we suspect that interest in overseas properties from Singaporean buyers is likely to increase, especially when you look at the predicted strong

GDP growth and property price outlook for nearby overseas markets such as Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines," he added.

"There remains a strong desire from buyers throughout Southeast Asia, not only in Singapore, to invest in property.

Overseas property purchases just became even more attractive, and we expect the number of overseas developers targeting Singaporeans and Southeast Asian property buyers and investors to increase during 2013."

– *Phuket Gazette*

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Banking in Thailand for expats

FOR expats in Thailand who intend to stay permanently, or for most of the year in the country, opening a Thai bank account makes financial sense. After all, except for a few ATMs owned by AEON (a large Japanese conglomerate) and Citibank, Thai ATMs will charge a 150 baht fee per foreign transaction and there are additional fees charged by the overseas bank for using an ATM outside of their network, currency transaction costs and daily withdraw restrictions (typically US\$500 per day).

In other words, the transaction costs of not having a Thai bank account can quickly add up.

Who Can Open a Thai Bank Account?

In general, expats in Thailand will need to have either a work permit or a long-term visa of some kind to open a bank account. In practice, you may still be able to open a bank account without a visa and only with your passport and a local address, but you will likely need a long-term visa to obtain internet banking access, a credit card and a checking account. At the very least, you will need your passport and evidence of a local Thai address (a lease or utility bill).

Thailand Deposit Insurance Protection

Thailand's Deposit Protection Agency (DPA) provides deposit protection insurance in case of a bank default. Currently and until August 10, 2015, the DPA will insure accounts worth up to 50 million baht (US\$1.6mn), but after that, and until August 10, 2016, the amount will drop to 25mn baht (US\$800,000) and then to 1mn baht (US\$32,600) after August 11, 2016.

Where Should Expats Bank in Thailand?

Thailand's biggest local banks are Bangkok Bank, Krung Thai Bank (state-owned), Siam Commercial Bank, Kasikorn Bank and Bank of Ayudhya. These banks have the biggest ATM net-

Island Investor

Don Freeman

works and offer the most security for depositors. In addition, major Japanese, European and American banks have a presence in Thailand, but be aware that their ATM networks will be more limited compared with local banks and not all of them deal with retail customers.

Special Considerations for Expats

Expats need to be aware that while there are no restrictions on

US Bank Wires into Thailand

One frequent question I get from American clients is how to wire US dollars from a US bank into their Thailand Bank. Because the US has very tight regulations this is not always easy to do. In fact, last week my client tried to wire in US dollars from a major US bank and was told he could not because Thailand is on a restricted country list.

The most efficient way I have found to bring in US dollars is to open a Bangkok Bank account and send the wire to the New York branch. Within 12 hours your money is converted into baht and received into Thailand for a very minimal fee. Simply then use your local ATM card to withdraw cash at no charge.

How Much Should Expats Deposit in a Thai Bank Account?

Unless you intend to buy property or you need to make a bank deposit for a retirement visa, expats in Thailand should consider keeping enough baht on deposit for at least a few months worth of living expenses and enough to cover an emergency, while staying under the limits for deposit insurance coverage and for taking cash out of the country without the need for special permission.

If you are an American citizen, you may want to keep less than US\$10,000 in a Thai bank account to avoid additional disclosure paperwork, but you will still need to pay close attention to any changes in IRS rules regarding the disclosure of foreign accounts.



A Thai bank account allows longterm expats to avoid excessive fees. Photo: Tim Moffatt

the amount of money brought into Thailand, there are restrictions on the amount of baht you can take out and these restrictions are subject to change. When dealing in cash, bringing in or taking out US\$20,000 or the equivalent will need to be declared to Thai customs, while for baht, 500,000 baht can be taken to countries that border Thailand and 50,000 baht can be taken to other countries. If you intend to do a bank transfer, you will usually need permission from the Bank of Thailand for transfers worth over US\$20,000.

Finally, and if you are an American citizen, be aware that if you control any type of foreign financial account(s) with a combined value of over \$10,000 at any point of the year, you will need to report it to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by filing Form TD F 90-22.1, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR).

You may also have other reporting requirements if your foreign financial accounts hold larger balances.

The coverage of insured deposits according to The Royal Decree on an extension of deposit coverage, is as follows:

Period	Coverage
11 Aug 2012 ▼ 10 Aug 2015	50 million baht
11 Aug 2015 ▼ 10 Aug 2016	25 million baht
11 Aug 2016 ▼ Onwards	1 million baht

COVERAGE OF INSURED DEPOSITS

Deposits exceeding the coverage amount could be claimed from the liquidation process.

COVERING YOUR BASES: Thai bank deposits are insured by Royal Decree.



Once you have a Thai bank account you can apply for a credit card.

Don Freeman is president of Freeman Capital Management, a Registered Investment Advisor with the US Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), based in Phuket, Thailand. He has over 15

years experience and provides personal financial planning and wealth management to expatriates. Specializing in UK and US pension transfers. Call 089-970-5795 or email: freemancapital@gmail.com.

Dawei to boost Thai economy

THE Dawei mega industrial project in Myanmar could boost Thailand's economy by 1.9% and upgrade it from labor-intensive to value-added, according to the Economic Research Institute for Asean and East Asia.

Thailand would gain closer access to natural gas and oil, which are abundant in Myanmar, while Thailand will run out of proved natural gas reserves in nine to 10 years.

Italian-Thai Development (ITD) has won the mandate to develop and run this project, which will become the largest industrial estate in Myanmar. However, ITD appears to need help to finance this mega-project, as it will require up to US\$8.5 billion just to set up infrastructure and US\$50bn to complete.

The Myanmar government has proposed eight joint ventures to operate the roads, railways, water systems, power industrial estates, the port and telecommunications systems and to relocate residents during the initial stage of development.

Many meetings of officials from the two countries have been held over the past few months. In



PROGRESS: A model of the Dawei site.

November, they reaffirmed their plans to jointly develop the Dawei special economic zone. The Thai PM visited Dawei in December to meet Myanmar President Thein Sein and finalize details. Following the meeting, both governments agreed to jointly finance the project, which is in line with the guidance provided by the transport minister.

The joint committee will finalize the plan by next month, before signing the framework agreement by March. Fundraising should start in April, followed by construction of the project.

Thailand is expected to spend about 45bn baht for the construction of a motorway between Bang Yai and Kanchanaburi and 10bn for a motorway between Kanchanaburi

and Banphu Namron on the Myanmar border.

The railroad from Dawei to Map Ta Phut would require about 20bn baht. To facilitate Thai companies' investment in Myanmar, the Board of Investment may give special privileges.

A few examples of these projects are steel and automobile factories.

Thailand has invested US\$9.6bn in key projects such as natural gas, factories and agriculture since 1988. Major Thai players in Myanmar are PTT Exploration and Production, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, ITD, Charoen Pokphand Group and Siam Cement Group.

The latest investment plan in Myanmar by Thai companies includes the SCG US\$400 million greenfield cement plant. It is waiting for the license. The plant is scheduled to be up and running by 2015.

Dawei development phases: (0) – basic infrastructure by next year; (1) – ports, roads, water systems and transport systems by 2015; (2) – downstream investment by 2020. – *The Nation*

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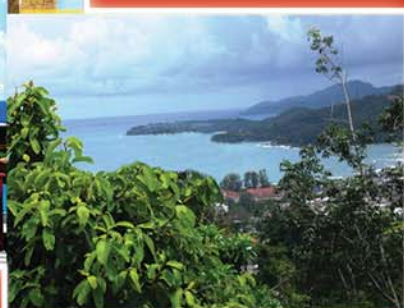
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Festering sores of 'public' transport

EFFORTS by the international diplomatic community to pressure authorities in Bangkok to tackle festering problems in the Phuket public transport sector and improve Phuket's reputation as a tourist destination are laudable and have the full support of the *Phuket Gazette*.

No subject has been the topic of more futile editorializing in this space than Phuket's bizarre patchwork of self-serving fiefdoms that collectively passes for a "public transport system", one which offers not only the highest fare rates in the Kingdom, but also the lowest quality of service.

The abysmal state of affairs has done inestimable damage to the island's reputation and served as the single greatest impediment to an industry which, in most other regards, thrives under free market forces – offering excellent value for money.

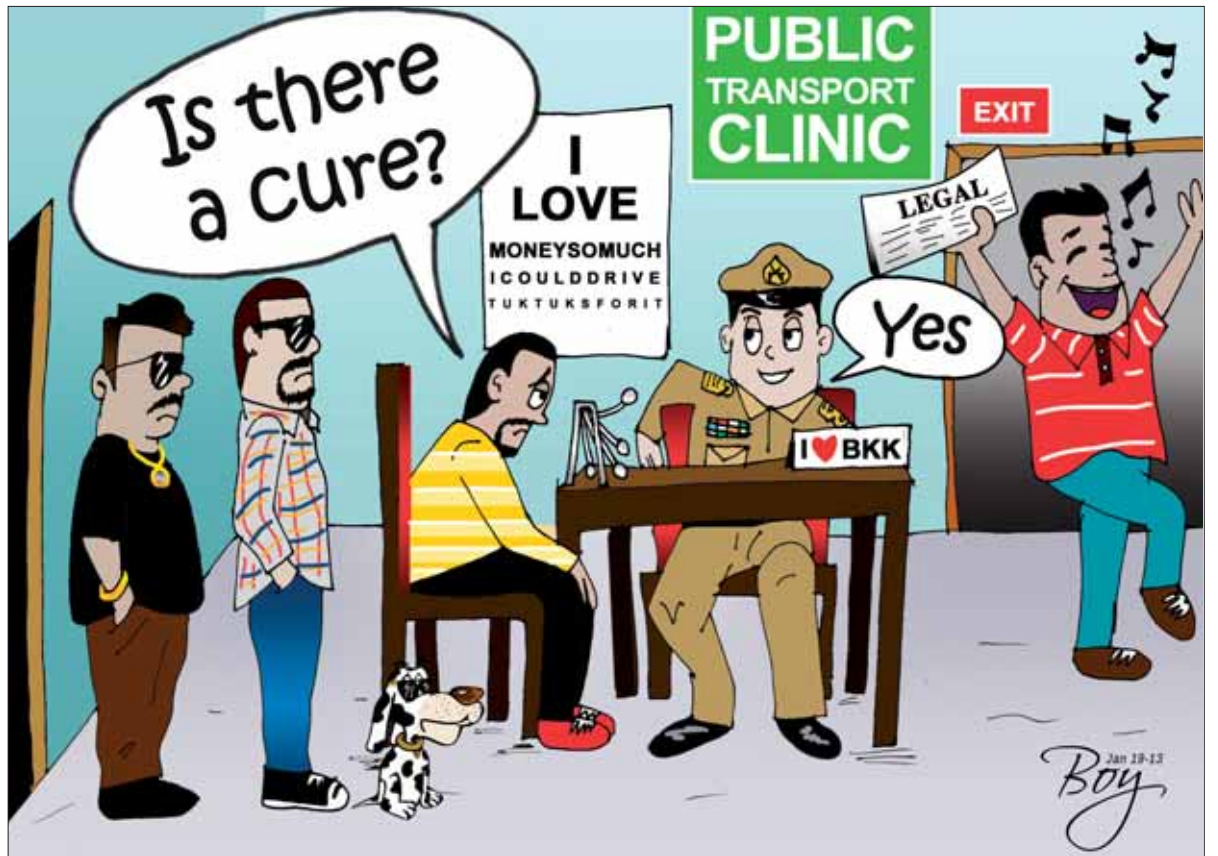
The unprecedented recent visit to Phuket and Krabi of not one, but three ambassadors from important tourist source markets shows once again that the issue cannot and will not go away until systemic collusion in the transport sector is tackled by authorities. Until it is, tuk-tuk, taxi and passenger van syndicates will continue to hold hostage an entire industry that depends on them: resorts, tourist attractions, food outlets – the list goes on.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, the *Phuket Gazette* would like to point out once again that real public transport, of the kind available in every other of Thailand's 76 provinces and in the capital Bangkok, is the key.

The *Gazette* wholeheartedly supports the brave move of the company that has stepped up to the plate and dares to defy the well-entrenched syndicates in Patong and Kata-Karon. This company, which has yet to publicly release its name, deserves the full support of agencies such as the Tourist Police, who should step in and make it a safe reality, even if it means having officers on board the buses. This may sound like a drastic measure, but compared to the steady stream of violent conflicts resulting from the status quo, it is well worth considering.

Much has been said and written about plans by some East Asian conglomerates to build a world-class light-rail system, but while such a network would undoubtedly benefit local residents it is unlikely that it would be of much benefit to tourists arriving at the airport who are unfamiliar with the island and just want to get to their accommodations as soon as possible – without having to pay more for a 30-minute taxi ride to their resort than the cost of the room itself.

At a more fundamental level, what is needed is a paradigm shift that restores public transport in Phuket to the tradition of Thai hospitality that is still very much alive and well in the Kingdom. If tourists fail to find it in Phuket, they will have no lack of alternative destinations to consider when planning their next trip.



Trading beyond the Russian bloc

Re: *Gazette online, Blockade-sparked tour counter blitz, 'well received', January 13*

So if I understand this correctly, the tour counters are owned by Thais, but as their language skills are limited, they hire staff that speak the language of their target group. Sounds logical. Now they are no longer allowed to hire these staff. So what will happen? The Russians will book their tours with the likes of Natalie Tours, Tez, Pegas and so on. Thais will lose business, Russians will gain.

SH

Gazette forum

From Russia with love

Re: *Gazette online, Two Russians charged over beach assault; search on for two more suspects, January 10*

This is a terrible incident. I regret that my countrymen behaved inappropriately. [You] cannot beat women under any circumstances. These people should be punished to the fullest extent of the law!

However, I ask you to not forget that "every family has its black sheep" and please do not compare all Russians with these monsters.

Serg

Gazette forum

You get the quality you paying for

Re: *Gazette online, A heart lost in Seoul: an English professor struggles with life after love in Phuket, January 13*

One reason we *farang* like Thailand is because the rule of law is weaker here, giving us a feeling of freedom that we don't have at home. Yet after the honeymoon period, it's precisely that lack of standardization that gets endlessly criticized.

Ditto the availability of women here – a big draw for *farang* men

Letters to the Editor

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

until they get burned by a bad choice.

Suck it up guys, this *farang* woman just isn't interested.

Nancy Carpenter

Phuket Town

Soul deep

Re: *Gazette online, A heart lost in Seoul: an English professor struggles with life after love in Phuket, January 13*

I have lived here 20 years; I have been happily married for 11 years; I was young once. Why do some people assume that all the old men [here] are with some little old slapper? I agree there are lots of old guys like you describe, but some people's comments remind me of some ignorant old hag from England who I came across last year.

My wife had gone to the toilet and the hag said to me, "Do you really think these people care about you?"

I said, "Yes, she does."

Andre

Gazette forum

Not enough officers taking care of Phuket

Re: *Gazette online, Police reinforcements to bolster Phuket tourist safety, January 10*

Last night I caught two burglars red handed at my house in Chao Fa. They fled immediately and we called the police and they were here in less than 30 minutes. The policeman said that there are only four officers and two motorbikes to patrol between Makro and Saphan Hin.

Phuket definitely needs more police. It's not only about the safety of tourists, locals do live here, too.

Placing [CCTV] cameras won't be the solution, I am afraid.

Lung Manu

Gazette forum

Lest we forget our Phuket road victims

Re: *Gazette online, Phuket Opinion: Taxis – a decade of blocking progress, January 13*

Good article, *Phuket Gazette*. I would add that the ultimate price is paid by the many deceased and those who are disabled for life from using the roads here, mainly from motorbike accidents.

Kata to Patong by tuk-tuk during the day is 400 baht, and at night is 800 baht, and to rent a motorbike for 24 hours is 300 baht. Most tourists choose the motorbike, many times with serious consequences.

The lack of transport is killing and injuring people here, literally.

Lest we forget the victims of Phuket's tuk-tuk cartel.

Lest we forget

Gazette forum

Wasting resources on injured dolphins

Re: *Gazette online, Rescued baby dolphin and mother losing deadly battle at Phuket Marine Biological Center, January 10*

I know the PMBC puts in all the effort and care to help these dolphins survive – and sometimes it works, albeit not as often as we would like. However, does it not seem strange to be pouring this much money into individual dolphins that are dying (like people/animals do), instead of research that could possibly have a real, long-term impact?

Johnny Turner

Kamala

Phuket Gazette

In association with The Nation Multimedia Group PCL

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Hotels must help water the flames in Patong

OUR fire department has a strong team and good equipment, but there are still ways we can improve our efficiency and effectiveness in combating fires, in a large part with the help of TOT and area hotels.

A very real problem we are currently facing is how emergency calls to the fire hotline are routed. When people in Patong dial 199 on their home phones, the call goes directly to our fire department in Patong. However, when they dial 199 on their mobile phones, the call gets routed to Phuket City Municipality. Officers then have to relay the information to us, causing a delay of about five minutes. In an emergency situation, five minutes may be the difference between life and death, and a little fire damage and a great deal.

I am in contact with TOT and we are fixing the problem. When it is fixed, 199 calls in Patong, whether from mobile phones or land lines, will come directly to us.

There is also a need for better fire training for hotel staff. They need to know what to do in case of a fire. For example, they should know where to go to turn off the electricity at their hotel, which will allow the firemen to start to extinguish the blaze on arrival.

Another way to improve fire safety in hotels is to make fire hydrants available in them; hotel staff could attach hoses and start putting out the fire before firemen even arrive. Water from a hotel pool could also be pumped out and used to hamper the flames from spreading.

Hotels are required to have their staff trained on a yearly basis; it is a prerequisite for getting their hotel licenses renewed. However, some hotels don't renew their licenses, and consequently their staff are not properly trained.

We offer basic fire-safety training. Any hotels in our area that are interested can send a letter to



Chairat Sukban has been Patong Deputy Mayor and chief of the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation in Patong for nine years. The 49-year-old Nakhon Sri Thammarat native has a master's degree in Public Administration and has been living in Phuket for 33 years.

Here he calls on the TOT phone company and local hotels to join the effort of squelching flames.



Patong firefighters pose outside the station. Photo: Patong DDPM

us and we will send a team to train their staff.

As I said, I have great confidence in the Patong Fire Department, not only in handling fires, but also other emergencies.

Since the tsunami in 2004, we have planned carefully for other disasters. We send out staff to train people in how to manage emergency situations. We are aware that emergencies can happen at any time, especially in our area, which is crowded with tourists and buildings.

Though with the one-way streets and road blocks it might seem like it would be difficult for us to re-

spond to a fire, they actually aren't an issue at all. In emergencies, we are able to remove the road barriers and take the most direct route to any emergency.

Though we do have quality equipment like I mentioned earlier, the one item on my wish list for the department is a mobile crane. Patong is a crowded area with a lot of power cables that can make it difficult for our fire trucks to get close to buildings. Currently our staff have to lift the cables up themselves to create access for our trucks, which slows us down. Nonetheless we are doing our best to keep Patong safe.

No taxi experience impossible



IMAGINE this headline: "Taxi driver returns money to customer; says she overpaid." Impossible? It happened to me.

All the taxi news seems negative recently, what with high fares, delays in getting illegal drivers to register as legal, and metered cabs being pushed out of some markets. The problem is apparently so bad that even the British Ambassador spoke up, and officials from Bangkok have come to Phuket to lend a hand.

I thought I'd put in a plug for the good taxi guys out there; they do exist, I've met them. But most especially, I want to praise the motorbike taxi drivers who I've ridden with during the years I've lived in Phuket.

Sure, they're not all perfect – I've had some steep fare requests from drivers near Central Festival, and there was the older gentleman who slowed down the trip because he had to cuss out everyone on the road; there was also guy who drove off with my stuff in his basket. But they are not all heinous. In fact, I'd say most of my experiences have been positive.

In the interest of balance, here are a few good stories about motorcycle taxi drivers.

One driver who posts himself at the Ocean shopping mall in downtown Phuket Town took me to Chalong once. I pride myself on knowing most fares, so I didn't discuss it with him when we arrived, just handed over the money. I must have seen something in his eyes, because I decided to double-check it later, and found I'd underpaid him. Later, when I saw him in front of Ocean, I offered him the difference. He smiled and refused it.

Another time a driver took me quite a distance from Phuket

Island View

By Leslie Porterfield

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

Town. Once again, I paid him what I thought was the appropriate price. He handed some of the money back, saying it was too much.

The last case is about the guy who drove off with my stuff. That's only half the story. He had picked me up at the downtown market, where I'd bought several kilos of fruit. I put my mangoes in his basket and held on to the rest. When we arrived at the hotel where I was staying, I asked him if the fare was 30 baht, which I thought was reasonable for the five-minute ride. He said, "60 baht." I got hot and told him that was way too high, gave him 40, and flounced inside. He drove off in a huff.

When I got to my room I found I'd left my 140 baht of mangoes in his basket. I was shaking my head when the phone rang. No one there. It rang again, the same thing. I decided to go downstairs to see what the problem was, and on the steps I ran into the taxi driver, coming up with my mangoes. All he said was, "I came back." That might be the only time my hand has moved of its own accord to cover my heart.

I know that it's the nature of the news media to tell us about problems, bad experiences, disasters and tragedies. It's "Man bites dog", not "Man pets dog." But good things happen in our world too, and if we want our perspectives to be balanced – to be realistic, I'd even venture to say – we'd be wise to pause once in a while to remember this.

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

Legal: Under where?

In the usual bar-room chatter someone said they believed it is an offense in Thailand not to wear underwear. With idle curiosity, and a little bit of humor, could the appropriate authority clarify the law before one ventures out again in commando attire and risks being fined by the fashion police after a thorough inspection?

James Marks
Phuket

Chiangsean Panhya, Phuket Provincial Chief Public Prosecutor replies:

Not wearing underwear is not an offense in Thailand. You can wear it or not, whatever makes you most comfortable. However, take care not to offend others by exposing yourself. The fine for indecent exposure is 1,000 baht or one month in prison.

What legal rights of access to my biological child do I have?

I am a British expat living in Phuket. My Thai "common-law wife" of seven years, from whom I have separated, recently gave birth to a baby daughter. The mother at first assured me that I was the father. However, I want to be certain and would like to have tests performed to determine the paternity of the child.

The mother does not wish the child to know who her father is. She wants the child to be raised in her sister's home in Phuket, and later by the child's grandmother in the family home in Khon Kaen. They will raise the child as they see fit.

The whole family will have access to the child, but the mother and her sister have told me not to make frequent visits.

I am not to handle the baby or attempt to care for her in any way. The mother has

not asked me for support of any kind.

If the child is my daughter, I want to do whatever I can for her, little though that may be. Where do I stand?

Stephen
Wichit

Friedrich Sam Fauma, Senior Partner, Director and Advisor to International Law Office, Patong Beach Co Ltd, replies:

As you are not legally married to the mother of the child, you do not have any legal rights as the father. This would be the case even if the mother registered your name on the birth certificate.

In this case, your rights can only be given to you by a court of law, to which you have to apply to register as the father. If the mother denies that you are the father,

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

Submit your issue at

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

you may ask the court to order a DNA test. With a positive test result, the court will legally record you as the father of the child and you will have all the rights and responsibilities of a father.

YOUR Phuket

VR GALLERY LAUNCHES EXHIBITION



From left: Watcharin Rodnit, artist, and Phuket vice governor, Dr Sommai Preechasilp.



SNOOP LION WITH SRI PANWA GM VORASIT “PLA WAN” ISSARA

Snoop Lion, formally known as Snoop Dogg, is spending his time in Phuket at Sri Panwa hotel to relax and prepare his new music video before starting his concert tour, the *Together Festival*, in January in Bangkok. He will perform together with other famous international artists such as *Justice*, *Max Vangeli*, *AN21* and Thai artists such as *Thaitanium*, *DJ Buddha* and *DJ Ono*.



THANK YOU PARTY BOAT PLAZA

Mr Boon Yongsakul (right), deputy managing director of Phuket Boat Lagoon, and Mr Panupong Kritchanarat, MD of Boat Plaza (center), received a congratulatory bouquet from a guest at the 'Thank You Party Night', an occasion commemorating Boat Plaza's success.



CHILDREN'S DAY 2013

Coco the Clown captivates kids at the annual Children's Day benefit for underprivileged youngsters at Holland House in Kathu.



THE NINE WINE & DINING

Mr Surin Maneemas, managing director (2nd from left) and Ms Krisana Matzenberger (2nd from right), advertising manager of PGTV.



From left: Mr Jacobo Astray Tudela, executive chef and Ms Aaishah Bohari, director of sales and marketing.

MAIKHAO DREAM HOTELS & RESORTS



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

PROPERTY of the week

Zenith
@ Chalong



See page 23

WHEEL & MOTOR of the week

mobile
car rental



See page 30

JOB of the week

British
International School, Phuket



See page 27

BOAT of the week

SIMPSON
MARINE



See page 31

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Properties For Sale

SEAVIEW PENTHOUSE FOR SALE



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

RAWAI LAND SALE

1 rai in Soi Suksan, flat land, freehold, concrete road and electric access. Quick sale! Tel: 089-472 9870. Email: dchaibut@gmail.com

2 UNITS PATONG PARADISE COMPLEX

Good location, central walkway. Only 19.95 million baht. Contact William. Tel: 090-153 6720.

HOUSE IN VILLA DOWROONG

Phuket Town. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 47sq wah. Tel: 089-909 2771.

LUXURY PANORAMA SEA & ISLAND VIEW



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

KHOK KLOY 8.5 RAI LAND



Beautiful land, 1km to beach, 2km from Sarasin Bridge. 750,000 baht per rai. From owner. Tel: 083-388 8036.

KAMALA NICE HOUSE



For sale. 2 bedrooms (possibility for third bedroom), 2 bathrooms, jacuzzi, dining and living room, kitchen, fully furnished, aircon, electric gate, all furniture included. 800m from beach, very quiet. Price: 9.5 million baht. (nous parlons Français). Tel: 086-280 7400, +33-62-448 3630.

LAND FOR SALE

Nai Yang. 2,630sqm. Chanote. Price: 9.5 million baht. Tel: 089-724 1140.

3 GORGEOUS LOTS, CLEAN TITLES

For sale or long lease. 2 lots on island beachfront (bungalow/housing-estate) and 1 big mainland mountain-property all in very quiet, secure, well maintained locations, near Krabi. Must see. For further details, please see our website at www.sackenheim.net

HOUSE FOR SALE IN BAAN PROMPHAN

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

LARGE HOUSE + 1 RAI

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

D CONDO 1, KATHU

-29.94sqm, mountain view, price 1,278,000 baht.

-29.70sqm, mountain view, price 1,280,000 baht.

-29.79sqm, pool view, price 1,330,000 baht.

-29.70sqm, pool view, price 1,365,000 baht.

Contact Vutdy on 081-892 3709.

BEACHFRONT LAND FOR SALE



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

KAMALA HOUSE FOR SALE



Near Phuket FantaSea. Price: 3.2 million baht. Negotiable. Tel: 081-719 1041. Email: teddykong0222@hotmail.com

PHUKET VILLA CONDO PATONG



New condo. 1km to beach, near Bangla Rd and Jungceylon, 1 bed, 1 bath, fully furnished. 3.9 million baht for 42sqm and 3.8 million baht for 44.5sqm. Tel: 081-541 2025. Email: c.junlarat@gmail.com

FREEHOLD CONDO PATONG

Patong Condotel, 7th floor, 28sqm. Fully furnished, kitchen, new bathroom and aircon. Seaside, 800m to the beach. Price: 1.35 million baht o.b.o. Tel: 084-844 7693 (English & Thai). Email: heijojo@hotmail.com

LAND FOR SALE

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

30 RAI IN TOWN

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

URGENT SALE/RENT



House in Patong. Newly built 40sq wah, near Sea Pearl project, Patong. 2 storeys, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 aircon, kitchen with hood, refrigerator, dining room, living room, hot water, cable TV and internet. Tel: 086-476 9612.

For sale: two freehold Apartments 85sqm. Unit, 151sqm. Unit Swiss Quality in Tropical Surrounding The Phuket Golf Residences Kathu



- Quiet area, 24 hours security guard, pool, covered car park.
- Long term rental possible.

Mobile: Alain 091-0408869 (English, German, Thai)

Email: agogniat@loxinfo.co.th

www.phuket-golfresidences.ch

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NEW CONDO: URGENT SALE/RENT



Special price, modern style, 30sqm, 1 bedroom, 1 living room, 1 pantry. In Kathu, 3km to Patong. Full set of built-in furniture. Ready to move in! Contact Ya. Tel: 081-797 5138.

LAND AT CHERNG TALAY

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

PRIVATE SALE OF HALF A RAI

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

CHEAP LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND NEAR MISSION HILLS



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

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Properties For Rent

NEW FULLY FURNISHED HOUSE



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

POOL PENTHOUSE SEA VIEW

Holiday rental, fully furnished, kitchen, pool, 5 minute stroll to 2 beaches + Kata town. Email: resortgm@gmail.com

HOUSE TO LET

Chaun Chuen Lagoon, near British International School. 3-4 bedrooms, 4 lounges, 3 bathrooms, kitchen, parking, park area. Tel: 076-239435.

POOL VILLA FOR RENT



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

NEW CONDO FOR RENT IN KATHU

Fully-furnished condo with aircon, TV, Fridge, gym & pool 10,000 baht/month. Tel: 081-978 1558. Email: keng.na.ranong@hotmail.com

PATONG CONDO PRIVATE RENTAL

Fully furnished apartment. 800m to beach, swimming pool, gym, WiFi, cable TV, washing machine. 1 or 2 beds available on January 16. Tel: 085-069 0938. Email: nnorthwo@hotmail.com

HOUSE AT PRIME PLACE VILLAGE



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

NICE HOUSE IN CHALONG



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

PHUKET VILLA 5 VILLAGE



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

THINK INSIDE THE BOX!

Unique design office space for rent. Prime location (Laguna area). Great exposure in high traffic and easy access. Offering two months free (3 year contract). Parking available. Rates: 12,000 baht for 32.5sqm, 16,000 baht for 50sqm, 25,000 baht for 94sqm. Tel: 081-823 4627, 085-782 1200. Fax: 076-264461. Email: ying@phuketpooltables.com Check us out now at www.theboxpark.com or facebook/TheBoxPark

CONDO IN PATONG

Large 50sqm studio, nicely furnished, pool and parking. Long term. Tel: 081-892 1621.

SUPERB 3-BED POOL VILLA KATA

Last minute availability 4-18 Jan only. Email: resortgm@gmail.com

SINGLE HOUSE FOR RENT/ SALE



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

BEACH CONDO, 3 MINS FROM BEACH

2 bedrooms, spacious, fully furnished, kitchen, large gardens, pool, free WiFi, great for families. Email: resortgm@gmail.com

RAWAI, NAI HARN BEACH

Nice house for long-term rent, 3 bedrooms, aircon, 2 bathrooms, kitchen. Just a few minute walk to Nai Harn Beach. 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-397 1835. Email: L.dewis@hotmail.com

SURIN CONDO

1, 2 & 3 bedroom, pool, safe, 300m to beach, low density. Email: jgstryker@gmail.com

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

LOVELY APARTMENTS FOR RENT

http://pukeyomefc2.web.fc2.com/phuketcondorent.htm

THAI TRADITIONAL VILLA

3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, private pool villa, fully equipped, only 3km to Nai Harn Beach, available for short or long-term rental. Tel: 081-141 6515 (English), 081-606 5604 (English & Thai). Email: ericvetier@gmail.com http://phuketserenityvillas.com/villa.php?nom=Sirinthara%20Villa

RENT APARTMENT, PATONG CONDO

Pool, security, 46sqm, furnished. Tel: 089-728 4005. Email: thamad17@yahoo.com

THAI WOODEN HOUSE FOR RENT

fully furnished, WiFi, daily, monthly, yearly. Tel: 086-375 4884. Email: darunee55@yahoo.com

PATONG CONDO 50SQM

Long-term rent, located on the 9th floor.com Restaurant. Tel: 088-181 1965. Email: e.breh@web.de

TOWNHOUSE IN KOH KAEW



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

CONDO HOLIDAY RENT



Holiday or long-term rent at Kathu area. Fully furnished, swimming pool, fitness, quiet and safe. Tel: 081-607 8567. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com

7 BEDROOM GOLF VIEW

7 aircon bedrooms with swimming pool, golf view, quiet area, close to all shopping malls and international school. Price for long term 65,000 baht per month and 70,000 baht per month for short term. Tel: 081-271 3228. Email: info@procarpentering.com

NAI YANG HOUSE FOR RENT

Quiet, fully furnished, 2 bedroom house with ensuite bathrooms, kitchen, laundry, aircon. 500m to Nai Yang Beach, 2km to airport. Short term 30,000 baht per month, long term 12,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-837 5774 (English), 089-667 1844 (English & Thai). Email: slarti@onthenet.com.au

LARGE HOUSE KAMALA

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

PATONG LUXURY APARTMENT

For rent, 46sqm, 17th floor, beautiful seaview, kitchen, bathroom, balcony, swimming pool, parking, security. Tel: 085-788 7352.

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The Network property office



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Khun Anna: 076-388144, 086-4780201, 088-1685032

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See more classified ads at www.phuketgazette.net

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@sgspuket.com

STAFF WANTED FOR BEACH BAR

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

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Experience as executive assistant/PA to MD for over 3 years - native Thai, excellent command of English, good computer and internet skills, own and drive personal car, great administrative skills and secretarial work, ability to "manage" situations make decisions. Tel: 081-979 9911 (English & Thai). Email: vrit@boatlagoon-yachting.co.th For further details, please see our website at www.boatlagoon-yachting.co.th

SMALL BUSINESS LOOKING FOR

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

ACCOUNT MANAGER

Experience as account manager for over 5 years - native Thai, and with excellent command of English - experience dealing with foreigners would be helpful. Tel: 081-979 9911. Email: vrit@boatlagoon-yachting.co.th

ADMIN MANAGER

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

REAL ESTATE REPS NEEDED

Phuket Condos & Homes, one of Phuket's leading Real Estate Agencies, are now looking for new property consultants to join our success full team. You should have experience in Sales and have your own car to be able to apply for this position. French and Russian speaking is a plus. Tel: 076-341 045, 081-459 0152 (English). Email: andres@phuket-condos-homes.com Please contact us by mail or call for an appointment

WEBSITE / SOFTWARE PROGRAMMER

Bayshore Group is looking for Web or Software Programmer/Developer (Java, C) (numbersign).NET) Requirements:

1. Have good knowledge of OOP and RDBMS with past working experience.
2. Good understanding of current web and software technology such as HTML5/CSS3, Ajax, MVC, etc.
3. Ability to code in Java or C(numbersign).NET as well as Ajax, JQuery.
4. Good understanding of frameworks and IDE in Java or C(numbersign).NET
5. Fluent English. Tel: 081-968 5963 (English). Please send CV to f@bayshoreprojects.com

RUSSIAN STAFF

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

LOOKING FOR STAFF (4 POSITIONS)

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

STAFF WANTED

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

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

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

WEBSITE PROGRAMMER

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

SWEDISH / FINNISH TOUR GUIDE

Swedish/Finnish speaking tour guide wanted for cruise boat. Tel: 087-897 1761. Email: lotta@lamoet.com

COOKS, MAIDS, MANAGERS

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

NEGOTIATOR

We are looking for well-qualified and motivated individuals to join our dynamic Residential Sales team in Phuket.

The ideal candidate will be:

- Female and of the Thai nationality.

- A Bachelor's degree holder.

- Fluent in spoken and written English.

- Service oriented, with good communication skills and able to work with demanding international clients.

- Computer literate (MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Office Access, email and the Internet).

- Fast-learning, enthusiastic, hard working and dedicated.

Candidates must have their own transportation and be willing to work in the Patong area.

We offer great opportunities for candidates, including new graduates, who are looking to grow with the Company and develop their skills in sales.

Qualified applicants please send your resume to phuket_hr@cbre.co.th

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

HOUSEKEEPER

For 6 months in Australia. An aussie man with 2 young daughters require help of young Thai woman to assist housekeeping. The candidate must have an English skills, passport preferably, age between 25-35, enjoy children. Contact Jum Tel: 087-095 9274.

MANAGER - PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Experienced manager required to manage 30 private residence in Krabi. The manager is responsible for managing all teams for maintenance, housekeeping, office, rental and security. Operate all property in a 5-star manner for both owners and guests. Applicants need to have strong leadership skills, excellent command of English, hotel and/or property management experience. Applicants will be required to have their own car and driving licence, and to be able to work both in Krabi and Phuket. Tel: 081-968 3140 (English), 081-797 3401 (English & Thai). Please send CVs to: manager@engchuan.com, www.engchuan.com, www.krabisunset.com and www.krabihideaway.com

COOK, MAIDS, DRIVER

Villa staff needed. Live in or live out. Pay negotiable plus good tips. Tel: 089-005 0700. Email: toddplay@hotmail.com

CONSTRUCTION MANAGER

Or civil engineer with experience. Any nationality. Established company. Tel: 087-897 0501 (English). Email: aleksa.rtn@gmail.com

THAI ADMIN WANTED

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

ANDAMAN CRUISES COORDINATOR

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

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

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Tel: **076-280400**
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PATONG

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- ▶ **Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe** (Aroonsom Plaza)
- ▶ **Deli Supermarket** (Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd)

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PHUKET CITY

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- ▶ **Sin & Lee** (Thalang Rd)
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 EZYSTAYS looking for marketing representative. No experience required, full training provided, work permit and good income. Email: leoinphuket@gmail.com

LOOKING FOR STAFF
 Aroi-Corner Restaurant in Rawai is looking for staff. Waitress and bartender with experience. Working hours: 3pm-11:30pm, one day off, good salary. Contact 084-442 8330. Khun Peter. Email: hp.schranz56@gmx.ch

STAFF FROM PHILIPPINES
 Bayshore Projects Company is looking for Filipino staff. Must be female. Contact Mariane. Tel: 081-968 5963 (English). Send CV to c@bayshoreprojects.com

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

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

STAFF WANTED
 Rawai Pub requires Thai Bar and Kitchen staff. Tel: 081-396 8707. Email: kanthasin@gmail.com

RUSSIAN COOK
 With experience and knowing English. For more information please contact Maxim. Tel: 089-728 2037.

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

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

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

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Applications close January 31st 2013. Early applications are encouraged as an appointment may be made immediately to the right candidate.

Further information about the school may be obtained from our website: www.bisphuket.ac.th

Junior Secretary at Headmaster's Office

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- Thai Nationality
- Bachelor's Degree in relate field
- Excellent English, computer literate and good people skills
- Able to coordinate with other departments in the school and community

Interested candidates should submit cv and recent photo to patcharakornt@bis.ac.th or sirirats@bisphuket.ac.th



British International School, Phuket (BISP)

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Business Opportunities

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Very nice guesthouse with 12 rooms and restaurant/bar. 100m to centre, 300m to beach. Fully booked every year Nov to April. Contract: 1+3+3 years, running. Rent included. Key money 54,000 baht per month. Price: 3.9 million baht. Serious speculators only. Tel: 083-590 3862 (English). Email: guesthouseinkaron@gmail.com

**PATONG RESTAURANT
AND BAR**

This commercial property is located on famous Soi Post Office, 80m from Thaweewong Road. Fully fitted and equipped, ready to open. 1.2 million baht key money and 60,000 baht per monthly rent. Lease for 9 years. Contact landlord for viewing. Tel: 081-271 5811 (English & Thai). Email: aslaferme@hotmail.com

**RESTAURANT &
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Newly renovated sports bar, 45 seats. Newly built kitchen. 5 rooms on 2nd floor. Sale includes all furniture and pool table and 5 flat-screen TVs. Location: Soi Taina 11 (Kata Center). Rent: 30,000 baht per month. No key money. Contract runs until 30 April 2015 (can be renewed after or already now) - Rent paid until 30 April 2013. Sale: 1.1 million baht. Call or email for more info and pictures. Tel: 080-530 5950. Email: allstarkatabeach@gmail.com

**RESTAURANT
FOR SALE**

6 years on contract, great location, Patong Beach Road, full furniture and equipment. Tel: 087-075 2166, 090-175 9126. Email: omaraalquraini@hotmail.com

**DESIGN RESTAURANT
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Popular restaurant pizzeria in excellent location with patio. 100 seats on over 300 sqm. Fully equipped, fully operating, high volume, high profit, low rent. Motivated seller looking for quick sale. Tel: 082-534 6658. Email: lorenzobortolotti@gmail.com

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Corporate membership for 2 persons. Yearly fee paid for 2 years. Free transfer. Price: 1.3 million baht. Tel: 081-737 5085.

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Family membership. Price: 550,000 baht, free transfer. Tel: 081-970 9764 (English). Email: ektorp@hotmail.com

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Looking for Swedish speaking babysitter for a few times during our holiday from 22 January to 15 February. Email: tilak_24@hotmail.com

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A family needs a live-out nanny with good English (20,000 baht per month) and a maid (15,000 baht per month). Tel: 085-576 9139. Email: Russe2003@mail.ru

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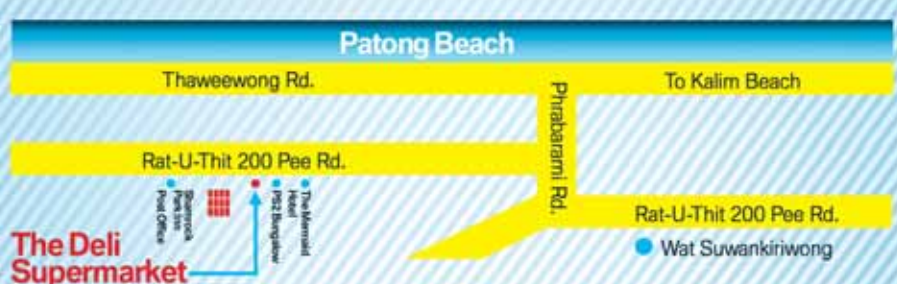
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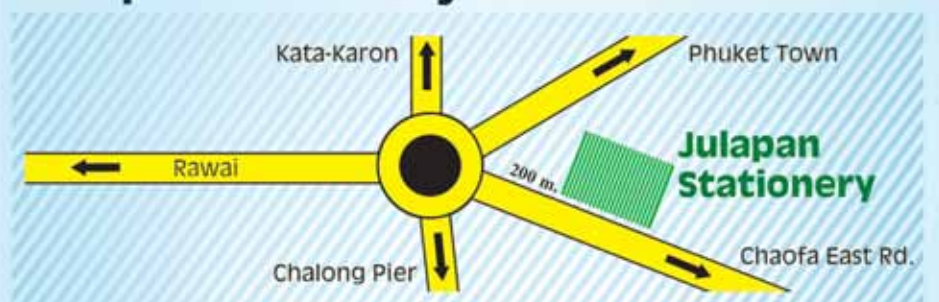


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HOBIE 17 CATAMARAN
With wings and new sail. In good condition. 155,000 baht, beach + street trailer included. Tel: 080-697 4629. Email:

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Built in 2009. No engine, no mast. It is to do something. 380,000 baht. Tel: 087-461 8089.

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NEW KARNIC 1851
Deep V Hull, 90hp lean-burn, 4-stroke Suzuki O/B. Bimini and trailer. 999,950 baht. Now in stock. For details contact Alan Giles. Andaman Boat Sales. Tel: 087-283 1674. Email: boats@andamanboatsales.

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I am willing to give away my Thai-registered 10m 30ft. yacht. All books are available and in order. It is moored in Ao Chalong. All I ask is that I can use it when I am in Phuket 4-5 times per year just for 2 days each time. The boat is called Tabata and is located about 500 meters due east of the yacht club. Tel: 087-273 8162 (English & Thai). Email: mmaston@infocon-technology.com

NEW KARNIC 2052
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55FT CRUISING CATAMARAN
6 double cabins, 25sqm center cockpit, composite, no engine, 380,000 baht. Tel: 087-461 8089 (English). Email: thongcat5@yahoo.de

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55 FT CRUISING CATAMARAN
6 double cabins, 25sqm center cockpit, composite, no engine, 380,000 baht. Tel: 087-461 8089 (English). Email: thongcat5@yahoo.de

SOLUTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S

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I would like to sell my Robin aircraft or trade it for a 4-seat Cessna or Piper (based in Hua Hin). The Robin: TTAf 300hrs. SMOH 60hrs. This is a well-equipped, two-seat aerobatic aircraft. Has the Christen inverted oil system. Excellent inside and outside. King KMA24 audio panel, KX155 nav/com, KI203 vor, KY197A comm, KN64A dme, KR87 adf, KT76A transponder, CSPA400 i-com, FP5 fuel computer, CHT, OAT, Pitot heat. Price: 4 million baht. Please contact Thom. Email: thos_w@hotmail.com

TECNAM P-92

- Price: 1.5 million baht
- Registration: U-B08
- Year of Manufacture: 2002
- Equipment: Full standard equipment
- Engine: Rotax 912-80HP 350hrs.

Please contact for more information. Aircraft is based at Klong 15. Tel: 081-840 8418.



Notice from Thai Flying Club: There is a very nice Piper Cherokee airplane at the Thai Flying Club (TFC) in Bang Phra. It has fallen into disrepair. Someone took out the seats and some other parts... and then went away.

Owner Wichai Pettongkam loves this airplane and wants to get it back in the air. If you like flying and might want to be a partner in the plane, please come to the TFC to have a look, or contact **Khun Tom** (email tom@thaiflyingclub, Tel: 089-092 2711). Or talk to **Khun Wichai** directly on 081-633 7082.

Khun Wichai does not want to sell the plane, but would welcome a partner who can help to get it flying again. This could be a very good opportunity for someone to get a share in a nice airplane for a very good price. All negotiable.

Rockwell Commander 114 HS-AWS



Built: 1976

Registration: HS-AWS
(in Thailand for the last 6 years)
Previous Registrations:
N4798W – USA
N479GE – USA
I-ECCE – Italy
G-BVNL – UK



Lycoming IO-540-T4B5D (1,300 hours, 700 hours to TBO). Prop: B3D32C419/82NHA-5. Overhauled Feb 2011 (7 years to TBO). C of A Due 11th November 2011. New 5-year Permit. 100 hour check completed 19 Feb 2011.

Specs:

Horsepower: 260	Gross Weight: 3140 lbs
Top Speed: 166 kts	Empty Weight: 2094 lbs
Cruise Speed: 157 kts	Fuel Capacity: 68.00 gal Usable
Stall Speed (dirty): 55 kts	Range: 700 nm
Rate Of Climb: 1088 fpm	Fuel Av Gas 100LL
Ceiling: 17,400 ft	1 crew plus 3 passengers

Radio and Navigation Configuration: Fully IFR equipped. 2 Garmin GNS430 VHF/COMM/NAV/GPS/TERRAIN. Garmin GI-106A VOR/LOC/GS/GPS CDI. King KN64 DME. Garmin GTX 320/327 Transponder with Mode C via Ameri-King AK350-30 Height Encoder. Garmin GMA 340 Audio Panel. Bendix King KR-87 Adf. Sandel SN 3308 EHSI. Century IIb Autopilot Dual Axis and S-Tec Altitude Hold. WX-500 Stormscope.

Price: 3.75 million baht. Located at Thai Flying Club, Bang Phra.

Contact Tony Scragg at 081-906 3250, or email tony_scragg@hotmail.com



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The “Banana Walk Countdown to 2013” held at Beachfront Terrace. The party was organized by *Piak DJ siam*, who manages some of the best Indy music bands, including: *Error 99*, *Somromband*, *Mocca Garden* and *Miraculous*. Hosted were DJ Karn, DJ Tuche’ and MC Andy who performed for Thai and foreign tourists at the countdown party.



More than 100 dancing enthusiasts got into the Latino groove on January 5 and danced the night away for the first Sky Salsa party of the New Year at the KEE



Sky Lounge in Patong. Dance instructors from the Salsa Club led the colorful party goers in a fun-filled evening fuelled with sensational mojitos and tasty tapas accompanied by Latino beats from DJ Caro.



From left: Ms Siwaporn Congsawas, owner of La Moon cafe and restaurant; Ms Panisa Thinkohyao, owner of Beauty Studio; Mr Koenraad Lucia Jozef Scholliers and Mr Waramai Wongsarot, owner of Sivara Development.



Craig Johns (3rd from right) welcomed Mr Pramuk Achariyachai, president of Phuket FC and KATA Group owner (4th from right) ; Mr Tinarat Tephabuttra, vice - president of Phuket FC; Mr Jakapop Su-Ngan, general manager; Mr Wiroot Howtavanich, director of finances and the Phuket FC team at their first training trial for 2013 at Thanyapura Sports & Leisure Club's floodlit Limonta 'Soccer Pro' FIFA-standard pitch in Phuket.



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Jan 25, Feb 1; 7 to 11pm: Indian Curry Buffet at Navrang Mahal in Karon Sea Sands Resort

All you can eat, authentic Indian Curry Buffet at 449 baht net per person. Come enjoy our cold Mango and Strawberry Lassi with our delicious Mutton Vindaloo, Dal Makhani, Bombay Aloo, Mutter Paneer, Butter Chicken and mouthwatering Chicken Tikka, Samosas, freshly baked Naans and more. For reservations contact Jaspal Singh on: 66-76-286464.

January 26, 10:30am to 11:30pm: Phuket Family & Gourmet Festival at Royal Phuket Marina

This charity event is the first of its kind, combining a family fun-packed day out for children with gourmet dishes prepared by some of Phuket's best chefs using the finest ingredients supplied by Jagota Foods. Activities include Birdman Jari Kuosma dropping in and world record breaking stuntman Ian Jamieson pulling his stunts. In the evening there will be live blues and rock with internationally renowned Australian Blues band *Vdelli*, Thai alternative rock band *Modern Dog*, and Phuket's own *Legends of Siam*. Tickets range from 100 to 3,000 baht with proceeds going toward 10 local charities for children. This event is proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and PGTV. Segments of the event will appear on the *Gazette's* 'Phuket Today' show, the island's only national television program, seven times per week (see below).

February 3-4, 6:30 to 10pm: Baan Kata Arts Fest at Mom Tri's Villa Royale

You are invited to join the Baan Kata Arts Fest 2013 at Mom Tri's Villa Royale. Sunday February 3 and Monday Febru-

WHAT'S ON in Phuket

ary 4. On February 3 there will be an opening exhibition of paintings by Mom Tri Devakul at the VR Gallery, and on February 4 ML Usni and his ensemble will perform a classical music concert at Villa Royale. Tickets for the concert are 500 baht each.

February 25: Makha Bucha Day (Public Holiday)

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

Apr 13 to 15: Songkran Festival

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

May 5, Coronation Day

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

May 6, Substitution for Coronation Day (Public Holiday)

May 24, Visakha Bucha Day
Visakha Bucha Day is observed on the day of the full moon during the 6th lunar month, which

usually falls in either May or early June. It is a day to commemorate three important incidents: the birth, the enlightenment and the passing away of the Buddha. Miraculously, these events fell in the same month and on the same date in the Buddhist era.

May 24, Arsarnha Bucha Day

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

August 12, Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday

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

October 23, Chulalongkorn Memorial Day

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

November 17, Loy Krathong Festival

One of the most beautiful festivals in Thailand. It is traditionally performed on the full moon night of the twelfth lunar month, which usually falls in November. A Krathong is a banana-leaf cup containing flowers, a candle and incense sticks, which will be



floated in a canal or river. The idea is to worship the river's Goddess and at the same time to float away any bad luck. Loy Krathong is not a public holiday.

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

Also marked as Father's Day in Thailand.

December 31, New Years Eve

This is a public holiday in Thailand.

January 1, 2014 New Years Day

This is a public holiday in Thailand.

Informal Sunday morning computer clinics

Do you have a question about computers, Windows, or the internet in Phuket? Need to find out where to get things fixed, or the best places to shop for new computer stuff? Drop by one of our FREE informal computer clinics. Every Sunday morning, starting around 10am or so, a group of computer savvy locals meet for breakfast at the Chalong/Fisherman's Way Sandwich Shoppe, 1 km north of Chalong Circle on Chao Fah East road.

Don't be bashful: introduce yourself to the group at the big table, and ask away. You might even find an iPad/iPhone, Android or Mac guru, if you're lucky.

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

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Saturday: 1.10pm	Saturday: 1.10pm
Sunday: 6.10am and 7.10pm	Sunday: 6.10am and 7.10pm
Monday: 5.10am	Monday: 5.10am

Phuket Cable Company (PC) - covers all Phuket.
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Rawai Cable - covers Rawai, Chalong, Kata, Karon areas.

Channel 1	Channel 43 - 8 shows a week
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10am, 1pm, 7pm, 10pm.	Friday: 4.10am and 11.10am
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A slow boat to China: The loris pet trade

By Patrick Campbell

A RECENT *Phuket Gazette* article offered some encouraging news for environmentalists. The Deputy Mayor of Patong has acted to stop touts from charging tourists. For what? For having their photographs taken with slow lorises. He is on record as stating that ten arrests have been made, adding: "The crackdown will continue because such activities are upsetting and annoying to tourists, who continually complain about them."

It was not recorded what complaints, if any, Thais might have voiced concerning the practice.

A step in the right direction? Absolutely. But kowtowing to tourist reactions, protecting Patong's "good name" is far from being the core of the issue. What should be everyone's concern is that this activity is only one small symptom of the cruel and remorseless Asian trade in wild creatures, either for the so-called "pet trade", or for their use in traditional medicine – usually a euphemism for ingesting body parts to boost sexual potency.

Think rhinoceros horn or tiger penises. Recently, 600 cobras were discovered in crates in a southern province, destined for the Chinese market. Unusable as pets, they would have ended up in Oriental restaurants as an expensive addition to some rich man's libido-enhancing lunch.

Cobras are not an endangered species in Asia. Slow lorises are. Hardly surprising. The loris is a small, cuddly, 'teddy-bear' of an animal, adorably cute. Technically a pre-monkey, it has thick, soft, finely marked fur, and huge, dark-rimmed eyes. It moves slowly and deliberately, and possesses a quiet nature, which makes it seem ideal as a pet. Apparently it is much sought after by Japanese ladies.

But consider these facts. There are only five dwindling species of slow lorises, from the pygmy (which weighs only a few ounces) to the Bengal loris, which may tip the scales at four pounds. Scarce any-

way, their rainforest habitats have been systematically destroyed, so they have difficulty in moving between patches of woodland. And though they have few natural enemies – mainly snakes, orangutans or eagles – they have fallen foul of the ultimate predator – man.

Nocturnal by instinct, lorises can be readily discovered by the light of a powerful beam, since their huge eyes reflect the light. And since, like agamid lizards, they freeze in self-defense, they are easily caught.

In Thailand they are openly sold in markets such as Chatuchak in Bangkok for the pet trade and in neighboring Vietnam for 'traditional medicine' (that phrase again). Folklore has it that the slow loris, maybe because it can use its vice-like grip to cling to branches for hours – has supernatural powers. So its flesh is an aphrodisiac and associated with sexual prowess. Other

Asian people consume it to bring good luck and ward off evil spirits.

If, in these circumstances, the inevitable fate of the loris is to be killed and eaten, you may conclude that being kept as a pet is a preferable fate. Alas, you would be wrong.

Nature has endowed the loris with one defense mechanism – a toxic bite. The poison is produced by a gland on the animal's arm: mixed with saliva, it becomes a powerful deterrent to would-be predators. Hardly in keeping with a cuddly pet. So what do the pet-traders do?

They either cut the tiny teeth with nail-clippers or, even more barbaric, remove them with pliers. Little wonder that between 30 and 90 per cent of lorises die in captivity – from infections, an inability to feed properly, from diabetes caused by an unsuitable diet or simply from stress. And they are often taken when young, snatched from their parents before they are capable of grooming and cleaning their own thick fur.

Worst of all, none of these lorises can be returned to the wild. A lingering death is the most they can hope for.



Tiger parts on sale in Myanmar. Photo: Dan Bennett



A SLOW DEATH: This loris was found on sale in Shan state, Myanmar. Photo: Dan Bennett



NOT SO CUTE: Patong touts are occasionally arrested and fined. Photo: Gazette file

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UN conference is informed of contamination

A CIVIC group has submitted to the United Nations a report showing that fish in a river in Prachin Buri, and hair samples taken from villagers living nearby, contain high levels of mercury believed to come from an industrial park in the province.

The group submitted the report to a UN conference on mercury contamination in Geneva last week. The conference is aimed at encouraging government agencies around the world to strengthen measures to control contamination caused by factories.

"All human-hair and fish samples collected from the site near the

industrial park in Prachin Buri were tainted with mercury at levels that exceeded safety standards," said Penchom Sae-Tang, director of Ecological Alert and Recovery Thailand (EARTH), who led the research team that compiled the report.

The report was submitted to the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC5) to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, held in Geneva from January 13-18.

EARTH researchers collected samples of common snakehead fish and hair samples from villagers living in tambon Tha Tum, near the

large industrial complex in Prachin Buri's Sri Maha Pho district.

The study found 0.53 milligram of mercury per kilogram in snakehead fish samples, which exceeds the standard set by the Public Health Ministry. Under this standard, the level of mercury in food should not exceed 0.02mg/kg.

The study found that the mercury level in the hair samples was 12mg/kg, which exceeds the EPA's contamination level of 1mg/kg for human hair. The Thai authorities have yet to establish a standard for mercury contamination in human hair. – *The Nation*

Samita Warrit

HEADS turn as Lieutenant Samita Warrit walks into a room. And rightly so. Any young, attractive woman in an officer's uniform is bound to make an impression.

Samita, 31, is a naval intelligence officer attached to the Third Naval Area Command of the Royal Thai Navy, based in Ao Ma-kham, Phuket.

"I am not a spy, of that I can assure you," says the poised Samita lightheartedly, before she goes on to explain, for the benefit of the interviewer, "My job is to gather and analyze information of military value. We need this – every country does – for our security."

Growing up in Phuket, Samita used to accompany her uncle (Phumisak Hongsyok, then mayor of Phuket) to functions in foreign warships that came to dock at the island. She was impressed with the experience, and working for the Royal Thai Navy had become something of a childhood dream.

As the Hongsyoks run many business ventures in town, Samita did toy with the idea of becoming a businesswoman and working for the family. She studied accountancy for a year but quickly realized it was not her true calling.

The path to fulfill her dream was then set. Having graduated with a degree in political science at Thammasat University, Samita went to England for postgraduate

THAI gallery

By Nanthapa Pengkasem

study in international relations at the University of Bristol.

"The University of Bristol was my father's *alma mater* and it came highly recommended by him," she smiles at the thought of her father, a retired professor who studied for his PhD there.

Studying political science and international relations, Samita says, has increased her understanding and awareness of the delicate balance that hangs between different cultures and groups. Driving her point, she says:

"For example, any shift in relations can happen like that [she snaps her fingers] at the hands of a whimsical leader. Political science is an inherent part of the social sciences. You deal with human nature, which is predisposed to being fickle. Social science, therefore, doesn't provide one single correct answer and cannot be based on theory alone. The whole idea fascinates me."

Samita returned to Phuket in 2006. Having declared to the family her intention to be a naval officer, she received their blessings and set off to work for the Royal

Thai Navy Intelligence Division in Bangkok for three years.

Elaborating on her decision to join the Navy, Samita says: "If you want to serve your country, the most direct way is to become a soldier. In a way I'm an idealist. I want to serve my country and King."

Joining the Navy was not exactly a piece of cake as Samita had to undergo grueling military training, which included harsh physical exertion, codes of conduct, naval traditions and familiarity with the fleet. And of course there was the use of firearms such as a handgun and an M16, among others.

"Using weapons is all about safety first. If your reflexes are good, the rest is easy – though assembling an M16 is awkward."

She transferred to Phuket two years ago. Though most of her work is analyzing intelligence, Samita's training in international relations means she's always at hand to receive and support officers from visiting foreign warships. From time to time, she also helps coordinate the Navy's Search and Rescue operations on the Andaman coast.

Her job keeps her on her toes. It's now 6pm and she has to get back to work. There's a meeting scheduled for 7pm and its nature cannot be revealed.

"Intelligence and classified stuff," she says smiling, ending the interview.



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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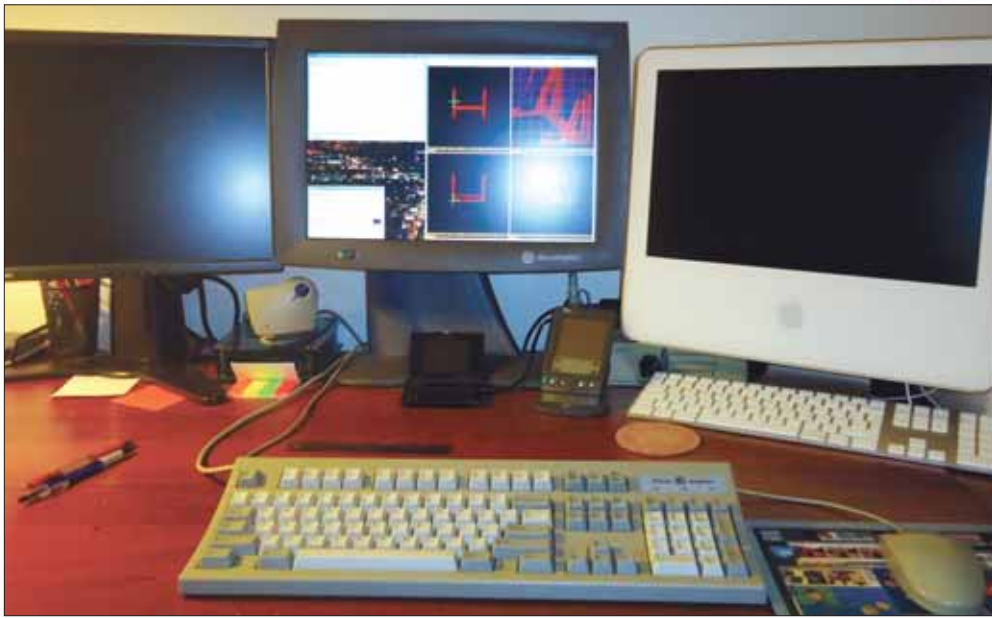




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*The Charm Residence Project: Pradit Co., Ltd. is the owner of the land, the land allocator and the marketer of the project. It's company registration number is 0855552010143, with its registered office at 5-11 Thaveewong Road, Tambon Patong, Amphoe Kathu, Phuket Province. The company's registered capital is THB 55,656,000.00 (based on the company's certification document dated 30 November 2012). The company is developing the project to be a residential condominium, comprising three five-story residential buildings, and one seven-story residential building, with a total of 240 residential condominium units and no commercial condominium unit. The company is also developing a residential land allocation project located at Thaveewong Road, Tambon Patong, Amphoe Kathu, Phuket Province. It is being developed on the land under the land title deed number 12177, land plot number 6, page search 940, Tambon Patong, Amphoe Kathu, Phuket Province. The area of the land subject to the development has an approximate area of 3 Rai, 1 Ngan and 15.8 square Wua. The company is the owner of the land. The land is encumbered to Kasikorn Bank PLC. The project is currently being developed. Once the buyer pays the full purchase price under the sale and purchase agreement, the company will be ready to transfer the ownership to buyers within 30 days. The development of the project commenced in April 2011, and the development of the common properties and public services in the project should be completed around December 2013. Once the development is completed, the company will register the condominium. The buyers of the condominium units will be required to pay the common area fees, taxes, and other fees as determined by the developer or the condominium joint person, subject to the laws on condominium and the terms and conditions set by the company.



WELL CONNECTED: Finding the right internet connection in Phuket depends on what devices you work with regularly and what your budget is. Photos: William Hook; Jiri Brazovsky

Making the right connections

IN LAST week's Live Wire, I stepped you through an exhaustive list of the internet packages available in Phuket.



Live Wire

By Woody Leonhard

I say "exhaustive" because, at this point, the only way to get a list of all of the internet packages is to physically schlep to all of the internet service providers' offices, pick up brochures, and grill the staff on what's really available. ISPs in Phuket generally don't put full lists of services and prices on their web sites.

I'm going through this exercise because I'm in the process of moving from Patong (where my wife and I have lived for the past 12 years) to Kathu. For me, the one key part of moving involves getting a decent, reliable internet connection. Two, actually, but I'll cover that next week.

This week, I want to go over the kinds of internet services available in Phuket, and help you narrow down the list. This discussion is spurred by a chance encounter with a fellow long-term Phuket resident, who was at the CAT office in Central Festival, absolutely bewildered by all the choices, trying to figure out what's best and how much it'll cost.

Believe me, even if you know the difference between HSPA+ and xDSL and 802.11a – very few consumers do – the choices are confusing. Very confusing. And if you don't understand the alphabet soup, you're likely to end up with stuff you don't want or need, pay too much, and get lousy service to boot.

Here's what you need to know about connecting to the internet in Phuket.

Let's start with the two basic wireless technologies: 3G and WiFi. As you probably know, 3G is based on mobile phone technology and towers; it's available just about anywhere you can get a phone signal. In Phuket, you buy 3G service from TrueMove H, DTAC, AIS, CAT and TOT.

WiFi, on the other hand, is a shorter distance technology that's baked into almost every modern laptop, notebook, netbook, Ultrabook or tablet.

Most public places in Phuket have WiFi networks operated by one of the major phone companies: if you have a mobile phone account with TrueMove, for example, you can usually get onto True's WiFi networks in most of the major public places –

malls, some retailers, a few restaurants and cafes. Fees vary.

You can also set up a WiFi network at home,

if you have an internet connection. All of the major wired internet service providers will sell or rent (or give away) a box that sits in your house and offers WiFi, of varying quality, throughout the house. If you pay for a wired internet service – one of the ADSL or Fiber Optic connections, for example – it's quick and easy to get a WiFi network set up in your house.

Here's how to put it all together.

Say you have a couple of "3G" mobile phones (iPhone, Galaxy, HTC, etc.), a tablet (iPad, Kindle, Nexus, Galaxy Note, Android) or two, a notebook computer (or Ultrabook, Mac Air, whatever) or three, and a desktop. The brand doesn't matter – Windows, Apple, Android and Linux all have basically the same problems and opportunities when it comes to connecting to the internet.

Almost everybody will want a "3G" package for their mobile phones (in Phuket, 3G is HSPA+), because it's very handy to have internet access while you're on the road – not just for maps and shopping/price comparisons, but also to look up movie schedules, upload shots to Facebook, check your mail, swear at the lottery results, and a gazillion other reasons.

Next week I'll talk about the various 3G vendors and help you choose the right package. For now, let's just assume that you have at least one 3G phone and it's running on a 3G connection – that's about 500 to 900 baht per month.

Many people buy tablets with 3G (or, soon, 4G) connections. You may want to consider whether you really need a separate 3G account for your iPad or Google Nexus, Samsung Galaxy Note 10 or other tablet. Why?

If you usually use the tablet at home, you can connect to the WiFi in your house (more about which in a minute). If you always carry your phone with you, and the phone has 3G, you can usually set up a connection using a technique called "tethering" that lets you turn your mobile phone into a WiFi hotspot. Many people don't realize that they can simply piggyback their WiFi iPad onto their iPhone and get

connected to the internet without paying for a "3G" iPad, and without paying for a 3G account/SIM card for the iPad.

Tethering iPhones and Android phones is usually easy. I'll cover it in a future Live Wire.

Wait. It gets even more complicated. If you have a laptop, Air, ultrabook, netbook – any computer with a built-in WiFi capability – you can almost always connect that laptop to the internet by using your mobile phone. You don't need to buy an "AirCard" or a USB dongle. As long as you're carrying it, all you need to do is figure out how to tether your phone, and the laptop thinks it's found a normal WiFi network.

In addition, if you have the right kind of phone account with TOT, for example, you can connect your laptop to any TOT WiFi network on the island. Granted, there aren't a lot of TOT WiFi networks, but many of the most popular locations on the island have TOT, True, AIS or DTAC WiFi signals.

For most people, a 3G account for their phones is a must. But 3G on a tablet is entirely optional. If you always carry your phone, 3G on a tablet is an added expense that probably isn't necessary.

Granted, your phone's battery will run down faster if it's tethered, and the data that you download to your iPad or MacBook or Windows ultrabook through the phone counts against your phone's monthly quota (more about which next week). There's a little bit of a hassle factor in connecting your tablet/netbook to your phone. But after you've done it a few times, you'll see it's like falling off a log.

Now permit me to throw you a curve. In all of those scenarios, you don't really need to tether your phone. You can buy a small box – about the size of a deck of cards – called a MiFi or MyFi unit that does the tethering for you. You stick a 3G SIM card in the MyFi box, and it turns itself into a WiFi hotspot. CAT has MyFi boxes in stock most of the time, but they're readily available at many of Phuket's savvy computer places. The best MyFi boxes can be charged in a few hours, and they'll hold a charge for the

better part of a day. That means you can stick it in your pocket, and carry your WiFi connection around with you, anywhere 3G is available – which is almost all of the island.

Here's another curve: you don't need to put a wired connection (ADSL, Fiber, DOCSIS, etc.) into your house in order to get your desktop computer onto the internet. Your fat old HP or Dell or Mac desktop will work just fine with a USB WiFi dongle – they're readily available for 1,000 baht or even less. So if you think

you're stuck with running wires to every corner of your house, you aren't.

To recap: just about any computer – tablet, laptop, desktop – can get to the internet if you have a sufficiently capable mobile phone to act as a tether, if you buy a MyFi box, or if you get a line installed to your house and have the installer put in a WiFi access point.

There are lots of

permutations and combinations, but you can save yourself a lot of money, every month, by experimenting with the equipment you have – or buying new equipment with a plan firmly in place.

Next week I'll step through the vagaries of ordering internet service, both wired and wireless, and give you some recommendations based on the latest results at our speed testing web site, phuketinternetspeed.com.

My conclusions may surprise you.

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

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



Your tablet doesn't have to have 3G if you tether it to a 3G phone. Photo: Intel Free Press

Airpark to reach new heights

By Andrew Scott

PILOT Ilco Nijstad flips a few switches, checks his dials, mutters something into his headphones and suddenly his single-engined plane splutters to life as the propeller whirls and the aircraft slowly moves away from the hanger towards the runway.

A bigger four-seater Cessna takes off first and then it's Ilco's turn, in his two-seater Pelican 912s. The plane hurtles along the grassy runway and with a slight move of the control stick, it lifts off the ground and our flight above Phuket begins.

Heading from the air park, on Phuket's northeast coast, we fly towards Cape Yamu and above Coconut Island.

The heat in the plane is stifling, but the view of the ever-changing landscape below and the experience of flying in a small airplane makes it bearable.

Dutchman Ilco has been flying for 15 years and says he enjoys the freedom it affords him. "I can fly to Krabi in 20 minutes. That's a 4-hour journey by road."

The intense heat from the mid-day sun causes a bit of turbulence as we fly over Coconut Island and the small plane bobbles about for a few minutes. After 10 minutes in the air the plane heads back to the airpark.

"I have to do ten more runs like that this afternoon," Ilco says almost begrudgingly. "It's tough to think of different routes to fly around this area. I can't fly above the jungle because of the rising heat"

The airpark is holding its biannual flying club meet, the first of 2013, and air traffic controllers who have just graduated from the Aerothai Academy in Bangkok are the guests of honor – all receiving a free ride.

Suchart 'Robert' Raksangob built the airpark on 124 rai of land intending to use it as a real estate development similar to Royal

Phuket Marina, Boat Lagoon and all the golf courses on the island.

American Pat James, who has over 40 years of experience in aviation, including flying as a pilot during the Vietnam War, says the airpark hopes to attract people who have a shared passion for aviation and to attract individuals who would like to start businesses, commercial enterprises, tour companies, along with people who want to maintain aviation products and anything that surrounds the peripherals of aviation.

Pat believes the airpark could store 75-100 planes (only 25-30 on any given day could use it) with the aim of being a second airport on the island to cater to smaller aircraft that are not allowed to use Phuket International Airport (HKT).

"Our long term vision is that our runway is doubled in length from its current 500 meters up to one kilometer and we plan to pave it, which could help us become what HKT airport needs – a reliever airport. HKT officials have canceled any general aviation aircraft from using the airport, including private jets from some of the largest corporations in the world. This air park would be the perfect for many of the aircraft that cannot use HKT."

The community feel in the clubhouse attracts lovers of aviation along with those who just want to have a drink and some food.

"It is a community-friendly business and the types of activities we hope to have would be friendly 100 per cent."



PILOTS: Suchart 'Robert' Raksangob and Pat James at the biannual flying club meet. Photos: Isaac Stone Simonelli



A hot air balloon ride was one of the events at the flying club meet.



A bird's eye of the airpark's runway and surrounding area on the northeast coast of Phuket. Photo: helicam.asia/abovephuket.com

In brief

Name: PHUKET AIRPARK – VTSW

Coordinates: 08°01.1' N x 098°24.2' E

Frequency: 122.3 (pattern)

Runway Heading: 31/13

Length: 500m (40m wide)

Surface: grass

Slope: 1/2 degree to sea

Pattern Altitude: 800'

Pattern Frequency: 122.3

Elevation: 20'

Contact Information:

Khun Suchart on: +66 (0)87-4178399 or

email:phuketairpark1@gmail.com



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Facebook and mental health

WE, AS people living in today's world loaded with information and technology, face a serious challenge from the use of information technology (IT) at work and in everyday life. It is normally assumed to have a beneficial role in people's lives.

A researcher has recently warned that instead, children's overuse of social media could affect their physical and mental health.

In a recent interview with Thai media, Amornwich Nakhonthap, adviser to the Ramajitti Institute and research chief at the Child Watch Project, cited a presentation by Larry D Rosen, PhD, professor of psychology at California State University.

At the annual convention of the American Psychological Association (APA), Rosen warned that frequent overuse of social media could

cause mental illnesses in young people – for example bipolar disorder, which was an alternate emotional state between mania and depression, a symptom related to delusions and hallucinations.

Rosen's study showed that frequent Facebook use among

teens correlates only with narcissism – but for young adults, it can indicate signs of many disorders, including narcissism, antisocial personality disorder, bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder.

Rosen told the convention that teens who are more frequent Facebook users often show more narcissistic tendencies, while young adults who have a strong Facebook presence show more signs of other psychological disorders, including antisocial behavior, mania and aggressive tendencies.

The professor also found that daily overuse of media and technology has a negative effect on the health of all children, preteens and teenagers, by causing them to be more prone to anxiety, depres-

sion and other psychological disorders, as well as making them more susceptible to future health problems.

Facebook can be distracting and can negatively impact learning. Studies found that middle school, high school and college students who checked Facebook at least once during a 15-minute study period achieved lower grades.

"Thai children aged eight to 18 spend about eight hours daily watching television, using cellphones or playing on the computer, although experts say children, especially those in primary school, should spend no more than two hours per day on any of these activities," Amornwich said, adding that Thailand had not paid enough attention to the problem.

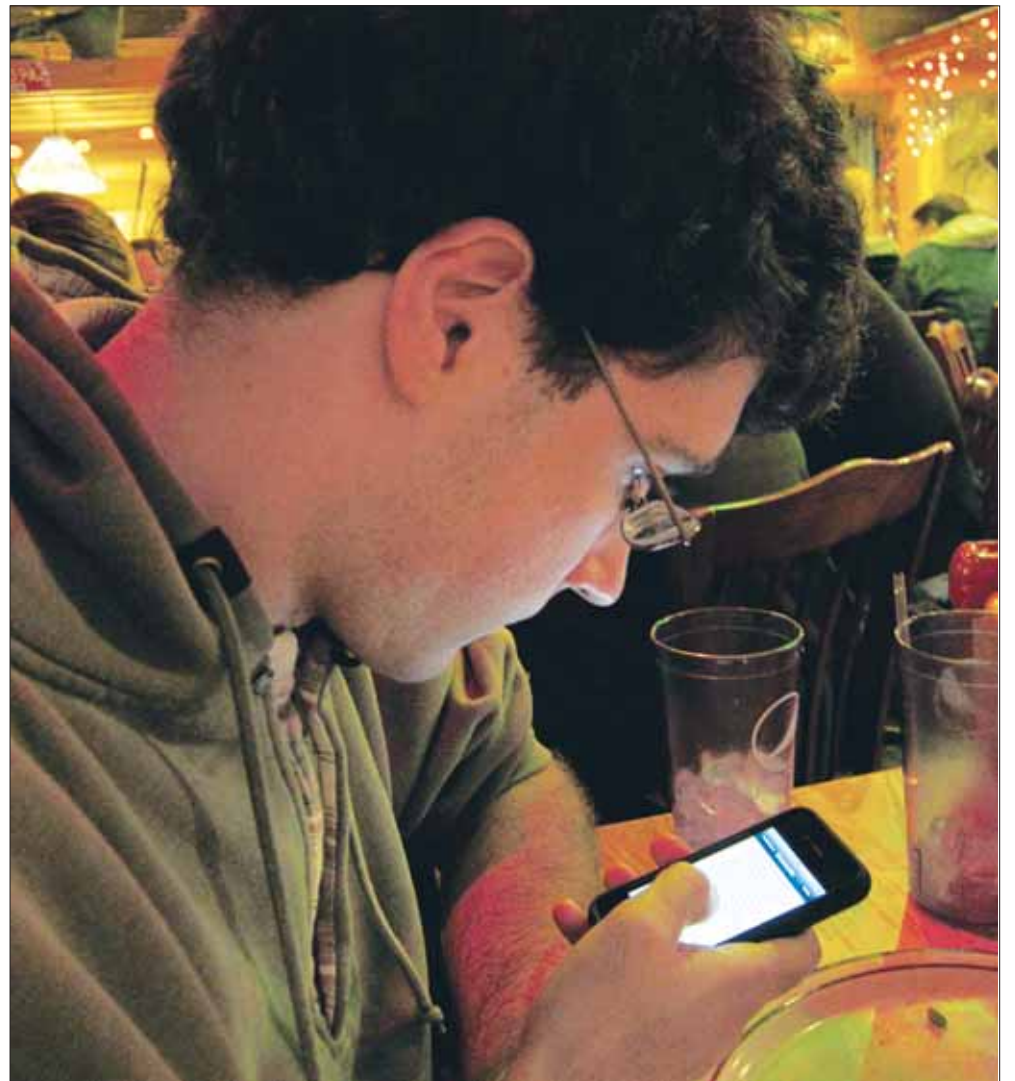
And, since a lack of life skills could lead to bigger problems when they grow up, he urged relevant agencies to take serious action on such vulnerable issues. "For years, we've heard that Thai children lack life skills, but agencies have not coped with this problem seriously," he said.

According to a survey by his Child Watch Project, the life skills they lack include being wise consumers who read food labels before buying or eating; knowing how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases; concern for their own safety by always wearing a helmet while riding a motorcycle; and being able to control their temper.

"This shows us that our families, communities and schools are failing to foster such important awareness in our children," said Amornwich.

The project's survey also found that students with low performance have been found to have low self-esteem, leading to risky behavior; and children who are not living with their parents are more prone to risky, undesirable behavior than those

'Thai children aged eight to 18 spend about eight hours daily watching television, using cellphones or playing on the computer, although experts say children, especially those in primary school, should spend no more than two hours per day on any of these activities.'



ALONE IN A CROWD: Over-use of technology can lead to antisocial behavior. Photo: Rich Moore

raised by their parents.

Thailand has around 7 million families where children are cared for by a single parent and grandparents, which leads to many childhood problems. Risky and unwanted behavior includes drinking, smoking, drug addiction, unwanted pregnancy, gambling, fighting and bullying.

"Teachers should not ignore students with low academic achievements – or what we call students at the back of the classroom – otherwise they will be like a

ticking time-bomb, becoming bad adults and causing bigger problems to society. It is necessary that schools and communities pay attention to them and inspire or motivate them to study to prevent them from becoming risk factors.

"Our project will push forward a campaign encouraging stakeholders to seriously address such problems. I will also propose the government to make the family its national agenda," added Amornwich.

– *The Nation*

AEC may increase illness

THAILAND will be at risk from breakouts of several infectious diseases, particularly diphtheria, when it enters the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), an expert in disease control warned recently.

When it launches in 2015, the AEC will allow free flow of labor across all ASEAN countries including Thailand.

Renowned virologist Dr Prasert Thongcharoen said yesterday that diphtheria had disappeared from Thailand for nearly 20 years, but breakouts had been detected recently in many Thai provinces because of high numbers of people traveling to and from neighboring countries.



More travel may increase infections. Photo: Michael Hashizume

According to the Disease Control Department, 62 people caught diphtheria last year, with six deaths as a result. Thais are vaccinated against the disease as babies, but the immunity only lasts 20 years.

"The immunity level against

diphtheria is weakest in people aged between 20 and 50 years old," according to Dr Opart Karnkawinpong, head of the department's Bureau of General Communicable Diseases.

Prasert said the Public Health Ministry was now considering whether to give the diphtheria vaccine to Thais aged 20 years and above.

"Vaccinations may be given to medical workers first," he added.

Other diseases to be on the lookout for during the advent of the AEC, says Dr Prasert, are whooping cough, mumps, polio, rubella, measles and Meningococcal disease. These illnesses are most likely to affect children and the elderly.

– *The Nation*

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Food, games, music and fun, and all for charity

By Baz Daniel

ON SATURDAY January 26 Royal Phuket Marina (RPM) will be thronged with an extravaganza of fabulous food, fun and games for the kids and then later in the evening, superb music from *The Legends of Siam*, *Moderndog* and the internationally famous bluesmen from Australia *Vdelli*.

As if all this wasn't enough to make this one of Phuket's most exciting, "must go" events ever, the whole day is being staged by Jagota Foods, RPM and sponsored by the TAT, Channel 3 and the *Phuket Gazette* to raise valuable funds for the Andaman region's less fortunate kids. What more could you want than to have the greatest day out and all for a good cause? It's the ultimate win-win-win situation.

Starting at 10:30am through until 5pm, the Family and Gourmet Food Festival will take over the gorgeous "Boardwalk" at RPM, which surrounds the yacht basin in which million dollar luxury craft are moored. Parents and kids will have a whale of a time with fun-packed kids' rides, games, activities and a huge selection of fabulous food stations all prepared by Phuket's best chefs. Children from orphanages will also be picked up and brought in to enjoy this wonderful day, while two well known Phuketians – the famous Birdman with the Flying Suit, Jari Kuosma, and world renowned stuntman Ian Jamieson will be on hand to greet visitors.

The admission fee is 100 baht for adults with which you receive 100 baht worth of redeemable vouchers and all the kids get in for free.

Starting at 6pm and running late into the evening a hot rocking

musical concert will kick off with terrific local and international bands. The night is headlined by Australian blues band *Vdelli* who have toured with *BB King*, *Buddy Guy* and *ZZ Top* and who are visiting Phuket for the first time. They will be supported in explosive style by alternative Thai band *Moderndog* plus local bands *Rockin' Angels* and Phuket's teenage sensations *The Legends of Siam*.

More gourmet food from the assembled chefs will accompany the music far into the evening and this section of the event will cost 900 baht each, including one free drink, or 3,000 baht for VIP tickets which includes all food and drink.

The cuisine will be a standout part of this fabulous day, with a wide selection of fresh oysters, cold cuts and cheese, BBQ, a selection of Thai dishes, hot dogs, sausages, Lady Pie pies, kebabs and wraps and desserts of bakery and crepes, ice cream and candy cup cakes. All this will be prepared and served by many of Phuket's top chefs who will be on hand throughout the event.

The kids are going to have a wild time with an exhilarating selection of rides and games including the dynamic Euro Bungee Jump, High Sheep Climbing, Hand Spin Boats, Giant Rolling Waterballs, Little Girls' Falls Foam plus wandering clowns, face painting, jugglers and heaps more to keep even the most energetic kids entertained all day.

The day will undoubtedly be one of the fabulous events in the Phuket calendar whatever your age and whether you come just during the day, or turn up for the bands in the evening...or stay all throughout the day and long into the evening. In

addition to great fun, food and entertainment all this is being done to raise funds for some of the Andaman's most important kids' charities, orphanages and institutions. The funds raised will be distributed in the most transparent and openly-publicized way by a committee comprised of the Governor and Vice Governor of Phuket Province, plus representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports Authority of Thailand, a top local legal firm and ten General Managers from Jagota, participating Hotels plus the Executive Chefs.

The organizers of this magnificent event are very concerned that everyone knows very clearly how much has been raised and how the funds are distributed in order to do give best possible help to the disadvantaged kids of our region. Hence, the *Phuket Gazette* will publicize the total funds raised and the charities to which they are being distributed on Friday February 16 and all distributions and accounting will be handled by a highly placed independent local accountancy firm.

This event for everyone is most definitely not to be missed!

Tickets can be reserved at 082-790 5141, 083-182 8460 (English speaking) and 076-273 555 (Thai Speaking) and will also be on sale at the gate.

This event is proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*, PGTV and the nationally televised Phuket Today show on UBC/True Visions. The half-hour show runs six times a day, seven days a week, on channel 99.

For more information please visit: thailandcharityevent.com



TOO MANY CHEFS: Food will be prepared by Phuket's most talented chefs.



STUNTMEN: High-flying daredevils will be at the extravaganza. From left: Ian Jamieson, Jari Kuosma and organizer George Des.



WORTHY CAUSE: Representatives of the assembled charities meet with organizers Anand Jagota (fourth from left) and George Des (far right). Photos: Marc Mulloy

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The houseguest from Hell

Living on this tropical paradise island, as many of us do, we often have to suffer the affliction known as “house guests”. Although many of these guests can be totally charming, here is a cautionary tale about one who is not.



FREELoader: Everyone has had that guest who just can't take the hint to go home. Photo: Travis Hornung

By Baz Daniel

MY so-called “friend” McHound is still here!

I've tried every way I know to get rid of the mooch, but he has a skin thicker than a rhino's and the ability to ignore hints to “shove off” that would put Russell Brand to shame.

So, we were sitting in a bar on Rawai Beach at about beer o'clock on a Friday evening watching the soft lightning dance within the rapidly-approaching storm clouds across Phang Nga Bay.

“What day is it?” says the ‘Hound, lifting his bleary head from the bar, a beer mat stuck to his cheek, while taking an enormous swig of his ‘voddie’.

“You know very well that it's Friday because you're supposed to be meeting that little honey.... ‘Honey’... and taking her out for a pizza. She's waiting for you right now and I suggest you get over there quick smart if you know what's good for you.”

“Look, I can't do this alone. I need moral support. Come with me and I'll spring for a tuk-tuk to take us all over to Patong and we'll have dinner at that Savoey Seafood place near Bangla Road.”

Strange, that the louder and more obnoxious my male friends are in the bar, the less able they seem to be to conduct normal human discourse away from it.

And of course, McHound possesses all sorts of advanced degrees in being loud and obnoxious in bars.

An hour later the three of us are encamped under the Savoey's awning near the Beach Road watching the monsoonal rains batter the sidewalk, and the passing parade of drunken football hooligans and tattooed

ladyboys trying to avoid it.

The lovely Honey, who as far as I am able to discern has forgotten to put on any outer garments and is clad only in her red and black underwear, is the first to crack.

“Honey's hungry ‘Hound... need some ‘nooden’,” she offers up as an opening gambit.

The ‘Hound scowls and calls over a damp waiter. “Bring us three bowls of noodles, a red snapper fried with garlic and pepper and a bottle of Johnnie Walker Black,” barks the Hound in a tone that suggests that he doesn't agree with ordering so

‘Strange, that the louder and more obnoxious my male friends are in the bar, the less able they seem to be to conduct normal human discourse away from it.’

much food to interfere with the ongoing consumption of booze.

The requested bottle of whisky is unquestionably excessive in light of the fact that we've been drinking all day... hell, we've been drinking all week in fact.

Me, because it's the only way I can endure the ‘Hound's continuing diatribes and McHound because... well... because drinking is what he does.

Honey sets about the snapper and her plate of noodles with abandon, while I nurse a cold beer and watch the Hound attack the JW with the ferocity of a man just released from a detox center.

At around midnight the JW is gone, ‘Hound is ranting about wasting money on snapper and other denizens of the deep and Honey is asleep, her head resting upon my knee.

“Right,” says McHound,

“That's enough sitting around... let's hit some bars.”

He staggers off up Bangla Road with Honey and me in his wake and leads us through a Fellini-esque sequence of increasingly degenerate watering holes along sois Eric, Gonzo, Crocodile and Tiger in which, strangely enough, he seems to be well-known and greeted with open arms and bottles by an endless array of terrifying demimondaines, at least half of whom are men.

At God knows what hour, he decides it's time to put in an appearance at an infamous Patong Disco... a venue that resembles a cross between *Dante's Inferno* and Hunter S Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

I have to rub my eyes to make sure I am not hallucinating as we stagger into the darkened maelstrom to be confronted by a scene that brings to mind that painting of *The Last Judgment* by Hieronymus Bosch.

In the center of the neon-lit dance floor, a clutch of *Jurassic Park* raptors are moving in slow unison, their frilled necks and scaly tails lashing in time to the endless pulse of Acid House.

There seems to be no rational explanation for this, until someone explains that it's the weekend of the Phuket Rugby Tens competition and the assembled Cretaceous-era reptiles are in fact the Bloemfontein ‘Old Buggers’ Rugby Team in party regalia.

McHound's reaction is alarming, although (having known the man for almost forty years) entirely predictable. He makes a bee-line for the group of dinosaurs and starts bopping with them in gay abandon.

As I lead the delectable Honey



This guy looks the way McHound acts. Photo: Lima Orosa

out of the inferno, my hand attempting to cover her eyes, my last glimpse is of McHound having a slow dance with a Tyrannosaurus Rex and attempting to thrust his tongue down his/her/its scaly throat.

I always said the man was a sexual dinosaur... and now I have the proof!

With grateful thanks to my friend Alan, who provided the original prototype for McHound.

Accidental bonding



AWESTRUCK: Some accidents were meant to be. Photo: G Dub

A WOMAN and man get into a car accident. Both of their cars are totally demolished, but amazingly neither one of them is hurt.

After they crawl out of the wreckage, the woman says, “Wow, look at our cars – there's nothing left! This must be a sign from Him that we should be friends and not try to pin the blame on each other.”

The man replies, “Oh yes, I agree with you completely.”

The woman points to a bottle on the ground and says, “Somehow this bottle of Scotch from my back seat didn't break. Surely God wants us to drink this Scotch and celebrate our good fortune.”

She hands the bottle to the man. The man nods his head in agreement, opens it, and chugs about a third of the bottle to calm his nerves. The woman takes the bottle, immediately puts the cap back on, and hands it back to the man.

The man asks, “Aren't you having any?”

The woman replies, “No. I think I'll just wait for the police.”



YOUR TURN: This may be Phuket's safest toilet, but how do you get out?



OUT OF THE OFFICE: I guess that's the problem with being too passive. Photos (above and left): Bob Mott



A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES: Gosh, that's almost 52 per cent. Photo: Marc Mulloy

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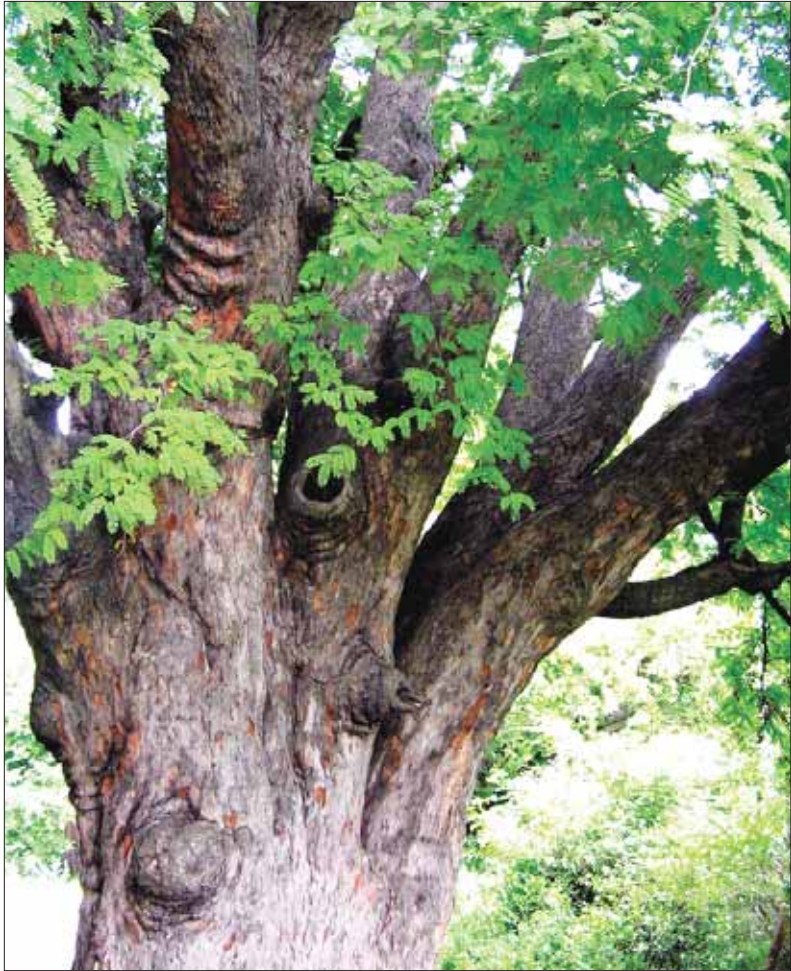
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From weird to wondrous



MAJESTIC: Tamarinds are disappearing in the Kingdom. Photo: additya sood



Impressive foxtail palms line roadsides in Phuket, but we need more mature trees. Photo: George Hatcher

NOBODY rattles on about the weather with as much relish as the British. But in 2012, only one word was needed – weird. The year, rated the second wettest since the advent of records, began as it started.

The Christmas skies in London, traditionally one of the drier spots in the UK, were permanently grey, and early risers were greeted every morning by incessant, drizzling rain. There were flood alerts everywhere. Not as cataclysmic as Thailand's recent tropical inundations, but more than enough to dampen the spirits. The nation's manicured lawns are, at this moment, more moss than grass, the trunks of trees are green with lichen. Even winter shrubs, attuned to low levels of light, are unable to flower in such gloom. There are real fears for the insect population and especially those key pollinators – butterflies and bees.

To add to these dire prognostications, Britain has the equivalent of Thailand's palm tree wipe-out. Not palms in this case but the ash, a tree much lauded by poets. When I was young, its jet black buds were brought home, an attractive harbinger of spring. A hospitable tree, other plants seem to enjoy growing around it.

Now the ash is headed for extinction. The culprit is ash-die-back, caused not by a beetle and its grubs' appetite for young palm shoots, but by a fungal infection, brought in from Poland. Years ago, our elms caught Dutch elm disease; now it is the turn of the ash. Chances are the tree will virtually vanish from Western Europe.

Here in Thailand, mature trees have been disappearing for generations, but the process,



Gardening
By Patrick Campbell

directly attributable to man's inhumanity towards Mother Nature, has now accelerated wildly, especially in Phuket. A few stately sator trees and Indian laurels still grace the roadsides.

There are isolated specimens of *dipterocarpus*, one of Thailand's tallest trees, though it is less in evidence here than in the North of the Kingdom. Tropical almond trees with their beautiful red foliage, still thrive near the island's beaches.

But tamarinds, despite their commercial value, have suffered from the march of concrete, and I have lost count of the number of trees, especially mangoes, that have been chopped back ruthlessly by the apparent need to keep sagging power lines visible. Road-widening schemes are another hazard: In Phang Nga a few years ago, hundreds of huge and venerable trees were sacrificed to progress.

Perhaps that is what stops authorities from planting grand trees. Certainly there have been municipal plantings, especially of palms to line roadsides or median strips. In some cases, especially where foxtail palms have been used, the results are impressive. But it does seem a pity that majestic trees are rarely introduced into urban landscapes. Take the *sentol* or *krathon*. A fast growing and shapely tree, grown here mainly for its delicious edible fruits, the *sandoricum* can reach 150 feet. Massive. The red variety is especially eye-catching, with attractive

red foliage. Imagine a line of these giants flanking a tropical highway.

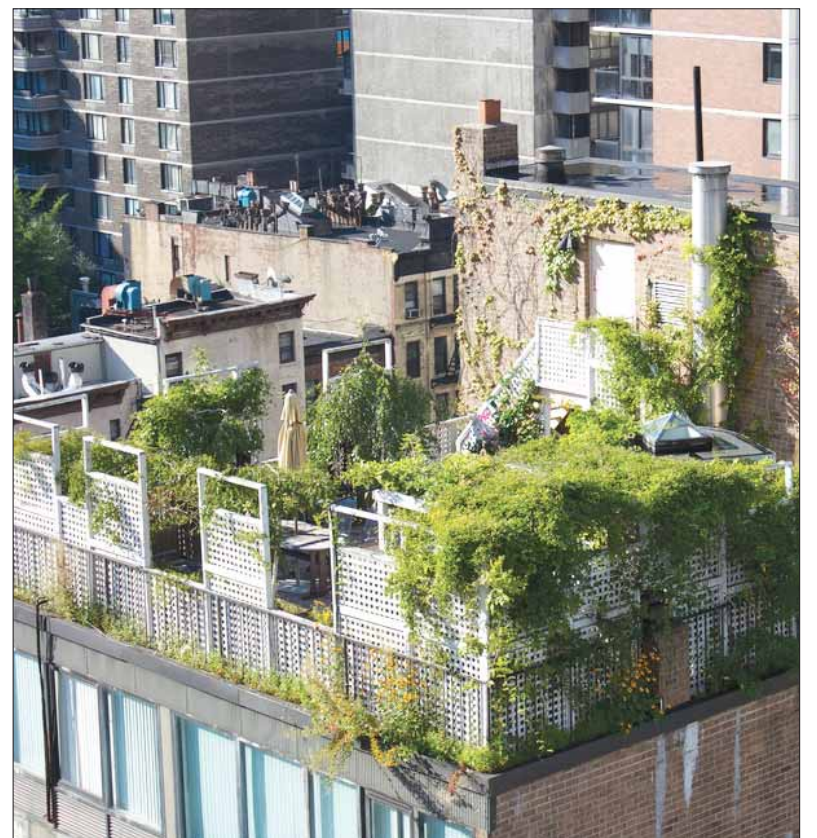
At the end of the day however, the responsibility for providing oases of greenery and havens for wildlife – especially birds, butterflies and bees – lies with the humble gardener.

Consider this example. A friend has a roof garden. Happily there are more and more of them as space at ground level is eaten up. But this is a wondrous example, not just because it is beautifully maintained, with an array of shrubs and climbers, but because it is home to maybe thirty pairs of nesting birds – sun birds, spider hunters, bulbuls.

No predators, no floods, no disease. And the human contribution is entirely benevolent.

A blueprint, perhaps a green-print for the future of Phuket?

If you have a question or a garden that you would like featured, you can email me anytime at: drpaccampbell@gmail.com



Roof gardens can provide much needed green space. Photo: Michael Henley

Tip of the Week

Garden Pests: Termites

TERMITES are small, social, ant-like insects, usually whitish in color, related to the cockroach. More of a problem in homes with timbers, where they can cause massive structural damage, termites are nonetheless a problem in the garden or wherever you have anything made of wood: for example, a trellis, a summer house (*sala*),



Termites. Photo: Malcolm Tattersall

stakes for supporting plants, even tool handles.

Why? Because they feed on cellulose, the main ingredient in dead organic material, especially wood. They live in huge, concealed

colonies and make their nests underground. Hence their depredations are rapid and often unseen until it is too late.

Pre-treat timber with oil-based preservatives, avoid putting wood directly into the soil, and use resistant timber such as *syncarpia* (turpentine tree) or teak *Eucalyptus* wood. Though oily, it won't last long; two of my trellises were destroyed in less than a year. As detritivores, termites are valuable recyclers. No consolation when you've suffered an infestation.



FORGOTTEN: Around 70,000 Latvian Jews died during the Holocaust. Photo: Rob Smith

Hell in Latvia

DR GWENDOLYN Chabrier's novel *Behind the Barbed Wire* (Orchid Press, Hong Kong, 2011, 203pp) is about the Holocaust.

It is not true to say that bookshelves groan under the weight of books written about the Holocaust – whole libraries do. Amazon lists more than 5,000 titles on the subject. In comparison, the many more millions of Russians and Chinese who were killed by Stalin and Mao have passed away in relative silence. One nice thing about *Behind the Barbed Wire* is that it doesn't lend much weight, only 203 pages, to the overload.

Books

By James Eckardt

The book purports to be a conversation between Mr George Schwabe, a Latvian Holocaust survivor, and his

shrink. The narrative is adorned with footnotes and a seven-page bibliography dedicated to the 70,000 Latvian Jews who lost their lives in the Holocaust. The book does not read as a work of fiction. There is almost no characterization, no dialogue, no drama, no humor – just page-long paragraphs of wordy exposition that lumber on endlessly. The prose is fussy, formal and dull.

One thing that Dr Chabrier is very good at is description. The food and furnishings

of the narrator's bar mitzvah in pre-war Riga are meticulously detailed. Riga was a cosmopolitan city of Latvians, Russian, Germans and Jews, each with their own social and sporting clubs. This introductory section plays to Dr Chabrier's strengths of academic research and legwork.

George Schwabe's parents are journalists. While he is raised in his mother's Jewish religion, his father is a German gentile, a family friend of Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda chief. The second section veers into Germany and is determined to demonstrate in plodding academic prose for 45 interminable pages that Adolf Hitler was a very bad man. I think we all know that. Again, the descriptions of Nazi rallies and the celebrations around the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin are lavish

The rest of the story follows a familiar downward arc as the Nazis take over Latvia. George Schwabe is thirteen at the time. Shops and synagogues are destroyed. Jews are forced to wear yellow stars and herded into ghettos. Then they are shipped off to concentration camps. Schwabe and his family are first housed in the Kaiserwald labor camp and then the Stutthof extermination camp. Schwabe has a mother, a brother, a sister and a girlfriend. Who will die and who will survive? The deaths are recorded mechanically, with a curious lack of emotion.

The father, meanwhile, has been repatriated to Germany. "Initially, he was arrested by the Germans, who suspected him of spying against them, but was finally released," Schwabe reports. "Then, after his second arrest, under torture, father

admitted to work as a foreign agent of the CIA. We learned that he had been hung in the beginning of 1945, with the benediction of his friend, Goebbels."

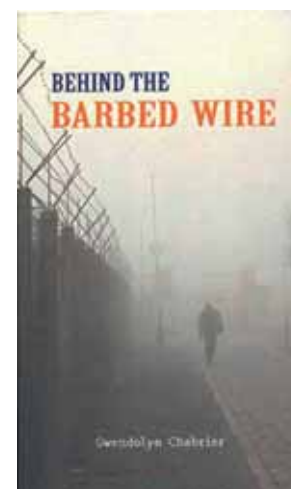
This is an impressive achievement since the CIA was not founded until 1947. The details of the camps are familiar: the three-tiered bunks, three to a bed, the sadistic kapos or barracks chiefs, often long-term hardened criminals, the meager meals of soup and bread, the endless roll calls and casual beatings – all presided over by the black-uniformed SS.

"I was amazed how many of the inmates, yes, the Jewish inmates, really aped the SS," Schwabe observes. "The Jewish men in my barracks did everything and anything they could to become a carbon copy of the SS. They not only adopted the same goals, values and attitudes, but even tried to look like them. . . I was sickened and alarmed to learn to what extent my fellow barracks mates had been brainwashed and manipulated by those odious Germans."

On the last day of the war, Schwabe is aboard a sinking prison barge as Jews are tossed into the ocean by German overseers and Polish and Ukrainian convicts. His liberation is confined to a single sentence: "Those happy few who were spared, myself among them, were saved by a nearby British ship and taken to Stettin."

Again, no drama, no emotion – a classic example of anemic prose: telling and not showing.

The 70,000 Latvian dead may deserve a worthy memorial, but it is not this book.



An evening with Mr Zubin Mehta

HE MADE many heads turn in 1981 when, as the conductor-for-life of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO), Zubin Mehta announced that he would play an excerpt of Richard Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde" as an encore piece at the end of a subscription concert. The music of Wagner, a German composer, had been banned in Israel since 1948. Despite passing away half a century before Adolf Hitler and the Nazis took control of Germany, Wagner has been perceived, even today, as greatly influencing that regime. It was well known that he was Hitler's favorite composer.

Before playing Wagner, Maestro Zubin Mehta – a much heralded and appreciated conductor in Israel, as he had braved bullets and bombing to perform in the country over the years – made a short speech to the audience. He spoke of Israel as a democracy, in which all music should be played. He added that if anyone was offended by the performance, they could leave the auditorium. Some of his orchestra members did, as did some older members of the audience. The performance was halted only when a Holocaust survivor jumped onto the stage and opened his shirt and showed a scar on his stomach inflicted in a Nazi concentration camp.

Outdoor symphony performances are not new in the West, but in Thailand? Paris is known as the "city of light", but Bangkok really should be called "the city of noise". And to play at the Pramane Ground or Sanam Luang with cacophonous traffic on all sides? Many people invited to the performance of the IPO under the baton of

Zubin Mehta did not know what to make of the idea or what to expect. It had never been done before, and it could be said that the performers were up against all odds, acoustically and otherwise.

But Mehta, who has played outdoor concerts elsewhere, did not disappoint. His choice of compositions – that by now he and his musicians have played a thousand times – was able to make the audience forget about the surrounding traffic noise and the hum of giant air-conditioner compressors that kept the temperature pleasantly cool in the small enclave where the music was performed.

This was not the first performance by Mehta and the IPO in Thailand. He and his musicians came to play in Bangkok for the first time in 2008, at the Thailand Cultural Centre. At that time he had to change the programme of music due to certain constraints of the hall, which was built as a gift from Japan to Thailand. It was meant primarily as a venue for events for school-children. The physical configuration of the hall and the seats were not meant for adult music, and did not lend themselves well to the intricate and delicate sounds of a classical music orchestra.

The audience was overjoyed to see Her Royal Highness in public for the first time since her release from hospital. Mehta passed his baton to her as he asked for her autograph on the playbill. It was a simple act of mutual appreciation and respect. And over the hazy Bangkok sky, Jupiter managed to shine brightly through.

– The Nation



Above: Pramane or Sanam Luang grounds, Below: Jewish conductor Zubin Mehta. Photos: Martha de Jong Lantink and Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires.





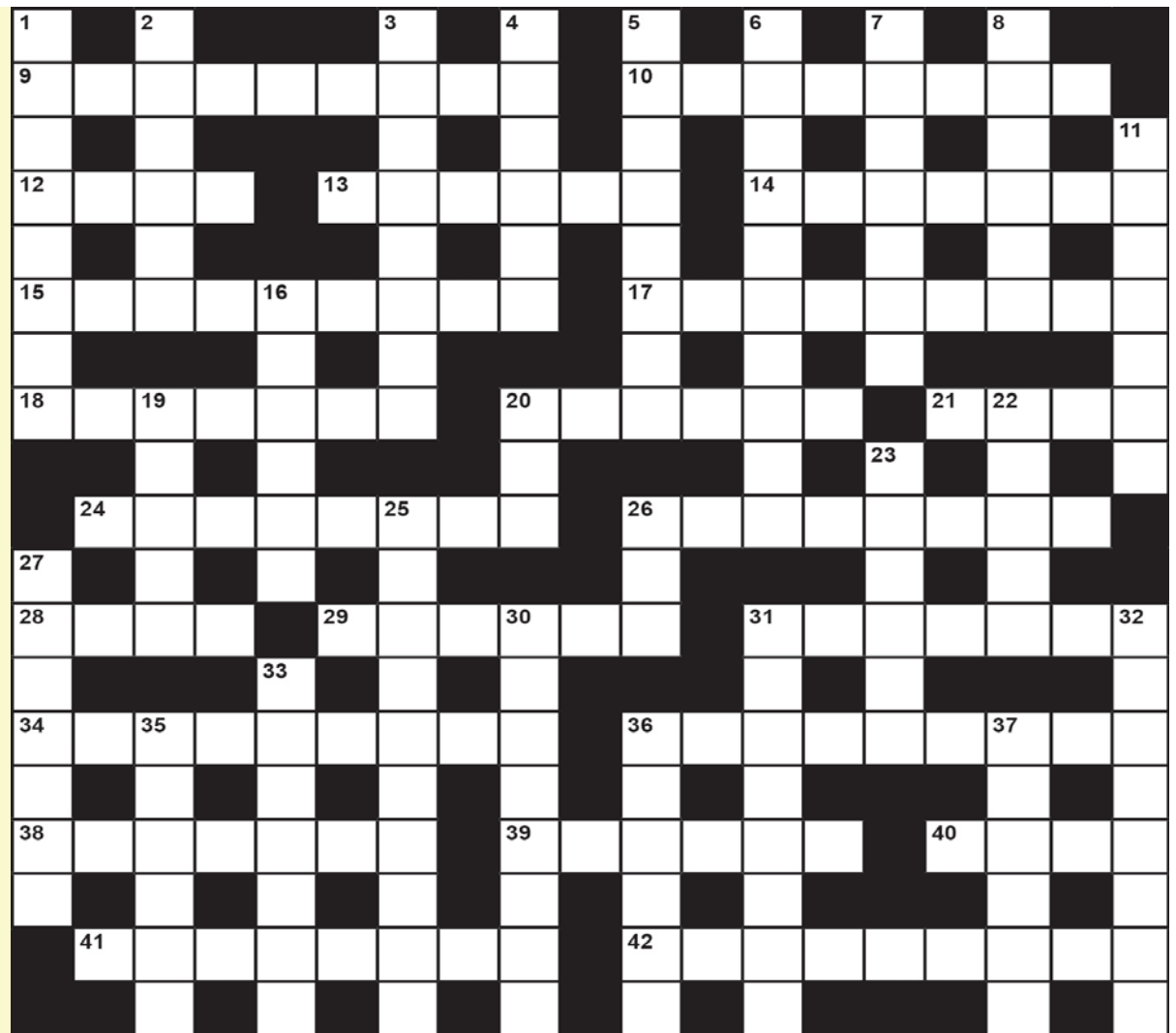
SUDOKU: Each row, column and 3x3 sub-grid must contain the number 1-9 once only. © Kevin Stone (brainbashers.com)

COFFEE break

Across:

9. Squeezing out is our next move (9)
10. Aquarium fish go new four sided shape (8)
12. Poet may be moved to drink to excess (4)
13. Spare strange East Indian (6)
14. North, a thousand twice changing red in Phuket hills (7)
15. I'm on liver transplant, thus orange colored (9)
17. Excellent dish, an American football game! (5,4)
18. Set of rules about soldier men (7)
20. Thick! Needle person, ancestral stock (6)

21. Turn to right, run at moderate pace (4)
24. Check remaining wet weather (8)
26. Clever traders take note of renewed tires (8)
28. Signs skin carefully (4)
29. Can be unusual, nothing in signal (6)
31. Take notice until the end our heat is under revision (4,3)
34. Topic, possible weight in graph depicted by drawings (9)
36. Next to the circuit, follow team (9)
38. Destroy paper at barrier (7)
39. May be afar at holy mountain (6)
40. Grand youth delighted (4)
41. Jewel, maybe get some around the North (8)
42. Ha! Keep yon higgledy-piggledy Muslim settlement in Phang Nga Bay (3,6)



Down:

1. Restless fever lot of remainder (4,4)
2. Good man, pour out in a daze (6)
3. Action it as laid out in official commendation (8)
4. Noun is mis-spelt in agreement (6)
5. Highlighted the desserts coming up (8)
6. Rise, indicate opinion (10)
7. Financial supporters in reverse? (7)
8. Old Boy turns, changes role in dance (6)

11. Nowadays turn overdue praise in excess (7)
16. Con fashionable friend (6)
19. Grand smell from inhabitant of Mediterranean country (5)
20. Forbid graduate Nationalist (3)
22. Or aid adaptation to wireless (5)
23. Packer arranged to parcel up again (6)
25. Bear out allocation in departure from the norm (10)
26. Break urn, leg it (3)
27. I lie, pop out to see the fuel supply line (3,4)
30. Noted similarity that made

- crop run riot (8)
31. Be boss of pain from migraine, for example (8)
32. Render it crazy, more fashionable (8)
33. Extent of care of Military Police donkey (7)
35. Possibly crave right sort of chair (6)
36. Trails the lines (6)
37. Carefully lays in inserted pieces (6)

Cryptic crossword compiled by Patong Bill. Answers on page 31.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19):

Your suspicions that a situation has been brewing at work are confirmed this week. The stars advise waiting for more facts to emerge before reacting. Where money is concerned, your intuition is strong during the second half of January and investments made before the end of the month should be successful. Those with a birthday during the coming days will see romance from a more practical perspective in the year ahead.

PISCES (Feb 20-March 20):

An edgy mood at the start of the week could mean that Pisceans say the wrong thing at a sensitive moment. The stars advise communicating with caution, particularly where working relationships are concerned. The astral atmosphere supports your aim of a more serious approach to personal finances; this is an auspicious time to seek professional advice. Romance with an air sign can be rocked when a secret spills out.

ARIES (March 21-April 20):

The social scene is exciting for Arians this week, with focus on old friends turning up unexpectedly. An air sign can spice up what you thought

would be a stale weekend, but those with a partner could be put in an awkward situation. Finances are auspicious midweek – if you are in the position of selling something, you should not accept the first offer. Dazzling days for romance are Wednesday and Thursday.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21):

Looking at the bigger picture can help those born under the sign of Taurus to see more clearly where they are heading. A fire sign friend has the right ideas where a work dilemma is concerned, but advice from a water sign could confuse your situation even more. Your romantic outlook is strong during the second half of January – this is an auspicious time to make the first move.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):

The balance of power at work is set to change this week and this should mean easier times for those born under the sign of Gemini. However, the stars advise that an earth sign could be hard to convince. Tuesday is the most favorable day for persuading people to come round to your way of thinking. In the realm of romance, a water sign's gesture could leave you lost for words this weekend.

YOUR horoscope By Isla Star

CANCER (June 22-July 23):

Cancerians are advised to take an honest look at personal relationships during the second half of January. There are hints that you have been taking too much for granted and it would be wise to develop more sensitivity. The spotlight shines on your domestic situation, with signs that relocation will become a valid option before too long. Events this weekend can show that a fire sign has what it takes to spark your interest.

LEO (July 24-Aug 22):

The stars suggest that this may be a week of confusion for those born under the sign of Leo. Where work is concerned, an earth sign you thought could be counted on is likely to show that their loyalty lies elsewhere. In the realm of romance, mixed signals could bring embarrassment this weekend. Leos are advised to keep their cool until the end of this month when the astral atmosphere calms down.

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept 23):

Virgoans will be tempted to retreat into the shadows during the coming days and the stars advise that this is a good thing. Your need for solitude might not be understood by everyone – a fire sign romantic partner won't appreciate being let down this weekend. Money matters are well starred during the second half of January and there are signs you will end the month better off than anticipated.

LIBRA (Sept 24-Oct 23):

The stars indicate that many Librans will be making serious choices before the end of January. Information received this week should make it easier to decide what to do, but there are signs that something you learn from a water sign can be misleading. A family member's idea of fun this weekend probably won't match yours, but showing willing is the easiest way out. Lucky days for love are Sunday and Monday.

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22):

Your energy stays strong during the second half of January, but the stars show that Scorpions should avoid being sidetracked. A work-related issue will demand concentration this week – leaving anything to

chance is not recommended. Where personal relationships are concerned, another water sign will appreciate knowing they can count on you this weekend. Focus on finances can reveal that you have been spending more than necessary on essential items.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21):

After a trying start to the New Year, the outlook becomes brighter for Sagittarians. Those who have been caught up in an emotionally charged situation relating to close friends or family will find the right moment to back away with dignity. Where work is concerned, your ability to stay on the ball while others are distracted ensures that problems are solved before they get out of hand.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20):

Your diplomatic skills can be called upon this week. The stars suggest that it might be necessary to pour oil on troubled waters at work and Capricorns will know exactly how and when to do this. Vague suggestions of promotion can become reality if you display enough motivation. Those who have been hoping for romance with a fire sign should see positive developments this weekend. Fortunate days for finances are Monday and Tuesday.

INTERNATIONAL
Sport

By Julian Linden

LANCE Armstrong could be jailed and cycling could be dropped from the Olympics as a result of the disgraced American athlete's reported admission that he had used performance-enhancing drugs during his racing career.

USA Today and other media said on Monday that Armstrong confessed to doping in an interview with Oprah Winfrey aired January 17. The talk show host confirmed the reports on Tuesday in an appearance on the CBS *This Morning* show.

"I'm sitting here now because it's already been confirmed," Winfrey, who interviewed the Texan for more than two hours on Monday in a hotel in Austin, Texas, told CBS.

It will not come as a great surprise that Armstrong admitted he cheated his way to the top. The mountain of evidence against him was already overwhelming and the pressure to confess was building.

From the moment it was announced last week that he had

Armstrong may face jail



PRIME TIME: Lance Armstrong is interviewed by Oprah. Photo: Reuters

agreed to the interview with Winfrey, it was widely expected that the 41-year-old cancer survivor would make some sort of confession but even Winfrey was surprised by what he said.

"He did not come clean in the manner that I expected," she said, without elaborating on the specifics.

"For myself, my team, all of us in the room, we were mesmerized and riveted by some of his answers.

"I didn't get all the questions asked, but I think the most impor-

tant questions and the answers that people around the world have been waiting to hear were answered."

If a damning confession emerges, Armstrong faces the prospect of jail time, according to at least one lawyer, and the return of millions of dollars in repayments for lying about his alleged use of performance enhancing drugs during his career.

Armstrong had already been banned for life and stripped of his race wins, including seven Tour de France victories, after a US

Anti-Doping Agency report last year described him as the ringmaster of the "most sophisticated, professionalized and successful doping program that sport has ever seen."

But he had always denied the accusations made against him, which involved anabolic steroids, human growth hormone, blood transfusions and other doping.

Andrew Stoltmann, a Chicago attorney, said an admission that he lied and cheated his way to the top could have serious legal implications for Armstrong.

"Having previously testified under oath and denying the doping allegations, Armstrong's admissions would make perjury or obstruction of justice charges a relatively easy charge for prosecutors," Stoltmann said.

"His past sponsors, including Nike, Anheuser-Busch and even smaller brands like FRS and Honey Stinger, could potentially sue him for brand damages associated with his admission."

CBS reported Armstrong was in talks about repaying part of the

taxpayer money he earned during his career and might be willing to testify against others involved in illegal doping.

That could open up the possibility of a reduction in his lifetime ban but only if he owned up to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

"Only when Mr Armstrong makes a full confession under oath – and tells the anti-doping authorities all he knows about doping activities – can any legal and proper process for him to seek any reopening or reconsideration of his lifetime ban commence," WADA Director General David Howman said in a statement.

Cycling, one of the showcase sports at the Olympics, also could possibly be kicked out of the Games if the sport's officials are implicated, International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Dick Pound told Reuters.

"The only way it is going to clean up is if all these people say 'hey, we're no longer in the Olympics and that's where we want to be, so let's earn our way back into it.'" – Reuters

European football roundup

ANOTHER goal from the prolific Lionel Messi helped Barcelona to a 3-1 victory over Malaga in La Liga as the leaders ended the first half of the season with a record points haul.

Robin van Persie was on target as Premier League table-toppers Manchester United got the better of Liverpool but Juventus's lead in Serie A was cut once again after they were held 1-1 at Parma.

Unbeaten leaders Barcelona ended the first half of the season with a record 55 of a possible 57 points when Messi scored one goal and had a hand in two more in a 3-1 win at Malaga on Sunday.

An 18th victory in 19 games for Tito Vilanova's side restored their 11-point lead over second-placed Atletico Madrid, who earlier secured a 10th win in 10 home matches this term with a 2-0 success against Real Zaragoza.

Barca's win also extended their advantage over arch rivals Real Madrid to 18 points after the stuttering champions, mired in third, were held to a 0-0 draw at bottom side Osasuna on Saturday.

Messi's goal was the World Player of the Year's 28th in the league this season and the ninth straight game he has scored, a personal best and one short of the La Liga record last achieved in the 1996-97 season by former Barca striker Ronaldo.

Manchester United maintained their seven-point lead at the top of the Premier League with a 2-1 home win over Liverpool where hotshot Van Persie opened the scoring before a nervous finish.

Nemanja Vidic put United 2-0

up without knowing much about it then substitute Daniel Sturridge gave Liverpool a lifeline and nearly snatched an undeserved draw.

Second-placed Manchester City won 2-0 at Arsenal, their first league win there since 1975, thanks to Laurent Koscielny's 10th-minute red card and goals from James Milner and Edin Dzeko.

City captain Vincent Kompany was also harshly dismissed in the second half.

Chelsea are third after a 4-0 triumph at Stoke City's usual fortress after two Jon Walters own goals while fourth-placed Tottenham Hotspur drew 0-0 at former boss Harry Redknapp's bottom side Queens Park Rangers.

Juventus, eight points clear at the top of Serie A before Christmas, had their lead cut to three by Lazio after they were held 1-1 at Parma.

Andrea Pirlo put Juventus ahead early in the second half with

a free kick, which was deflected in by Jonathan Biabiany but Nicola Sansone kept Parma's unbeaten home record intact with a 77th minute equalizer.

Lazio took advantage of the result by beating Atlanta 2-0 with a controversial second-half goal from Sergio Floccari, who appeared to control the ball with his hand, and an own goal by Davide Brivio.

Napoli stayed two points behind Lazio in third with a 3-0 win over Palermo while Cagliari's 2-1 win at home to Genoa lifted them out of the relegation zone.

Olympique Lyon reclaimed the Ligue 1 top spot with a 2-1 win at struggling Troyes thanks to center back Samuel Umtiti's first league goal.

Lyon are on 41 points from 20 games, two ahead of Paris St Germain who could only manage a 0-0 home draw against lowly Ajaccio after Thiago Motta was sent off on the stroke of half time.

Olympique Marseille are third on 38 after their four-game winning run in all competitions ended with a 3-1 defeat at 17th-placed Sochaux.

Girondins Bordeaux moved up to fourth with a 2-0 win at Stade Rennes, who fell to sixth. Both clubs are on 32 points, along with Nice who were inspired by striker Dario Cvitanich's brace in their 5-0 home hammering of Valenciennes.

Benfica and Porto scored twice each in a goal-filled opening 20 minutes of a match that ended 2-2 at the Luz stadium to keep the Portuguese Premier League title chase wide open.

The Lisbon club lead the table with 36 points from 14 matches, three ahead of Porto who have a game in hand.

Third-placed Braga missed the opportunity to close in on the pace-setters, losing 3-2 at Nacional, and are 10 points behind Benfica.

– Reuters



Tevez in action. Photo AFP

EPL TABLE			PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES	
TEAM	PTS		SAT, 19 JAN 2013	SAT, 19 JAN 2013
1 Man Utd	55		LIVERPOOL VS NORWICH	22:00
2 Man City	48			Man City vs Fulham
3 Chelsea	41			Newcastle vs Reading
4 Tottenham	40			Swansea vs Stoke
5 Everton	37		SUN, 20 JAN 2013	
6 Arsenal	34		CHELSEA VS ARSENAL	20:30
7 WBA	33			West Ham vs QPR
8 Liverpool	31			Wigan vs Sunderland
9 Swansea	30		SUN, 20 JAN 2013	
10 Stoke	29		TOTTENHAM VS MAN UTD	23:00
11 West Ham	26			
12 Norwich	26			
13 Fulham	25			
14 Sunderland	25			
15 Southampton	21			
16 Newcastle	21			
17 Wigan	19			
18 Aston Villa	19			
19 Reading	16			
20 QPR	14			

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NFL: expecting the unexpected

By Mark Reynolds

AFTER a regular season filled with the unforeseen, I decided to expect the unexpected while watching the Division Playoffs and that's exactly what I got. Predicting exactly how it would play out was not part of the equation, foreseeing that I would continue to bare witness to the amazement of the NFL's 2012 season was a guarantee.

Baltimore beating the #1 seed Denver Broncos, and Las Vegas's 9 point favorites, 38-35 on a 47 yard field goal in double over time (yeah, go ahead and try to tell me your uncle in Oxford Maryland predicted a Ravens win), was astonishing. Denver's All-Pro starting quarterback Peyton Manning (who will also most likely pick up NFL MVP and Come Back Player of the Year awards) was, well you guessed it, mediocre at best.

This was foreseen. Manning has never been "great" in playoff games, he's tied with Brett Favre on 11 losses (9-11). He fumbled, threw two interceptions (one a 39 yard pick by the Ravens' Corey Graham, the other in overtime setting up Baltimore's rookie kicker,

INTERNATIONAL Sport

Justin Tucker, to split the uprights from 47 yards in double overtime for the win) and simply had no answer against the oldest starting defense in the NFL.

Expected? Not really.

Not after what Manning did during the regular season and not with Joe Flacco and a Ravens offense who only five weeks ago fired their offensive coordinator. You want unpredictable? How about this: Denver stayed alive in this game and forced overtime when 165cm Trinden Holliday returned a kick off and a punt each for a touchdown in the same game.

Yup, never been done before, a new NFL record. How about Joe Flacco? Surely you pegged him for 331 yards and three touchdowns without an interception? No?

Of course, you must have had Tory Smith beating All World Cornerback Champ Bailey, twice, for touchdowns, right? It would

have been three if not for Flacco's errant pass. The Ravens deserved this win, whether you predicted it or not. And I know you didn't.

How about Atlanta allowing Rookie of the Year candidate, Russell Wilson, to lead his Seattle Seahawks to fight back from a 20-0 half time deficit and hold on to win, right? Wrong.

Atlanta did not fall apart in the closing moments and captured their first playoff win since 2004, with Matty "Ice" Ryan completing passes to the ageless Tony Gonzalez to set up a Matt Bryant field goal with 0:08 seconds left. Yes, shockingly, the Falcons held on to win this battle of the birds 30-28. But you predicted that, right?

Lets move on to San Francisco and discuss Alex Smith. You remember him? The same starting quarterback whose head coach, Jim Harbaugh, told him: "No son, you won't lose your job for suffering a concussion." Yes, you guessed it, he remained on the bench and the starter from week 9, rookie Colin Kaepernick, was under center. Here's the part you did not predict correctly:

Kaepernick would go on to run wild like Roger Craig, picking up 181 yards rushing (two touchdowns, including one for 56 yards untouched) and pass the ball as well as, yup... heard it here first, Steve Young.

The 49ers decimated the healthy again Green Bay packers 45-31, perfect spiral after perfect spiral beating the Packer defense. Michael Crabtree hauled in nine passes for 119 yards and two touchdowns. Kaepernick finished the day with 444 yards of total offense, four touchdowns and a tattoo that says "I'm the Man". The 49ers defense was stout. Aaron Rogers did double check after double check to find an open receiver and oh, that old running back that lost a step, Frank Gore, punished the Packer defenders and picked up 5.2 yards per carry, 119 total yards and a touchdown. I won a zillion dollars on a



GROUND BREAKING: Kaepernick (red) rushed 181 yards. Photo: AFP

four baht bet in Vegas picking Kaepernick to perform as well as he did. You didn't?

How about them Patriots? My friend thought I was crazy, but I had Rob Gronkowski to re-break his arm on the 7th play of the game. In fact, he called me nuts when I predicted Danny Woodhead would go down after the first play of the game. He laughed uncontrollably when I told him Shane Vereen, the third string running back on the depth chart would step in for both players and score three touchdowns. The South Boston native told me to "jump in my cah, go to the liquoh stohe and buy anotheh beeh".

Arguably, the worst defense remaining in the playoffs held All Pro Arian Foster and the NFL's # 8 rushing attack to a measly 91 yards. The Swiss cheese New England secondary held the Houston passing attack to two garbage time touchdown receptions. This game was over by the end of the 3rd quarter. JJ Watt, candidate for the NFL's Defensive Player of the Year had half a sack. He hit Tom Brady once. He deflected one pass.

Now New England can stay right in Foxboro after this 41-28 victory, and wait for Sunday's rematch of last years AFC Championship with Ray Lewis and the Ravens. Yeah, you definitely predicted that.

So, lets look ahead. We've got the 49ers visiting Atlanta. Baltimore heading to New England. I'll go on the record as saying this: Bill Belichick will lineup next to Vince Wilfork in the 4-3 and sack Tyrod Taylor twice. Ray Lewis will return a punt for a touch down and shoot himself in the foot while wrestling away a musket from the Minute Men Militia. In the NFC I like Atlanta honoring Joe Montana at half time and the Falcons actually going to the Superbowl. Yes, the unexpected is all we as fans can expect from this years NFL season. This fan would not want it any other way.

Any of this expected? Russell Wilson, Coach of the Year Candidate Pete Carroll (my vote), the Seattle Seahawks defense, a team that beat the best all year (Packers, 49ers, Patriots, Bears) however, somehow lost a game they were favored to win, in Atlanta.



Trinden Holliday returns a kickoff 104 yards for a touchdown. Photo: AFP

New Ryder Cup captain named

NEW Ryder Cup captain Paul McGinley plans to commemorate the late Seve Ballesteros and pay a special tribute to the 'Home of Golf' when he leads holders Europe against the United States at Gleneagles next year.

"I can assure all of the people in Scotland that I'll have very much a Scottish theme to what I'm going to do at Gleneagles," the 46-year-old Irishman told reporters ahead of this week's Abu Dhabi Championship.

"I would also like to have a Seve theme to what we are going to do. One of the things I want to do as captain is continue the Seve legacy.

"I don't know how I'm going to go about that yet. I'll leave that for discussions later but I will be continuing that legacy," said McGinley after being appointed the first Irish skipper in Ryder Cup history on Tuesday.

Ballesteros, who died in 2011 at the age of 54 after a long battle with brain cancer, was one of

Europe's most inspirational performers in the biennial team competition.

The Spaniard compiled an impressive 20-12-5 record as a player and formed an outstanding partnership with fellow countryman Jose Maria Olazabal.

Ballesteros also played an indirect role in McGinley's appointment as Olazabal's successor as Ryder Cup skipper as it was in his Seve Trophy event that the Irishman first cut his captaincy teeth.



Paul McGinley with the Ryder Cup.

McGinley led Britain and Ireland to seven Trophy victories over Continental Europe in 2009 and 2011 and he said team golf had always brought out something extra in him.

"I certainly went to another level when I played in team golf," said the Irishman — Reuters

Nadal returns

FRENCH tennis Open champion Rafael Nadal will make his long-awaited comeback from injury at next month's Brazil Open, the ATP confirmed last Tuesday.

The former world number one has been sidelined with a knee injury since last year's Wimbledon tournament.

It will be Nadal's first appearance on the tour in South America since 2005.

The tournament is staged indoors in Sao Paulo.

Buakaw draws thousands to Patong fight



READY TO RUMBLE: Buakaw and Kathu Mayor Chaianan Sutthikul. Photos: Chaichana Keowkaow

By Chaichana Keowkaow

BUAKAW 'Dam Dot Com' performed an artistic demonstration of ancient Muay Thai against two opponents at once, at the Patong Boxing Stadium on Monday January, 14, in front of thousands of cheering fans.

Buakaw's demonstration began at 10:45pm, after a number of opening fights featuring local fighters.

Formerly known as 'Buakaw Por Pramuk', before a longstanding dispute with his former gym forced his early retirement last year, Buakaw has reclaimed his given

name Sombat Banchamek, but he also goes by his ring name Dam Dot Com.

He is a two-times Thai Fight champion, two-times K1 World Max Champion and holds a professional record of 208 Wins (54 (T)KOs), 21 Losses and 12 Draws.

Buakaw took on opponents Khun Kaokanlek and Khun Paochee Khaovijit in a mock fight after performing the ancient *Wai Kru Ram Muay* dance, a *Nok Muay*'s (fighter's) salute to their teachers and ancestors.

Tourists were impressed by the performance and the demonstration drew thunderous applause and adulation for the



Buakaw vs Khaokanlek at the Patong Boxing Stadium.

veteran fighter.

After the show, Buakaw greeted fans, signed autographs and took photos with those in attendance.

Buakaw, or Dam Dot Com said, "I am impressed to see so many Muay Thai fans, be they Thai or foreigners. Thank you all for the warm welcome you've given me."

"Phuket is a world class tourist attraction and has a lot of Muay Thai training camps, which support the sport and help to make it better known around the world.

"I personally love Phuket because there are a lot of beautiful beaches and tourists with happy expressions. I look forward to

coming back again," he added.

Kathu Municipality Mayor Chaianan Sutthikul, who is also the owner of the Patong Boxing Stadium, said, "The stadium has been open for 10 years now and this fight can be considered historic because Buakaw was here to perform Muay Thai for the fans."

"The fight was stunning even though it was just a show, not a real fight with violence. The stadium was crowded with Thais and foreigners alike," said Mr Chaianan.

"We collected two million baht in ticket sales so Buakaw will definitely have another fight in Phuket in the future," he added.

Thanyapura welcomes the world's elite swimmers

THANYAPURA Sports and Leisure Club (TSLC) has sprinted into 2013 at world record pace, with three visits lined up in January and February, by a galaxy of swimming stars from the Dutch, Hungarian and British national swim teams.

Olympic hero of the Sydney and Athens games, and one of the greatest swimmers of all time, Pieter van den Hoogenband, headed up an elite group from the Dutch national team and participated in a high performance training camp at TSLC on January 13.

Also in attendance were fellow gold medalists Ranomi Kromowidjojo and Femke Heemskerk, with Dutch national team coach Jacco Verhaeren and Royal Dutch Swimming Federation Elite Swimming Team Manager Aadvan Groningen.

Van den Hoogenband's credentials as one of the greats of the pool are unquestioned: the 2000 World Swimmer of the Year began his gold rush at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, where he faced world record holder Ian Thorpe in the 200 meter freestyle and beat the home crowd favorite in world record time, while in the 100m freestyle he set a world record in the semifinals before beating the great Alexander Popov to win a gold medal.

At the 2004 Olympics in Athens, he again won gold in the 100m freestyle and finished ahead of Michael Phelps in both the 200m freestyle for the silver and also in the 4x100m freestyle relay, he became the only swimmer ever to beat Phelps twice in Olympic competition.

Two Italian swimmers, Filippo Magnini and Federica Pellegrini, along with coach Matteo Quintana, have also announced they will drop in to "jam" with their fellow Olym-



MAKING A SPLASH: Elite European swim teams converge on Thanyapura for a series of high performance training camps.

pic gold medallists. Both swimmers have a cavalcade of world records and gold medals to their names, and the Italian pair caused a stir when they posed naked for the cover of *Vanity Fair* in 2012.

Ranomi Kromowidjojo, whose exotic name attests to her Dutch-Javanese-Surinamese heritage is a triple Olympic champion with gold medals in the 4X100m freestyle relay at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and in the 50m freestyle and 100m freestyle at the 2012 Olympics in London.

Femke Heemskerk is another freestyle specialist who also excels in backstroke and medley, and is part of the world record-holding Dutch 4x100m freestyle relay team, as well as part of the Dutch team that holds the 4x200m freestyle relay world record.

Federica Pellegrini, meanwhile, is a former world record holder in the 200m and 400m freestyle, 200m freestyle gold medallist at the 2008 Olympics, as well as

the first female to break the four minute barrier for the 400m freestyle and Italy's first female swimming gold medallist.

Filippo Magnani is a four times World Champion, twice in the 100m freestyle, and in the 100m and 200m freestyle relays. He is also an Olympic bronze medallist from the 2004 games.

Following the Dutch team's high performance sessions, next out of the blocks is the Hungarian national team training camp starting January 22, followed by the Liaoning Swim Team from China starting January 27 for an intensive coaching camp with Australian legend Stephan Widmer.

Then the British national team arrive at Thanyapura for a high performance training camp starting from February 4.

Craig Johns, Thanyapura's director of Sports Academies, said the stellar line up was a brilliant start to 2013 and continuing evidence of Thanyapura assuming its place

as one of the world's leading venues for elite athletes seeking an extra edge in performance.

"It's such a thrill to see great champions like Pieter van den Hoogenband lined up to visit us here and train, as well as more recent stars like the Dutch women," Mr Johns said. "So far, every elite athlete who has trained here at TSLC has come away wowed with the facilities and the entire project. The next two months will cement our place as a serious force in sport and we expect the stars of world swimming will continue to shine at Thanyapura."

Mr Van Groningen also said he was "very happy" Van den Hoogenband had agreed to travel to Phuket with the Dutch elite swim team. "This will be a great promotion all over the world in swimming," he said. "At this stage, it looks like a major Dutch newspaper and a Dutch television channel are coming to cover the trip."

Laguna continue to dominate cricket

IN A hotly contested fifth match of the Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels League on January 13, reigning league champions Laguna Cricket Club faced early league contenders Patong Cricket Club (PCC).

Dominance seesawed throughout both innings and it was only fitting for the winner to be decided in the last over of the second inning. Despite a determined effort by PCC, Laguna showed their class and walked away with the spoils.

The ever important toss was won by Laguna, who elected to bat first. Evergreen opener Bill Stahmer and batting partner Darren Shaw anticipated a full blown attack from

the PCC bowlers.

While Stahmer prevailed, Shaw lost his wicket in the 8th over. Youth and experience partnered up next when Valentine Guiraud came out to bat. Putting the PCC under the cosh, Stahmer mentored young Guiraud (32) as they put on a 92 run partnership. The 3rd wicket partnership of 53 runs between Sameer Khan (36) and Stahmer signaled the inevitability of a big score being accumulated by Laguna.

Manish Sadarangani, 1 for 25, together with Raju Seemant, 2 for 36, were the stand out bowlers for PCC. After delivering a master class in batting, and tormenting the PCC bowlers with the slash

of his willow to leather, Bill Stahmer lost his wicket on 83. A cameo appearance by Stuart Reading, 27 runs of 11 balls, further aided Laguna to set an intimidating total of 244 for Patong to chase.

Patong has never skulked away from a challenge and Laguna were under no doubts that the match was yet to be secured. The PCC batting line up has proven to be rather resilient this season and they would have been quietly confident.

Buoyed by the performance of their batsmen, the Laguna bowlers came out guns blazing, the final bowling figures of Sami Ulla, 2 for 41 and Valentine Guiraud, 1 for 34 proving the point. By the 14th over, with the score on 62, four PCC batsmen had hit the showers.

A 5th wicket stand of 87 runs between Preston Smith (48) and Paddy Morton (68), showing that he was just as comfortable with the bat as he is with ball in hand, brought some stability to the PCC run chase. With the score on 149 after 26 overs, Smith lost his wicket.

Captain Van Blerk came to the crease looking to guide his team to victory. With some swash buckling hits by the captain it was game on. The match was far from decided going into the final over. Odds were in favor of Laguna as



SPECTATE: Action in front of the pavilion from the PCC vs Laguna game.

Patong needed 30 runs for a win. When the captain lost his wicket for 40, the fat lady started to warm up her voice and by the end of the over, it was Laguna who undoubtedly enjoyed her sweet song.

The match once again has proven the competitive nature of this season's league and although Laguna had won this game, they are under no doubts that there will be a multitude of challengers vying for the Phuket cricket throne.

On January 20, TNT will play against the Village at the Alan Cooke ground at 9am. Both teams are well renowned for their good spirit on and off the pitch and spectators are in for a treat. – *Phuket Gazette*

JLL HOTELS LEAGUE 2012-2013				
Team	Played	Won	Lost	Points
Patong	2	2	0	13
Laguna	2	1	0	9
ICC	2	1	1	6
Village	2	0	1	4
TNT	1	0	1	2



HOW'S THAT? Patong Cricket Club bowling to Laguna at the ACG.

Phuket Super Six		Super Six Tables Division 1							
Team	Pld	W	T	L	G	D	Pts		
Morning Star	1	1	0	0	6	3	3		
Pita Bar Phuketeters	1	1	0	0	4	2	3		
Holiday Inn FC	1	0	1	0	3	0	1		
Nanai Boys	1	0	1	0	3	0	1		
Phuket Condos & Homes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Joy Dive FC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Banana FC A	1	0	0	1	2	-2	0		
Shakers FC	1	0	0	1	3	-3	0		

Super Six Tables Division 2		Super Six Tables Division 3							
Team	Pld	W	T	L	G	D	Pts		
Irish Times	1	1	0	0	6	2	3		
Seduction	1	1	0	0	5	1	3		
Atmanjai	1	1	0	0	4	1	3		
Mr. Moo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Bat Fire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Pluto Italian Ice Cream	1	0	0	1	4	-1	0		
Phuket Serenity Villas	1	0	0	1	3	-1	0		
Blue D Zine PSU FC	1	0	0	1	4	-2	0		

Super Six Results DIVISION 1		Joy Dive FC vs Phuket Condos & Homes		PP	
		Shakers FC vs Morning Star		3 - 6	
		Pita Bar Phuketeters vs Banana FC A		4 - 2	
		Nanai Boys vs Holiday Inn FC		3 - 3	

Super Six Results DIVISION 2		Pluto Italian Ice Cream vs Seduction		4 - 5	
		Bat Fire vs Mr. Moo		PP	
		Phuket Serenity Villas vs Atmanjai		3 - 4	
		Blue D Zine PSU FC vs Irish Times		4 - 6	

Super Six Results DIVISION 3		Fruit Ninjas vs Gang Junior		6 - 3	
		FC Raya Group Asia vs Two Chefs		10 - 1	
		Banana FC B vs Rose United		1 - 8	
		Crown Plaza Panwa FC vs Russia United		1 - 3	



Russia United (green top) against Crown Plaza Panwa.

SEASON four of the Super Six League started last week at Soccer Island at HeadStart School, and the popularity of the league means there will be three divisions this season. Division 1 continues to exude a high level of performance; the first week's results from Division 2 indicate that it could be a very tight league and Division 3 is waiting for a team to lay down an early marker of intent.

The first match in Division 1 kicked off with old rivals Shakers FC and Morning Star vying for early bragging rights. Morning Star started the better and took the lead through two early goals from Andrew Knightly and Simon Smith respectively. Morning Star went into half time leading 3-1. In the second half, Shakers picked up the pace and started to make a match of it, trailing by a goal at 3-4 before a goal a piece from James Saunders and Karl Ward

secured a 3-6 opening day victory for Morning Star.

The two newly promoted teams, Pita Bar Phuketeters and Banana FC (formerly Puensil FC), played against each other in their first game in the top division. Pita Bar, repeating what they did last season, put in a strong performance and won 4-2.

Aniel Debie's Nanai Boys were up against Holiday Inn, with both teams showing the high level of competition Division 1 is known for. Nanai Boys took the lead, but Holiday Inn pushed back for an equalizer and a share of points. The game finished 3-3.

In Division 2, Atmanjai, who didn't do as well as expected last season, caused the shock of the day beating PSV 4-3.

Rose United look like they may be early favorites in division 03, with an impressive 8-1 win against Banana FC B. – *Phuket Gazette*

Chonburi outclass Phuket United

By Andrew Scott
and Wisuwat Romin

TOP of the table Chonburi GH Bank ABAC were too strong for a spirited Phuket United, with the Andaman Pearl losing 3-2 last Saturday night

The high tempo match was played in front of 1,200 vocal supporters at the Saphan Hin Indoor Sports Complex in Phuket Town.

Leading up to the match, Phuket United won their last three games, against Lampang United, Royal Navy and CAT FC.

The players and supporters were hoping the teams' improved run of form would continue against Chonburi, who were led by the four Thai international players – Suphawut Thueanklang, Kritsada Wongkaew, Apiwat Chaemcharoen and Kiatyot Chalarnkhet – who had headlined the national squad's campaign in the Futsal World Cup last November.

The first half was played at a blistering pace, and it was Chonburi who broke the deadlock when Sarawut Jaipet turned a Phuket defender on the edge of the box and placed the ball into the bottom left corner of the goal.

The score remained 1-0 going into half time.

Phuket United's goalkeeper, Parinya Pundee, pulled off a number of excellent saves to keep the score line down, but he had no



RESPECT: Players and coaches thank the fans after the game.



Manager Patt Srivijit gives his half time talk.

chance to deny Chonburi's second of the game, just after half time.

The ball was laid off for Thai international sensation, Kritsada Wongkaew, who, just outside the area, smashed it into the top corner past a helpless Pundee.

Jardel managed to bring Phuket United back into the game pouncing on a goalkeeping error to bring the score to 2-1 in the 22nd minute.

Phuket United started to

threaten more as they searched for an equalizer. Jackson Santos placed his header wide of an open goal after Jardel had out jumped the Chonburi keeper to knock the ball towards his fellow Brazilian.

Jardel eventually equalized for Phuket in the 32nd minute but a lack of concentration allowed Kritsada Wongkaew to score the winning goal in the 35th minute for Chonburi.

Phuket United missed a number of chances in the final minutes and



Jardel celebrates scoring his second of the game. Photos: Wisuwat Romin



Suphawut Thueanklang injured.



Akkadet Chuayklay clears the ball.

Chonburi's goalkeeper made a brilliant double save to deny the Andaman Pearl.

After the match Patt Srivijit told the *Phuket Gazette*: "Our team played well against Chonburi but were unlucky with the score. I hope fans come to cheer at our next home match."

The defeat made Phuket drop two places to seventh. Phuket FC played Sripatum Sunrise Sisaket on January 16 at Saphan Hin.

Rank	Team	GP	W	D	L	Pts.
1	Chonburi	14	12	1	1	37
2	Bangkok	14	10	4	0	34
3	Thai Port	14	10	2	2	32
4	Royal Navy	14	8	1	5	25
5	Sisaket	14	8	1	5	25
6	Lampang UTD	14	8	1	5	25
7	Phuket UTD	14	8	0	6	24
8	Surut Thani	14	7	2	5	23
9	Nonthaburi	14	6	2	6	20
10	CAT FC	14	5	1	8	16
11	Semut Prakam	14	4	1	9	13
12	Prachin FC	14	3	3	8	12
13	Leo Bang Sue	14	2	4	8	10
14	Samut Songkhram	14	1	5	7	9
15	Samut Sakhon	14	2	3	9	9
16	Highways Dep	14	2	0	12	6

Signing spree continues



Pamuke Achariyachay (c) unveils Geoffrey Doumeng (l) and Chana Sonwiset

PHUKET FC has signed 33-year old French midfielder, Geoffrey Doumeng, from Chonburi FC. The midfielder has played in France's Ligue 1 for Montpellier HSC, AS Nancy, Valenciennes FC and France's Ligue 2 for RC Lens and Tours FC. Doumeng also represented France at U16 and U17 level.

The Islanders also signed Thai player Chana Sonwiset from E-San United and six youth players, who Mr Pamuke Achariyachay, Phuket FC president, hopes will help the development of the club's youth policy.

"We aim to present the chance for local players to join our team, and youth players will get a salary

every month," he said.

Phuket FC have reached their quota of foreign players but Mr Pamuke says he still hopes to bring in 2-3 more Thai players.

Kampon Phatomakkakul, a former pupil of Sartree Phuket School, has been called up to represent Thailand's football team in the 27th SEA Games to be held in Burma. Kampol played for Phuket FC last season and was part of SCG Muang Thong United's youth team.

Phuket FC has signed a third goalkeeper, Adisak Dongsri, to challenge their two current keepers: Kampon Phatomakkakul and Ninurrudin Nide-ha.



Kampon Phatomakkakul.

The team has been training at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club (TPSLC) every Tuesday and Thursday since January 10. This is only a temporary solution, as plans are afoot for a training pitch to be built next to the TOT service center on Chaofa West Road in Chalong.

– Wisuwat Romin



Youth team players: l-r: Thawatchai Kong-in, Aran Kaewnet, Ekkawit Permjan, Siripong Pukkawet, Prasittichai Patkor and Ekkalark Senewong.



Chana Sonwiset. Photos: Phuket FC



Adisak Dongsri.



Phuket FC training at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club.

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