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Airport taxi abduction

Driver faces sexual assault charges after allegedly abducting female teenager

INSIDE TODAY

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IN THE DARK

Despite Southern Thailand descending into darkness, Phuket keeps tourism alight

By **Gazette Reporters**

AS ALL of Southern Thailand plunged into darkness on Tuesday evening in what has been called the country's worst blackout on record, Phuket gleamed like a pearl in preparedness.

Police were immediately ordered to take to the streets to control traffic and boost public safety, hospital generators kicked in and hotels went onto backup power supplies.

Tanit Sorat, vice chairman of the Federation of Thai Industries, said the blackout caused economic damage estimated at more than 10 billion baht.

Pongsak Assakul, senior chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, said the outages affected investor confidence because tourism is the key industry in the South.

However, Phuket Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) office Director Chanchai Duangjit said that as the blackout was only short-lived – less than an hour in some places on the island, no more than four hours in others – the power outage had little effect on Phuket's critical tourism industry.

"Although we did receive lots of complaints from hotels, no flights were cancelled since the airport has backup electricity supply for up to eight hours and hotel bookings remained unchanged," he said.

Phuket Tourism Association (PTA) Vice President Bhuritt Maswongsa agreed. "As far as I know, hotel operators were not greatly affected because most hotels on the island have their own generators to cope with such blackouts."

"We asked tourists how the blackout af-

ected them. They said it was not a big deal. It was just a blackout," he added.

However, although power in Patong was down for about 40 minutes, Patong Entertainment Business Association President Weerawit Kurasombat said that such a short outage would have cost entertainment venue owners at least a million baht, likely more.

"It's too early to tell, but any blackout quite significantly affects the entertainment industry in and around Patong. The total cost has yet to be calculated, but I believe it will easily reach at least a million baht.

"Although Patong had no electricity for just over half an hour, it happened around 7pm, which is when tourists would normally go out shopping or have...

Continued on Page 4

Australian gunmen walk



TWO Australian tattoo parlor owners who shot two German tourists in a botched assassination walk free after less than two months in prison.

Full story on Page 3

Tourist Buddy app now supported by Android platform

THE application can be downloaded in English or Thai, and allows users to quickly access local maps, find out where tourist attractions. The app also has instant access to the Tourist Police hotline in case of an emergency and a GPS locator.

Full story on Page 41

Monsoon returns trash, takes sand

HOTEL owners worry about coastal erosion as waves pound the Andaman coast, take the beachfront and leaving rubbish in their wake.

Full story on Page 8

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This Week



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The Bangkok Hospital Phuket set to invest in new facility. **Page 12**



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An interview with Vista del Mar's Chairman of the Board. **Page 13**



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How to avoid investing pitfalls with the help of Don Freeman. **Page 17**



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The exotic taste and smell of Asia's 'King of Fruits'. **Page 36**



Charity

Crew of *USS Nimitz* and *Princeton* to give back to the community **Page 42**



Sport

The Digby looks ahead to this weekend's Monaco GP. **Page 48**

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No-smoking campaign gets breath of fresh air

By Orawin Narabal

FLAGRANT disregard for non-smoking laws in Phuket has prompted officers from the Bureau of Tobacco Control in Bangkok to plaster Phuket International Airport, Phuket Bus Terminal 2 and a variety of private businesses across the island with no-smoking stickers.

"Most public areas are smoke-free areas by law, yet we still have found many tourists and local business operators disobeying the signs, despite having seen them," Tobacco Control Bureau Legal officer Kanet Wongsasaid.

In addition to putting up no-smoking stickers, officers spoke with guards and staff to enlist their help in monitoring and preventing people from smoking in prohibited areas.

"It is possible that some people might not understand the law clearly or they do not take the law seriously. Either way, we are here to make sure there is change," Mr Kanet explained.

After an initial warning from a guard or staffer, a person can be reported to police and fined up to 2,000 baht.

"We have assigned the Phuket Provincial Health Office and the regional Public Health Office for



Kanet Wongsas puts a 'no-smoking' sticker on a bus at Bus Terminal 2.

all of Southern Thailand to survey public areas weekly and report to us," Mr Kanet said.

Mr Kanet and his team will return to Phuket in two weeks to follow what progress, if any, is being made.

The public smoking checkup falls in line with the Public Health Ministry expanding its definition of areas where smoking is banned on June 28, 2010.

The June 28 proclamation declared all public areas and buildings smoke-free zones, specifically

inside and outside buildings at all educational and healthcare institutions, as well as at veterinary clinics, religious centers, indoor and outdoor sports centers, banks and other financial institutions.

Then toward the end of the year, Phuket marked off its first "no-smoking" peninsula, the well-known Laem Phromthep.

"The prohibition zone starts at the bottom of the stairs and extends along the hill," Rawai Municipality officer Sanya Kontien explained in December 2010.

Brit drowns at Patong Beach

POLICE have identified the foreign man whose body washed ashore on Patong Beach early Tuesday morning as 37-year-old Jeremy Thomas O'Neill.

Because Mr O'Neill's body was found without any identifying documents, police circulated a photo of him to hotels in Patong hoping he would be recognized, Patong Police Deputy Superintendent Akanit Danpitaksat explained.

His identity was established when police scouring the beach came across his passport.

Patong Hospital confirmed that Mr O'Neill died by drowning, and also said that he had been treated at the hospital as an outpatient. They would not reveal what treatment he sought.



The body of Mr O'Neill was found on Patong Beach six to eight hours after his death. Photo: Gazette File

"We are still investigating to find out more information about his period of stay in Thailand and when he was last seen alive," Lt Col Akanit said.

— Kritisada Mueanhawong

Police search for extortion gang leader

PHUKET Police are on the lookout for three men who evaded arrest on the night of May 19 when officers raided an address given as that of the ringleader of a teenage motorbike extortion gang.

The raid originated from a complaint filed by Sasiprapha Sukhang, 18, from Buri Ram, who told police she lent her motorbike – which she had rented – to a friend about a week earlier.

However, her motorbike was not returned, and two days later she received a call from a young man who identified himself as "Berm Patong".

"He said that if I wanted the bike back, I had to meet him at the Family Mart [convenience store] in Kalim," Ms Sasiprapha said.



The Family Mart (right) on the beach road in Kalim. Photo: Google Maps

The 18-year-old contacted the owner of the motorbike and explained the situation, and he accompanied her to the rendezvous. They recovered the bike, which had been damaged.

After the owner reclaimed his motorbike, Ms Sasiprapha received another phone call from Berm while

she was returning home.

This time he threatened her.

"He asked why I brought the police with me to get the bike. He didn't know the man with me owned the motorbike. He threatened to attack me," Ms Sasiprapha explained.

"After I got home, I saw three men stalking me. I was really scared," she added.

On May 19, Ms Sasiprapha received a third call from Berm. This time he told her to meet him at Galaxy Pub and give him 1,500 baht.

Instead, Ms Sasiprapha reported the call to the police, who went to the well-known nightclub with her and arrested two 16-year-olds who were there to meet her.

— Thawit Bilabddular



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Teen tourist alleges sexual assault

Chinese woman lured into illegal taxi driver's car at Phuket International Airport

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

AN ILLEGAL taxi driver operating at Phuket International Airport has been charged with sexually assaulting a 19-year-old Chinese tourist while holding her captive in his car for hours.

Paitoon Kruain, 32, presented himself to Phuket City Police Station for questioning last Saturday. The interrogation by police lasted six hours.

Mr Paitoon, from Sakoo, a small village on Phuket's west coast near the Phuket Airport, stands accused by the Chinese tourist of holding her captive in his car for nearly five hours and repeatedly touching her while he drove around.

In her statement to the Phuket Court on Monday, the tourist, a female student from Shanghai studying in Singapore, recounted her ordeal.

"I got in a taxi at the airport and asked the driver to take me to a hotel in Patong. The driver convinced me to sit in the front seat. He said the back seat had a problem, so I sat in the front," she said.

The tourist identified the taxi as a bronze Honda Civic with Phuket



Paitoon stands accused of abducting and sexually assaulting a tourist minutes after she landed on Phuket.

license plates KorPor 5602.

"We left the airport at around 4:30pm. The driver kept touching my legs. I tried to stop him, but he kept doing it. So I took off my shoe and told him to stop or I would hit him," she said.

"He didn't stop. He kept touch-

ing me and asking if he could kiss me while he drove around. I had no idea where we were. The doors were locked. All the time he kept asking to kiss me and sometimes he hugged me."

Mr Paitoon drove around until his car ran out of gas at about 9pm.

When he unlocked the doors to get out of the car, the 19-year-old got out and yelled for help. Passersby heard her pleas and took her to a police station, she said.

Mr Paitoon has denied the accusations, Phuket City Police chief Sermphan Sirikong told

the Gazette.

Phuket City Police Inspector Watcharapong Plaiphon confirmed, "He said she was the one who tried to assault him by hitting him with her shoe...We did not believe his statement, so we tested him for drugs."

"He tested positive. He confessed that he took one and a half pills of *ya bah* [methamphetamine] on the day," he said.

Mr Paitoon subsequently has also been charged with being under the influence of drugs.

"He is now being detained at Phuket Prison. We expect to pass the case to the public prosecutor soon," Col Sermphan explained.

"We are still questioning witnesses, such as the people who assisted the tourist. We will also question the taxi driver's friends and family and collect evidence, such as CCTV images of the areas where the driver drove past," he added.

Additional reporting by Orawin Narabal

See page 5 for special report: 'Fears of island abductions'



Kusoldharm Foundation rescue workers tend to the injured man.

Bangkok tourist hit-and-stay on busy island road

A TOURIST arriving on Phuket from Bangkok in his pickup truck struck an unidentified man who allegedly had stepped out into one of Phuket's busiest roads last Sunday.

At the scene, Thepkrasattri Road, police found a man in his 30s injured on the road, and the driver of the pickup truck that hit the man, said case investigator Chatree Chuwichian.

"We transferred the injured man to hospital. We didn't find any form of ID on him," Lt Chatree said.

The 19-year-old driver of the pickup, Areef Janchu, had remained at the scene.

He told police, "I drove down from Bangkok with a friend for a holiday. We were heading to Patong to find a room. I saw the man standing on the divider in the middle of the road. Suddenly, he stepped into the road in front of me. He was too close. It was impossible for me to avoid hitting him."

— Thawit Bilabdullar

Gunmen walk free after short prison stint

TWO Australian tattoo parlor owners are now out of prison after mistakenly shooting two German tourists while trying to gun down alleged Danish mafioso Dennis Mark Knudsen on January 22.

"The suspects, afraid they would be attacked by a party that they were in conflict with, decided to strike first," said Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Arun Kleawwatee, shortly after the men were arrested.

John Cohen, 32, and Adam Shea,

26, were released on April 11 after having served about 40 days of prison time.

"They were sentenced to a six-month, 15-day suspended prison term and fined 7,500 baht," Phuket Provincial Prison's General Administration chief Suparat Tantipongwiwat confirmed.

However, the two men chose to serve time at a rate of 200 baht a day instead of paying the fine,

Mr Suparat explained. Mr Cohen and Mr Shea's target, Mr Knudsen, 24, is currently

in prison after being caught for breaking his 2012 bail conditions.

Mr Knudsen was wanted for breaking bail after he failed to appear at Phuket Provincial Court on January 22 to resolve a dispute with Mr Cohen and Mr Shea about a "big bike" worth about 300,000 baht, which eventually led the men to attempt to make a "hit".

Mr Knudsen was arrested by Pattaya Police on September 20, 2012 on outstanding embezzlement charges. The warrant was issued by the Phuket Provincial Court on August 27, 2012.

Mr Knudsen was taken back into the court's custody on February 3, 2013.

— Orawin Narabal



Mr Cohen (left) and Mr Shea

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Phang Nga yearly drill readies for bird flu



Phang Nga had to cull birds in 2004.
Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

OFFICIALS in Phang Nga staged a rapid-response exercise on May 16 to prepare for an outbreak of bird flu.

The exercise simulated an outbreak in a small village.

"Officials rushed to the area to inspect the situation, spray chemicals to kill the virus and rescue villagers by taking them to hospital," Mr Manit explained.

Phang Nga has held such drills since 2007, following the outbreak of the H5N1 virus in 2003.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

Nationwide drug-free school program launched in Phuket

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

A NATIONWIDE campaign by the Ministry of Education to make schools drug-free was launched at three Phuket schools on May 17.

Deputy Education Minister Sermsak Pongpanit, joined by Phuket Governor Maitri Inthasut and 850 other participants, including education officials from throughout the Andaman provinces, announced the "White School" anti-drug campaign at Satree Phuket School in Phuket Town.

Mr Sermsak explained that tackling drugs in schools had been given high priority by the ministry and that succeeding in the effort required the help of every level of official in the school system.

"The ministry's project is to create 'White Educational Institutions' free of drugs. In order to achieve that, we need co-operation from everyone, especially from homeroom teachers who are closest to the students," said Mr Sermsak.



Deputy Education Minister Sermsak Pongpanit (right) talks to students.

Schools have seven days from the start of each semester to report to the ministry the number of students found or believed to be involved with drugs, including users, dealers and potential users

or dealers.

"All such information will be kept confidential so students and schools will not be adversely affected," Mr Sermsak said.

Provincial health offices

across the country will launch their rehabilitation programs on June 15.

Schools will be responsible for setting up their own measures to help students who are potential drug users or dealers, Mr Sermsak added.

The ministry will be sending inspectors to evaluate each school. If the school is deemed "white", it will receive a white pennant as a declaration that it is 100 per cent drug-free.

"The main objective of this project is to rehabilitate students involved in drugs. Our victory lies in bringing those students back to their families and their academic careers," Mr Sermsak explained.

"The Thai government has set a target of providing rehabilitation to 300,000 drug users this year. So far about 100,000 have received treatment. The Ministry of Education wants to play a part in helping the government achieving that goal," Mr Sermsak said.

Phuket tourism industry takes blackout in stride

From Page 1

...dinner," he explained.

As people came to realize the blackout cut across all of Southern Thailand, rumors spread through social media networks such as Facebook, attributing the cause of the power outage to terrorist attacks in the Deep South.

Some even speculated the blackout was the result of an earthquake, possibly preceding an impending tsunami.

In response, the Governor of the Electricity Generating authority of Thailand (Egat), Sutat Patmasiriwat quickly issued a statement explaining that the cause of the power outage was — put simply — down to a lightning strike.

"Southern Thailand does not have the capability to produce enough power to supply its own region, so we have four cables at Bang Saphan [in Prachuap Khiri Khan province] feeding power to the South," he said.

Two of the cables are 500kV and the remaining two are 230kV, he said.

"One of the 500kV cables was shut down for regular maintenance when the other 500kV was struck by lightning.

"The two 230kV cables cannot supply enough electricity for all of Southern Thailand," he said.

Power consumption in the South has grown, Mr Sutat said, explaining that the coal-fired power plant planned for Krabi would help alleviate the pressure on the Prachuap Khiri Khan facility to provide electricity for the



An officer directs traffic during the blackout. Photo: Isaac Stone Simonelli

South, including Phuket.

However, the plans for the Krabi power station have come under severe criticism by key environmental groups including Greenpeace, which has slowed progress in that facility being built.

Mr Sutat said that to assist the Krabi plant in supplying the South, Egat was currently building a second power plant in Chana, in Songkhla province.

The Chana power station has come with its own problems: heavy criticism from human rights groups because local villagers have been threatened and intimidated by security forces assisting in the Trans Thai-Malaysia (TTM) gas pipeline and gas separation plant project and allegations that the land it is built on was illegally acquired during Thaksin Shinawatra's term as prime minister.

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Fears of island abductions

When does a taxi side-trip become an abduction? Officials offer conflicting views

SPECIAL REPORT

By Orawin Narabal

IT IS a typical story in Phuket: a taxi or van picks up passengers and on the way to their destination gets them to stop at a jewelry store, souvenir shop or travel agency.

A familiar experience, considered no more than an irritation or a waste of time by some.

But is it more serious than this?

For an elderly American woman who arrived alone on Phuket last January, it was a terrifying event, one that caused her to run out of the cab screaming for help once she reached her hotel. Prompted by the frightening experience, the woman called the US Embassy in Bangkok and report that she had been kidnapped, according to an email sent to the *Gazette*.

"She was emotional and almost frantic," the email said.

The woman said that she was picked up at the airport and had asked to be taken to the five-star resort where she had a reservation.

Instead, she was delivered to a travel agency, where she said she was "interrogated" about her per-

sonal information, such as where she came from and how long she planned to stay in Phuket. The agent told her that if she booked any trips, they had to be made through his agency.

The woman felt frightened and intimidated and pleaded to be taken to her hotel. She finally arrived there over an hour later.

When does a side-trip become an abduction? Two top legal officers in Phuket disagree on the answer.

Phuket Public Prosecutor Tawan Sukyiran did not mince his words.

"This is a case of abduction according to the law," he said.

"The taxi driver, by not taking her directly to her hotel, which she had asked to go to, deprived her of her freedom," he said.

"The length of time doesn't matter. Even if it was just for five minutes, it can still be considered an abduction.

"She did not get out of the car willingly at the tour agency. She was forced to get out and she did so because she thought her safety was in jeopardy," Mr Tawan said.

Yotsavee Pornperaparn, Phuket Tourist Police Superintendent, did not share Mr Tawan's view.



The deprivation of liberty, no matter how short, is considered an abduction, says the Public Prosecutor's Office. Photo: Alexander Romero

"It is not an abduction," he said, "because in the end, she was taken to her hotel."

"He did not kidnap her or take her to an unknown place," he said.

Col Yotsavee argued that it is impossible to know what the driver and the woman discussed.

"She might have said something and the cab driver might

have misunderstood her and thought she wanted to visit a tour agency," he said.

"I don't think this is a case of abduction, but it might be a case of cheating," he continued.

"It would be cheating if he took her to the agency in order to try to get a commission from the company," he explained.

Col Yotsavee said that this case was the first of its kind.

"A case like this has never been reported before... though taxi drivers do cheat and take advantage of tourists all the time. We have tried to fix the problem, but it's out of our control," he said.

He called on the public to report similar cases to 076-223 891 or 1155, with information about the license plate number, the color of the car and the driver's name.

Some taxi companies have policies in place to protect tourists. Prasat Pechwang, a taxi driver with Phuket Taxi Meter Service Co Ltd at the airport said.

"If the taxi company finds out that a driver tried to cheat, drive out of the way or force a tourist to stop at another place on the way to the hotel, he will be barred from driving his car for the company for three days," Mr Prasat said.

"The first time the driver will be warned. If it happens again, he might be fired," he said.

How many tourists, backpackers to luxury guests, are taken on such an unwelcome first "tour" of Phuket is uncertain. However, one thing is sure – guests such as the elderly American woman are unlikely to be recommending Phuket to friends.



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Big brass busts illegal buildings

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

A TEAM of Ministry of Interior officials landed in Phuket on May 17 to raid four sites in and around Patong, all of which are now under investigation for illegal construction.

Leading the raids was Lt Gen Jutti Thammanovanich from the Office of the Commissioner-General of the Royal Thai Police, one of the top-ranking police commanders in the country.

"The team was assembled to inspect land in Phuket after we received complaints of construction on steep hills. We found that the land plots in question were being developed for housing, resort and hotel construction," Lt Gen Jutti said.

The first site raided was in the hills off Muang Chaofa Road, which links the Prince of Songkla University Phuket campus in Kathu with Chalong.

"We found they had a permit to develop the land for housing. However, it is illegal to do such construction on slopes of more than 30 degrees," Lt Gen Jutti explained.

The second site raided was in Baan Nanai, on the hills behind the



Lt Gen Jutti Thammanovanich (2nd from right) led raids on four Patong construction sites under investigation.

premier tourist town of Patong.

"We found workers using a backhoe to develop the hillside land. They claimed they had a permit to do so and presented a NorSor 3 Gor land document, but

they failed to present a permit to develop the land," Gen Jutti explained.

"The backhoe driver and the site manager were asked to come to Patong Police Station for ques-

tioning. The police will conduct the investigation from here," he added.

The third site raided was at Paradise Beach, south of Patong Beach.

"We received a complaint that a private street was under construction on SorPorKor land leading to a private resort. We have ordered the Land Department to investigate and confirm the status of land ownership," Lt Gen Jutti said.

"At the fourth and last site raided, located opposite Laem Singh Beach, we found a concrete street built over a public waterway. Also, the road was clearly built on a slope greater than allowed by law," he stated.

"I have been informed that this issue is now being handled by the Damrongtham Center. The center has requested the local municipality to destroy the street," he said.

Gen Jutti said his team will continue their investigations into the four cases.

"The complaints we received were accurate. We have collected the information we need to investigate who is involved in this wrongdoing," he said.

"We will investigate officials who issued the land documents and the permits to allow such construction on steep hills. Everyone found to be involved in these illegal activities will be held accountable," he added.

King Cobra catches a ride

A KING COBRA three meters long was captured in Phuket's Khao Phra Thaeo Wildlife Sanctuary on Monday night after it went along for a ride in one of the park trucks.

The driver of the truck, park employee Wad Promya, 59, had taken the vehicle to run an errand at a friend's house. He felt something moving under his seat, but it stopped after a while, so he kept driving.

"A short time later, I saw a King Cobra on the seat next to me. I was scared to death and I jumped out of the truck as soon as I could pull over.

"Then I called the rescue foundation for help," he said.

Kusoldharm Foundation rescue staff arrived at the scene to find Mr Wad and about 10 villagers standing at a respectful distance from the truck.

"We found the snake entwined around the machinery under the truck. It was an old truck and the snake was able to go in and out of the cab easily," one of the rescue



The three-meter-long King Cobra was riding shotgun for a while.

workers said.

Using a long piece of bamboo with a string at the end, the group spent more than two hours maneuvering the snake out.

"We finally caught it at 8:30pm. It was about three meters long," the rescue staff worker said.

The cobra was put in a bag in order to be transported to a forest and set free.

Mr Wad had just one request. "I asked them to let it go somewhere else, not near Ton Sai Waterfall as it might come back," he said.

— **Thawit Bilabduhar**

Snatch convicts turning gold into milk money

A PAIR of snatch-thief convicts were snapped up by police shortly after they ripped two gold necklaces from the neck of a woman taking her child to school in Phang Nga on Tuesday morning.

After her necklaces – worth about 30,000 baht – were stolen, Waroon Chaisang called the police, who notified officers at a checkpoint down the road in the direction the men were last seen heading.

"Officers at the checkpoint were ready, but the two thieves didn't stop," Takuapa Police Superintendent Khemmarin Hutsiri said.

"Racing on with police in pursuit, they got as far as a rubber plantation, where they ditched their bike and started running."

Police gave chase and caught up with Kiatthichai Taiwang, 28 and Thaet Chaichana, 26.

Both men are fathers of young children, Col Khemmarin said.

"They said they had to steal the



Mrs Waroon identifies the men.

gold to buy milk for their kids," he said.

However, police records showed that the pair had been recently released from Phang Nga Provincial Prison, where they'd been incarcerated for snatch-thefts.

"We charged them with using a motorbike to steal, and we returned the necklaces to Mrs Waroon," he said.

— **Kritsada Mueanhawong**

Phuket Marine Office urges all island boat owners to be vigilant

IN THE wake of recent break-ins and thefts on yachts anchored around Phuket, the marine authorities are urging boat owners to ensure their boats are secure.

"In order to protect yacht property from being stolen, I suggest yacht owners have round-the-clock security on their boats," said Lt Col Chatchai Sakdee of the Marine Police.

"They should protect their boats as they protect their houses," he said.

"Being part of a network of yacht

owners will also be helpful, because you can look after each others' boats," he said.

Phuket Marine Office chief Phuriphat Theerakulpisut supported Col Chatchai, saying, "I advise yacht owners to have 24-hour security – someone must be looking out for the boats at all times.

"This way you can take the best care of your own valuable property," he added.

Marine Police will do their part, added Col Chatchai.

"We patrol the area around Phuket and also in Phang Nga Bay," he said.

"The frequency of patrols depends on what problems we are seeing and where. We do our best to make every area safe even though we don't have enough officers to look after the whole island at the same time," he said.

The focus on security follows two men being caught trying to rob the well-known catamaran *DaVinci* in the middle of the night in Chalong Bay.

The thieves were arrested only after the boat's captain was alerted by silent alarm that intruders were on the vessel.

Col Chatchai urged any boat owners in Phuket whose yachts have been robbed to report the incident to the Phuket Marine Police at 076211883 or by calling the Marine Police hotline at 1196.

"Anyone who suspects a robbery is in progress is urged to call 191 immediately," he added.

— **Saran Mitrarat**



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Sansiri encourages iodized salt consumption to help boost IQ of children

QUEER news



A disgruntled Mr Ekaphong raises a brick to mark the occasion.

ATM versus drunk man? Police win

NOBODY likes having their card swallowed by the ATM – but most people take it on the chin.

That's not how you could describe the actions of 26-year-old Ekaphong Bunyaratphan, who got more than a little upset when his ATM card was gobbled by a cash dispenser in Samut Prakan.



The ATM

Mr Ekaphong, who was more than a little "refreshed" at the time, lost his temper and started smashing the defenceless ATM machine with a brick. His friends soon came, stopped him from doing any more damage and sped him away from the scene.

Unfortunately for Mr Ekaphong, he chose the wrong ATM to mess with: it was in a gas station and the whole incident was caught clearly on CCTV.

Staff called the police, who arrived at the scene minutes later.

Police soon found Mr Ekaphong sitting with friends, boozing at an all-night rice porridge shop. They arrested the still highly intoxicated young man, who later confessed to the whole thing. He was charged with damaging property.

– **Kom Chad Luek**

Mass mangrove planting to honor HM Queen Sirikit

PHUKET Governor Maitri Inthasut led more than 1,200 people in a mass planting of mangrove trees on May 17 to honor HM Queen Sirikit's 80th birthday.

A total of 24,000 seedlings were planted over about 47 rai of land in the Klong Mudong area of Chalong.

"Among the specimens planted were *Rhizophora apiculata*, *Ceriops tagal* and white bean," explained Kasem Sukwaree, chief of the Natural Resources and Environment Phuket office.

The mass planting was the third held in Phuket as part of a nationwide campaign to plant 800 million trees by 2016 in celebration of Queen Sirikit's 80th birthday, which was celebrated on August 12 last year.

"The aim of the project is to urge people to preserve and protect the forest and other natural resources," Mr Kasem explained.

"We started by planting 10,000 trees at Rama IX Park [Suan Luang, also known as King's Park] on April 8, 2012... The second project was on April 12, 2012, when we planted 8,520 trees," he said.

Governor Maitri reminded the participants of the importance of preserving mangroves.

"Mangrove forests are an important part of Phuket's coastal ecology that are being threatened by the development of tourism," he said.

"Every department needs to work together to preserve the valuable natural resources of the island forever," Governor Maitri said.

– **Kritsada Mueanhawong**



More than 1,200 people took part in planting the 24,000 mangrove seedlings along Phuket's east coast. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

Monsoon's return brings beach trash and erosion

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

WAVES two meters high pounding the coast north of Phuket has forced at least one hotel owner to set up sandbags to protect against the sea and prompted the local mayor to call for help from the Phang Nga Governor.

The force of the powerful surf has caused damage along 13 kilometers of beachfront at Bang Niang Beach in Phang Nga.

"Hotels in the area were damaged and a wall on the beachfront was destroyed by very high seas," said Sawat Tankeng, the mayor of Khukkhak Municipality.

"Local hotel owners had to set up sandbags to protect their properties from the waves," he said.

"There is no beachfront for tourists because the waves eroded the shoreline," said Chatree Lao-piyasakul, owner of Ayara Villas.

"There used to be 40 meters of sand between the land and the water, but now tourists are complaining that there is no beach to play on," Mr Chatree said.

Shambhala Khaolak Resort owner Varunee Khomkla also complained that the beach in front of her hotel had disappeared.

"We had to bring in sandbags to protect our resort," she said.

Mayor Sawat said he reported



Turbulent surf brought on by the monsoon is dumping dangerous debris onto Patong Beach. Photo: Gazette reader

the problem to the governor, and was awaiting a reply as to what assistance may be provided.

Meanwhile in Patong, broken glass, plastic and wood with protruding nails washing onshore have alarmed tourists, but local authorities say they are powerless to prevent the dangerous flotsam.

Though officers from Patong Municipality's Public Health Office collect trash strewn along

the beach every morning, they are finding it difficult to keep the sand clear of debris.

"It's the same problem every year in the [southwest] monsoon season. Garbage is washed ashore every morning," one of the health officials told the *Gazette*.

"At Patong, the seabed under the shallow water is shaped like a trough so garbage gets trapped," he explained.

Lack of manpower was cited as a contributing factor to trash not being cleared.

"The beach is about four kilometers long – so it takes time to complete the job... Sometimes we can't finish in the morning so the garbage is still on the beach in the afternoon," the officer said.

Additional reporting by Orawin Narabal

Hospital offering free checkups

PHUKET residents are invited to sign up for free medical checkups at the Phuket Provincial Hospital on May 31 in honor of HM Queen Sirikit's 81st birthday later this year.

The first 1,253 Phuket-registered residents to contact the Provincial Hospital before May 29 can take advantage of one of many checkups available.

The hospital will be providing 810 eye sight and cataract checkups for people 60 years old or older; 181 diabetes checkups; 81 cardiac calcium scoring scans; and 81 full medical checkups for qualifying residents 45 years old or older.

"In honor of the HM Queen Sirikit's 81st birthday on August 12, the Phuket Provincial Hospital will be launching the project on May 31, the hospital's second anniversary,"

said Phuket Provincial Administrative Organization (PPAO) President Paiboon Upatising.

"We want to honor Her Majesty the Queen for her work and devotion in the name of public health," he added.

Hospital Director Anan Lohapattana-bamrung told the *Gazette* the event was being well received by people seeking medical care.

"A lot of people have already applied for the free checkups," he said.

"However, people are still welcome to join the event, especially the free eye checks, as we now have a full-time ophthalmologist on board who is expert in cataract operations," Dr Anan added.

For more information contact the Provincial Hospital at 076-354813.

– **Namsai Wongsaree**



Among the 1,253 checkups the hospital is offering are free eye-sight tests. Photo: PPAO PR

Deputy PM threatens, slanders protesters

DEPUTY Prime Minister Plodprasop Suraswadi has refused to heed calls to resign after he called protesters at a Chiang Mai water summit “garbage”.

Mr Plodprasop said he would have demonstrators at the second Asia-Pacific Water Summit arrested if they did not disperse.

The protesters had gathered to demonstrate against the government’s water management policies, which are mostly opposed due to the top-down approach that is accused of neglecting the need for local community input.

“If they [protesters] come, they will get arrested. What will you protest against? Don’t come. If you violate laws, I will order your arrest,” Mr Plodprasop said. “Chiang Mai people should not allow such garbage [protesters] to be around.”

In response, well-known NGO Campaign for Popular Democracy (CPD) called for the minister to issue an apology, accusing him of violating human dignity and threatening people exercising their right to assemble.

The CPD also pressed for Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra to



Deputy Prime Minister Plodprasop Suraswadi. Photo: The Nation

reprimand the outspoken politician.

“If she does not do that, she can be considered his accomplice,” the CPD said in a statement.

Ms Yingluck has so far declined to comment, though Mr Plodprasop remains unrepentant.

“The word is not rude. I mean, these people are useless,” he said.

Mr Plodprasop is the chairman of the Water and Flood Management Commission, which is overseeing the bidding by four private firms on the massive 350-million baht water-management and flood-prevention scheme.

Rocket festivals deemed ‘dangerous to aviation’



NORTHEAST Thailand’s rocket festivals last week became the subject of controversy after an airplane pilot reported seeing a homemade rocket at a height of 3,000 meters without advanced warning.

Critics also claim the Bang Fai festivals have become excuses for binge drinking and gambling on a vast scale.

The fairs, which stem from the Northeastern belief that firing rockets will appease local deities and bring rain, have increased in scale over recent years – as have the rockets.

Traditional Bang Fai rockets often reached as high as 1,500 meters and stayed aloft for only up to a minute.

The traditional simple bamboo rockets have gone out of fashion and have been replaced by machine-built metal contraptions filled with highly explosive potassium nitrate.

The largest rockets are made with a 30cm-wide, 6m-long PVC pipe filled with two tonnes of potassium nitrate. They can soar up to 8 or 10km, higher than some aircraft, which in some areas cruise at only about 3km.

Once the rocket’s fuel is spent, the casings fall to the ground at a high speed, creating a real danger for aviation as well as people’s homes.

Agencies met on April 24 to campaign against the rockets and



One of the modern rockets built for Bang Fai festivals. Photo: The Nation

highlight the danger they pose to aircraft; people’s lives and property; and to the country’s image.

Among the decisions made were to find measures to mitigate the danger posed by the rockets

to aviation; to ask people not to light Bang Fai rockets in aviation safety zones where planes land and take-off on or around airports; and to limit the size of the rockets to eliminate the danger to aviation.

Cheating scandal rocks nation

THE Thai education system has been shaken by a cheating scandal in which it has emerged that as many as 344 new teachers cheated on the country’s recruitment exam.

Pisit Chotking, director of Nakhon Ratchasima Primary Educational Service Area Office 3, said that he was preparing to dismiss six newly appointed assistant teachers at schools under his office’s supervision.

The Department of Special Investigation (DSI) has advised the

office and 118 other offices to dismiss 344 assistant teachers accused of cheating in the exam.

Meanwhile a school director and an assistant teacher have been charged for their alleged roles in the scam.

The suspects will soon be summoned for questioning, DSI chief Tharit Phengdit said.



Pisit Chotking

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In brief...

US tornado kills at least 24, many thought to be school children

AT LEAST 24 people, including nine children, were feared killed when a tornado 3.2 kilometers wide tore through an Oklahoma City suburb, trapping victims beneath the rubble. One elementary school took a direct hit and another was destroyed.

Brazil launches probe into rumor that set off panic run on state bank

BRAZILIAN President Dilma Rousseff on Monday ordered the Federal Police to investigate the source of a rumor that sent thousands of poor Brazilians running to state bank branches seeking payment of a monthly stipend.

A rumor that payments of the Bolsa Familia program would be ended led crowds to line up over the weekend at branches of the Caixa Economica Federal government bank to get their money.

Libya war weapons may be killing central African elephants – UN

ARMED groups in central Africa are using powerful weapons, some of which may be left over from the civil war in Libya, to kill elephants for their ivory, the United Nations said on Monday.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the illegal trade in ivory may be an important source of funding for armed groups.

Obama looks to ease sanctions, Myanmar urged to end violence

By Paul Eckert

US PRESIDENT Barack Obama urged the president of Myanmar on Monday to halt violence against a Muslim minority, but praised economic and political reforms in the formerly pariah nation that is emerging as a US ally in China's backyard.

During the first visit to the White House in 47 years by a leader of the Southeast Asian nation, Obama called for an end to the killings of Rohingya in western Myanmar's Rakhine state.

Reformist Myanmar President Thein Sein vowed to resolve ethnic conflicts and bring perpetrators to justice.

"I also shared with President Sein our deep concern about communal violence that has been directed at Muslim communities inside Myanmar. The displacement of people, the violence directed towards them needs to stop," Mr Obama said.

As the Myanmar government eases repression, long-simmering ethnic tensions are on the boil – a dynamic that resembles what happened when multi-ethnic Yugoslavia fractured in the 1990s after communism fell.

Mr Thein Sein appealed for US "assistance and understanding" as Myanmar attempts difficult reforms.

Mr Obama said the Myanmar leader had assured him that he intends to release more political prisoners and institutionalize political reforms that have already begun transforming the country and ending its estrangement from the West.

Rights groups and some US lawmakers fear Mr Obama has moved too quickly since forging a dramatic breakthrough in relations in 2011 after a half century



Myanmar President Thein Sein arrives for his first visit to the White House. Photo: Reuters

of military rule in Myanmar.

US officials argue that reforms by Myanmar – freeing democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi and hundreds of political prisoners, scrapping censorship, legalizing trade unions and protests – are transformative and deserve support from Mr Obama, who confirmed the end of Myanmar's pariah status with the West with a landmark visit last November.

Even critics in Congress of Mr Obama's Myanmar policy support the US strategic goal of bringing the country, tucked between China and India, out of its isolation from the West.

The long US-Myanmar estrangement was a drag on America's relations with Asean

that looks to Washington as a counterbalance to the more assertive China of recent years.

In a speech after the White House meeting, Mr Thein Sein described efforts to develop Southeast Asia's poorest economy, overhaul decrepit institutions, undo the habits of decades of authoritarian rule and build a new, inclusive national identity from dozens of ethnic groups, some of which have been at war for decades.

"To achieve all this we need maximum international support, including from the United States, to train and educate, share knowledge, trade and invest and encourage others to do the same," he said.

He referred to the Muslim killings and said his government "must ensure not only that inter-communal violence is brought to a halt, but that all the perpetrators are brought to justice."

Mr Thein Sein, a retired general, was taken off the US Treasury Department's Specially Designated Nationals visa blacklist last year to facilitate engagement.

The slight, soft-spoken leader was a close confidante of former military ruler Than Shwe, who ran Myanmar for 19 years, a period that saw mass jailing of opponents, the gunning down of pro-democracy protesters and widespread abuses in ethnic minority areas.

– Reuters

AP chief says US phone probe making sources reluctant to speak out

THE US Justice Department's seizure of phone records for journalists at the Associated Press is hurting the agency's ability to gather news, the wire service's Chief Executive and President Gary Pruitt said on Sunday.

"Officials that would normally talk to us and people we talk to in the normal course of news gathering are already saying to us that they're a little reluctant to talk to us," Mr Pruitt. "They fear that they will be monitored..."

The Justice Department told AP on May 10 that it had earlier seized records of more than 20 of its phone lines for April and May 2012. The seizure was part of an investigation of media leaks about



US Attorney General Eric Holder takes questions. Photo: Reuters

a foiled terrorism plot.

Mr Pruitt said the Justice Department claimed an exception to a rule that required them to notify AP of such a record seizure.

– Reuters

With end of Afghan war in sight, EU pushes business

THE European Union threw its weight behind developing Afghanistan's small but promising private sector this week, in the hope that business can usher in stability and peace once foreign troops leave by the end of next year.

In the largest ever EU visit outside the capital Kabul in 12 years of war, a 21-country delegation of envoys on Sunday jetted to the western city of Herat, where a flurry of business activity is largely seen as a rare success story in desperately poor Afghanistan.

War and tens of billions of dollars in constant aid have made Afghanistan a ward of the international community, though vast potential mineral resources and pent-up business desire amongst



Afghan President Hamid Karzai at a news conference. Photo: Reuters

educated youths mean the environment could be changing.

The EU chose Herat for its trip as "we are encouraged by the province's vision, its ability to at-

tract foreign investment", the bloc's representative to Afghanistan, Vygaudas Usackas, told Herat governor Daoud Saba.

– Reuters

Rains stunt seafood, tour trade

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

THE rough seas brought on by the onset of the annual southwest monsoon have taken their toll on the Phuket tourist day-trip trade, with companies reporting only half the usual number of passengers.

Meanwhile, fishing boats have been unable to put to sea, with the resulting fall in supply causing an upsurge in seafood prices.

"The monsoon weather has arrived in Phuket, causing many fishing boats to stay onshore," Phuket Fishing Port officer Korakot Pareephat told the *Gazette*.

"Usually a fleet of about 50 fishing boats goes out each day, but right now that number has dropped to about 10. The large fishing trawlers can put to sea, but the smaller seine boats cannot," he explained.

Having most of Phuket's local fishing fleet remaining in port has directly hit seafood prices, with some prices rocketing to double what they were before the southwest monsoon arrived.

"For example, anchovy prices rose from 10 baht per kilogram to



TO GO OR NOT TO GO: The number of tourists joining boat tours has dropped by half for some boat companies. Photos: Kritsada Mueanhawong

20 baht per kilo, and Indian mackerel prices went from 55 to 70 baht per kilogram to 80 to 100 baht per kilo," Mr Korakot said.

"Overall, seafood prices have increased by about 30%," Mr Korakot added.

Meanwhile, tour boats at Rassada Port are currently seeing

about half the number of tourists taking boat tours compared with the number of bookings during the high season.

"From 1,000 tourists per day, we now have only 500," Santi Phonyeumsann, a port staffer of the tour operator Chaokoh Group, explained.



Safety remains a concern for both tour and fishing boats.

"Our company will continue to provide tours with safety as our main concern. Our boats carry sufficient numbers of life jackets and our crews will operate boats with extra caution," Mr Santi confirmed.

Mr Korakot at the Phuket Fishing Port similarly emphasized safety was a top concern.

"I strongly suggest that all ship captains, crews and passengers closely follow weather reports and only go offshore when the wind and waves do not pose a danger.

"For your safety, do not leave shore when there are high waves and strong winds," he said.

Krabi rubber, palm farmers in distress

KRABI palm oil and rubber plantation workers last week threatened to blockade Krabi Airport if the government does not increase the legal minimum prices.

The current regulated minimum prices, as set by the Ministry of Commerce's Department of Internal Trade on May 14, were 81.5 baht per kilogram for raw rubber and 3.5 baht per kilogram for palm fruit.

More than 500 plantation workers gathered in front of Krabi Provincial Hall last week to file a complaint to be handed to Prime

Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

The complaint calls for the government to increase the minimum price of raw rubber to 120 baht per kilogram and palm fruit to 5 baht per kilo.

Protest leader Chamnan Makpol accused the national government of failing to provide assistance to farmers across Southern Thailand.

"We have been in a difficult period since Ms Yingluck was elected prime minister. The rubber and palm fruit prices have kept falling, but she has never re-

ally helped us. She just works on creating her good image from time to time," he said.

"In the past, when she distributed 40 billion baht to help poor farmers, the money never went to us. It all went to the middleman. Poor people like us got nothing," he added.

Mr Chamnan pointed out that plans to provide financial assistance to rice farmers across the North and Northeast of Thailand, the heartland of the ruling Pheu Thai Party's voter base, were already in motion.

"The government should care about us more. They should not just think that we are 'yellow shirts' and ignore us, and support only 'red-shirt' farmers in the North and Northeast. They haven't even grown the rice yet, but the government has already set up a budget to support them," he said.

"We don't want to pressure the government, but we want to let them know we are in serious trouble," he added.

Krabi Provincial Chief Administrative Officer Weera

Jantharithipparak received the complaint on behalf of Krabi Governor Prasit Osathanon, who is in Bangkok on official business.

"I will report the problem to PM Yingluck immediately and will call in other relevant organizations to discuss it" Mr Weera said.

Satisfied for now, the protesters dispersed, but vowed to return in 10 days to see if their request is to be acted on.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

For the latest updates on the situation, check the *Gazette* website.



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Bangkok Hospital Phuket to invest B600mn in facility

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

BANGKOK Hospital Phuket (BHP) has announced that it will invest 600 million baht to open a new hospital on the island by early next year.

The site of the as yet unnamed hospital will be on Chao Fah West Road, just opposite of the Chao Fa Villa Phuket housing development in Mueang district.

Director of Bangkok Hospital Phuket, Dr Narongrit Havarungsri, said that BHP has been open for business for 18 years, and revealed that they will now launch a new BPH network hospital.

The new 100-bed facility has a target opening date of early 2014, and will be oriented towards “middle-of-the-road” patients seeking treatment services for non-complex conditions that are too expensive, said Dr Narongrit.

The new hospital will not take the same name as BHP, as in BHP 2, but will simply be integrated into the BHP network, he noted.

Although the standards will be on par with BHP, the cost of treatment is expected to be about 30% less, since the new hospital will be smaller and thus have lower overhead costs, he said.

These lower overhead costs, including the building, location, medical devices and personnel, will be underlined by reduced administration costs and will not affect the service standards that BHP is known for, he said.

The new hospital will comprise of two buildings on a plot slightly larger than 10 rai (16,000 square meters). Although it will eventually contain 100 beds, it will only have 50 beds initially, which will

increase in line with patient demand.

The facility will be equipped to handle between 200 and 400 outpatients for general, non-complex diseases and conditions, including those related to the digestive tract, hearing, throat, orthopedics, nose and smelling systems. There will also be pediatric, obstetrics and gynecology clinics.

Dr Narongrit added, that on any given day during the high season, BHP sees between 700 and 800 outpatients and 200 inpatients. During the low season, the number of inpatients is reduced to about 160 per day.

Of these, 70% are Thai and the remaining 30% are foreigners.

Foreign patients undergoing treatment at the hospital include accident victims and those who are undergoing elective



Director of Bangkok Hospital Phuket, Dr Narongrit Havarungsri.

cosmetic procedures.

This second group is expanding by about 20% annually and currently accounts for about 10% of revenue, he said.

He elaborated that a large portion of this group are Australians and New Zealanders who come to do breast enhancement

and augmentation procedures, which he reasoned are about two to three times cheaper to do (at BHP) than in the patients' home countries.

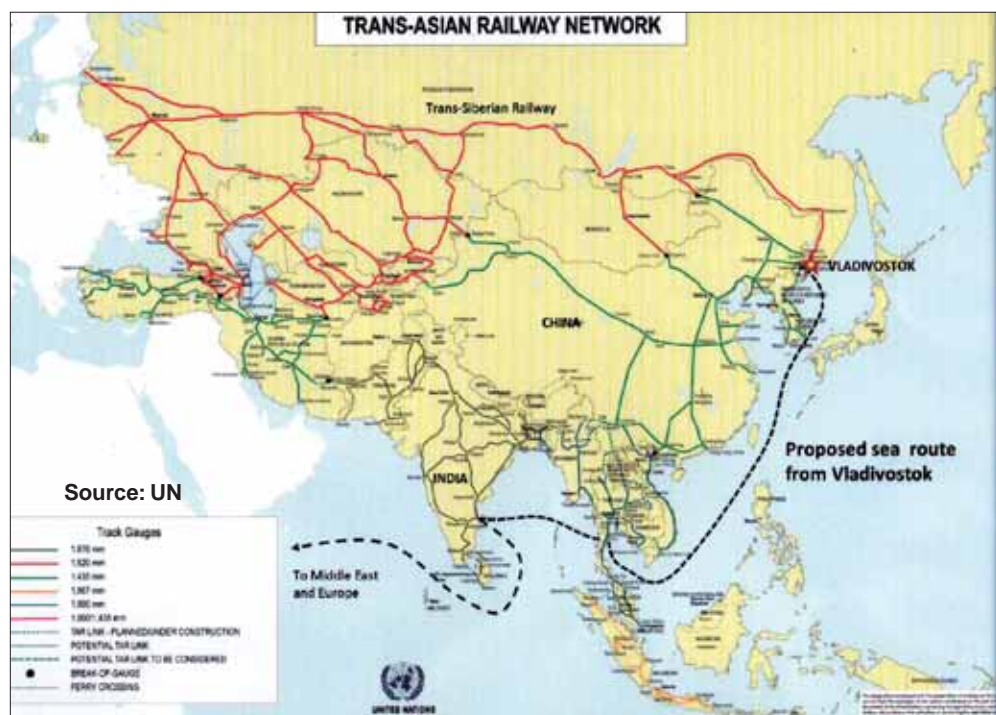
Dr Narongrit finished by saying that BHP plans to establish a fully-integrated cancer clinic within two years.

Cashing in on Russian relations: Part II



Photos: Phuket Gazette

TOO BIG TO IGNORE: Phisak Nivataphand (inset) presented a lot of good advice and ideas at the seminar, including a proposal for a new trade route from Russia's East Coast (below)



MR PHISAK Nivataphand, the president of the Thai-Russian Chamber of Commerce and advisor for the Russian Studies Center of Chulalongkorn University, was recently in Phuket to give a speech as part of a seminar aimed at promoting Thai-Russian business relations .

Organized by Thai-Russian media firm, Expert Media Co Ltd, the seminar was held on Friday, May 10, 2013, at the Royal Phuket Marina. During his speech Mr Phisak suggested several ways as to how Thai-Russian business could be boosted, pointing to several recent developments across the region, with a particular focus on the ASEAN Economic Community.

In the first part of his speech, as outlined in Part I – published on page 11 last week (May 18-24 issue) – Mr Phisak highlighted important historical points, such as the friendship between His Majesty King Rama V and Czar Nicolas II; he also covered various factors to consider when trying to penetrate the vast Russian market, as well as his proposal for a currency swap between the two nations.

Mr Phisak went on to examine what kind of exports Thailand should focus on in order to take advantage of the Russian market.

“Products of high weight and labor intensive manufacturing processes are items that SMEs have to think twice about. Attempting to export or sell such items to Russia is unlikely to succeed, unless the products have the selling point of ‘uniqueness’ or have been ‘value added’ .

“For example, take ceramic floor tiles: as you are aware, ceramic floor tiles are heavy in weight and bulky, in some cases, the shipping charges from Thailand to Russia will increase selling prices and such products will be unable to compete with those made in and offered from China, and, likely, Vietnam, with the certain tax or

incentive advantages available to them.”

Mr Phisak went on to discuss the advantages of improving transport corridors between far-east Russia and Asia, using Thailand as a central hub.

"It is important for Russians to realize the significance of the ASEAN market of some 600 million people. This market would, be more inclined to accept the quality of products made in Russia than would Japan and South Korea, and even China to a certain extent.

"I have proposed the 'sea-train' route to improve transport logistics between the eastern regions of Russia, namely, Vladivostok to carry Russian goods to ASEAN; and perhaps goods from China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong as well."

Goods from ASEAN/Thailand can, in the same way, be delivered to Russia much quicker than with the present route – having to go down to Singapore and sail up passing the Andaman Sea to Europe to reach St Petersburg which takes 30-plus days, he noted.

"My proposed shipping route from the Gulf of Thailand to eastern Russia would take only 14 days. This proposal will also allow Russia to make better use of the existing and well known Trans-Siberia railway line, running between the East and West of Russia.

Mr Phisak also examined the possibilities that improved transportation and business ties could have for value adding to raw products.

“Why should Russian companies just earn profits on selling plastic pallets, the raw material? Why not set up a factory in Thailand, using the plastic pallets, to produce finished products such as chairs, tables and other furniture to sell to the market of 600 million people in ASEAN to yield much higher profits by greatly reducing transport base costs,” he concluded.

– *Phuket Gazette*

PROPERTY Gazette

By Andrew Scott

SITUATED on a hill among lush landscape overlooking Nai Thon beach, Vista del Mar is an exclusive villa development bordered by landscaped tropical gardens.

The recently launched second phase of the development will consist of four smaller villas – 300 square meters, compared to the larger 420 to 700 sqm first phase villas – complete with infinity swimming pools and a starting price of 19.5 million baht.

The smaller second phase villas will be located closer to the beach on the same 1,700 square meter plot as the rest of the development.

The *Phuket Gazette* spoke to Vista del Mar's Chairman of the Board, Sergey Nesterenko, about his luxury development in Nai Thon.

Phuket Gazette: How did you get started in villa development?

Sergey Nesterenko: My clients asked me to invest somewhere in anticipation of the looming financial crisis. They wanted to invest in something real and they told me to buy something.

I traveled the world from Canada to Australia and I couldn't find a place better than Thailand. My major aim was to find a holiday destination. I helped find some projects in Bangtao and a couple of apartments in Nai

A vision for Vista



INTERNATIONAL: Between 30 to 50 per cent of the development's clients are French.

Thon for them. After helping my clients find projects, I decided to start my own and Vista del Mar is my own project.

How do you see the future of property in Phuket?

Phuket has two different types of trends. Firstly, it is really appreciated by successful business people who are already here and want to make it a high-scale destination, which now gives Phuket a lot of luxury areas like Layan and Nai Thon.

Phuket is almost in the center of Thailand, and Thailand is in the center of Asia, and Asia is now becoming the center of the world. My own perception is that Phuket should grow into a luxury area.

Secondly, you have a lot of package tours that are coming to Phuket, especially after the financial crisis. To accommodate this

market, a lot of cheap hotels and low cost condominiums can now be found on the island, even in Bangtao and Nai Thon.

Beach areas like Nai Thon will stay more upmarket simply because there is not a lot of land left to build on.

Why choose to build Vista del Mar in Nai Thon?

My understanding of luxury living is to be further away from the crowds.

There was no way I could do Vista del Mar in Patong or Rawai or Karon. I built here because Nai Thon is the best beach on Phuket. It's not crowded or too built up.

The *OrBorJor* [PPAO] doesn't allow beach vendors, jet skis or construction on the beach like Surin, and it is close to the airport. In today's world, it is fantastic that when you land at the airport you can be home in just over ten minutes.

What does Vista del Mar offer that is different to other villas in the same bracket?



Vista del Mar's Chairman of the Board, Sergey Nesterenko. Photos: Vista del Mar.

The main thing is the location. I don't think you can get a view like this from any other new villa project on the west coast. Also, it will be hard to find a new villa development that is this close to the beach. It is a unique location.

Another thing is design; it is what we call smart design. It is not done in a Thai style or Bali style because if you rent for two weeks that's fine, but if you live here and are not from Asia you will probably want something like the Vista del Mar design.

The villas have a local touch but not too much. We have optimized space in the villas so that we don't waste any and it is comfortable.

It would be hard to find a villa with a sea view on the west coast for the how much you would pay at Vista del Mar. The price is great compared to the location.

For more information on the project, visit: vistadelmarphuket.com or send an email to: info@vistadelmarphuket.com.



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GiVE back!

Government joins Sansiri, UNICEF in granting youth a voice to enact change

By Steven Layne

IT'S not only about rapid off-plan sell-outs for Sansiri Pcl; the real estate market leader is also known for setting the bar high in the realm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Complementing the success of its Iodine Please and Sansiri Academy projects over the past few years, the property firm has raised the CSR standard yet again, setting a new benchmark with its latest brain-child: the "GiVE" social change campaign.

Reinforced through a continuing strategic partnership with UNICEF, and now endowed with the full cooperation and support of the Phuket provincial government, GiVE is an unprecedented initiative to extend a private and public hand, ear and most importantly – budget – to Phuket's youth, who have already taken leaps and bounds to get the ball rolling in initiating much needed social change across the island.

Indeed, the GiVE initiative was created for the youth – and in large part, by the youth – in the name of the future of not only Phuket, but Thailand as a whole.

"As part of our commitment, we aim to take this model project and apply it to other provinces,"

exclaimed Srettha Thavisin, President of Sansiri, who was speaking at a recent "Phuket Children and Youth Assembly".

Held at the newly opened Pullman Phuket Arcadia hotel, overlooking Nai Thon beach on the north of the island, the aim of the assembly was to 'open the mic' for a select and fully-empowered youth committee, to exercise

ties for youth to gain experience and skills as tourist guides and assistants; 4) the issue of littering and garbage degrading Phuket's natural resources; and 5) the need for youth to retain and exercise their voice with elders, opinion leaders and policy makers.

Having listened to five 5-minute presentations, Srettha thanked the youth and other attendees, and reiterated that social problems do not fall on any one person, company or sector.

"These are everyone's problems. Therefore, we must all work together to fix the problems and move forward, together. The projects presented here today should be a good starting point for addressing and tackling some of the issues in society that arise with a growing and increasingly prosperous economy... that arise with the development of the well-being of everyone in the country," he continued.

"This is especially relevant at this time, in which the government is planning to undertake a lot of infrastructure projects. If we don't do something early on, then these problems will only accumulate and get worse with time. Sansiri is committed to working with all sectors in Phuket to support the youth in these projects so we can all move forward for the future," he concluded.

Phuket Governor Maitri Inthasut took the floor next.

"I would like to congratulate all those that have been selected as part of the 'Youth Working Committee' and who will be working closely with Phuket provincial authorities and the Phuket Governor's office.

Turning to the audience, Gov Maitri revealed, "The province has been working on this project with Sansiri for about five months now," before going on to add some of his own wise advice.

"It all starts with knowing and thinking, then doing. Once [the issues are] known, the next step is to think and analyze [solutions]. Then, we can act and do something."

Gov Maitri turned back to the youth committee: "You've all done well in presenting these five issues... as to how to move forward, you proposed, 'through the kind support of the elders'. [You've] given me a list [of the issues and proposed solutions], however you may not know of all the burdens and restrictions of the government, such as a lack of [a sufficient] budget, for example.



AMBASSADORS FOR THE FUTURE: The GiVE Youth Council of 30 empowered Phuket teens, have set a standard for the rest of Thailand.

"Nonetheless, taking action is only secondary to thinking, which is a very important part of the process, and depends on what you know," he preached.

The Governor went on to stress the importance of moving forward, but only if the actions taken are sustainable.

"We're not going to just talk about it, and when this seminar is over, forget about it. We must move forward, but sustainably."

Adding to the five issues presented, Gov Maitri emphasized three more social issues that he thought were most urgent for Phuket youth – teenage pregnancy, narcotics abuse and [the lack of will for] conserving the environment.

"I hope that this session today will enhance and promote relations between youth and elders... and that everyone will join us to develop solutions in the near future. It is the force of the youth that will develop and build the country to be able to face and address global challenges. New

'Phuket has become a society that is full of selfishness and taking from others – one that has forgotten about giving...'

– **Phuket Youth Council, GiVE**

tools and technologies, such as social media will prove instrumental in improving society."

Following the assembly, Paniti Chantayasakorn, Sansiri's brand communication manager gave an exclusive interview with the Gazette about the story behind the GiVE initiative. She explained that Sansiri started by approaching the Children and Youth Council of Phuket (PCYC).

Every province has such a council, which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development and Security (MSDS), she noted.

"Youth representatives from the PCYC had a meeting with Srettha Thavisin in Bangkok. Srettha asked them, from the standpoint of youth who had grown up in Phuket, what they wanted to do for Phuket. Their response to us was that Phuket has become a society that is full of selfishness and taking from others, one that has forgotten about giving."

This idea inspired the executives attending that meeting to change the culture from 'take' to 'give', and the campaign was



Gov Maitri and Srettha Thavisin

born. In the first phase, instead of working only with the PCYC youth reps, Paniti explained that Sansiri decided it would be best to open up the opportunity for all Phuket youth to have a part.

"We initiated a road show to announce the campaign, visiting schools across Phuket. In two weeks, we had about 500 applicants," she said.

In collaboration with the MSDS, Sansiri narrowed the list down to 30 – the cream of the crop.

"Next, we organized several two-day workshops which we invited various expert lecturers to lead using a 'participatory learning' model. These work shops ensured that the youth learned how to actively identify and address issues by going out into the community themselves, as to see the big picture.

A beach cleanup, as the kids learned, by itself does not really address the trash problem as the trash will eventually just build up again," she explained.

In the second workshop, the students worked really diligently to identify various subsets and factors, organizing their efforts and dialogues with local residents into useful mind and community maps.

"For the third workshop, we invited producers of popular Thai TV documentary programs such as Kon Kon and Nok Kala to come down and teach the kids about how to make a good documentary – from script writing to filming and producing.

This allowed the kids to see the perspective of media and journalists. To make a good documentary, you can't just spoon feed the issues to the audience, but have to raise questions so that by the end, the audience is left to think for themselves..."

And all this is only the beginning. So, Phuket and Thailand social problems – look out – your time is nigh! The youth have organized and will soon be coming to a neighborhood near you.

For more on the GiVE initiative, be sure to catch this week's Phuket Today show on Truevisions channels 58 and 99, and local cable channel 1.



JOINT EFFORT: Social problems do not fall on any one person or sector to solve, but are everyone's responsibility.

their voice with government officials, media and other members of the public and private sectors of Phuket.

Five topics were presented by the Thai youngsters, each needing government and private sector support, as well as media support to help raise awareness. The topics included: 1) the lack and dearth of warmth in the modern family unit 2) the need and importance of sea turtle conservation; 3) opportuni-

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High hopes for design exhibition

AAA Exhibition & Training Co Ltd, in collaboration with the Phuket Chamber of Commerce and Thailand Variety Construction Magazine, are ready to stage the inaugural Phuket Design and Decoration Exhibition.

The event will take place in the Grand Ballroom on the 2nd floor of the Royal Phuket City Hotel, from May 30 to June 2, between the hours of 10am to 8:30pm on all days.

With the aim of improving and promoting trade in the Andaman seaboard region, which covers Phuket, Krabi, Phang Nga, Ranong and Trang, the exhibition will feature approximately 100 exhibitors offering a wide range of products, including the latest and greatest of in-trend furniture, interior design and decorations – for houses, hotels, condominiums and resorts.

Visitors can expect to find lanterns, lamps, outdoor and pool furniture as well as all types of items for the spa, garden, bedroom, living room and kitchen. Furthermore, there will be wood carving products, brass, silverware, lacquer ware, ceramic, pottery, and special handicraft products from the North of Thailand on offer.

Apart from this, there will be indoor and outdoor sound systems ideal for meeting rooms, as well as electricity management systems.

Commenting about the event, Ms Neunghathai Duatree, managing manager of AAA Exhibition & Training Co Ltd, said: "We expect customers to not only come from Phuket, but from Khao Lak, Krabi, Trang, Surat Thani, Samui Island, Pa Ngan Island, Phi Phi Island and Lanta Island as well."

"They will include property owners, designers, property consultant companies,



The exhibition will feature approximately 100 exhibitors offering a wide range of products. Photos: Steven Layne

industrial enterprises, architects, souvenir buyers who want new products, companies' purchasing departments and local people who are just curious," she added.

Due to the fact that Phuket is a world-class tourism city which has a very strong economic base, there are always opportunities for business people to come and start their businesses all the time, she said.

Even though the island has at times faced environmental disasters or economic hardships, it always has been quick to jump back

on its feet, and the tourism industry continues to grow strong, she stressed.

"Therefore, it's crucial for companies to keep on improving its products. In fact, the number of products are increasing every year," Ms Nuengthai concluded.

Special activities in the exhibition will include a discussion about anticipated trends, designs and decorations for 2014-2015, to be given by a designated expert, as well as other special seminars and exhibitions targeting companies interested in interior

design products and outdoor decorations.

Exhibitors will include traders from the Phuket Association for the Promotion of the Small and Medium Entrepreneurs or ATSME, and will include a special showcase of Thai Andaman businesswoman dress. Moreover, there will be products exhibitions from students and freelance designers.

– *Phuket Gazette*

For more information contact AAA Exhibition & Training Co.Ltd tel 0814151777, 076375877

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Fearless forecast for Phuket hotels

WE are still less than five months into the Year of the Water Snake, and as I sit at my desk on a rainy Sunday, my mood turns



Property Watch

By Bill Barnett

aquatic. I grind out any thoughts of the past, like stubbing out a spent cigarette with a worn heel of a scuffed pair of working shoes. Not content with only a small snuff moment, I get up in the air and go all pogo on it. My view is, if you really want to crush, find the nearest steamroller and turn the switch to flat.

A little stunned after a mini spate of ultra-violence, my mind shifts to the present. It seems a thick fog has enveloped the island – at least in the expat world – which seems stuck in a little place called nostalgia. According to one of the nameless web dictionaries, nostalgia, in a nutshell, is “a bittersweet longing for things, persons or situations of the past.” Sounds familiar doesn’t it? “Do you know anyone bittersweet?” goes the infomercial with the graying doctor-type handing out the medication.

Never mind, personally, I try to keep my nostalgia focused purely on rock and roll circa 1968-1972. I don’t even let it out of

the house during the day, lest the neighbors complain. Back to business boys, and as we all know, ‘looking to the

future’ is the real name of the game – if only within the confines of the barbed wire compound known as 2013.

The buying and selling of hotels over the past decade has evolved into a micro-industry in itself. Pre-millennium sales of Phuket hotel assets were limited to odd occasions. In recent years, however, we’ve seen high-value internationally-branded properties, down to small and relatively obscure ones, go under the hammer.

I believe the second half of 2013 will see the sector propelled to an all-time high. Peering into the crystal ball, we see properties in Kamala Beach, Surin, Mai Khao, Nai Yang, Kalim Patong, Nai Harn and Phuket City, all expected to sell in the coming seven months. These sales will inevitably spur owners of existing assets, which either require extensive capital improvements or are aged to a point that they need redevelopment, come to the reality table, and then come to market.

The latter is not entirely a bad thing, as



FINDING THAILAND: The hit Chinese movie, *Lost in Thailand* smashed box office records and is credited with boosting the number of Chinese visitors to Thailand. Photo: Pegasus Films

the island will attract a new set of both domestic and international investors looking to upgrade hotels in order to capture upside demand. In popular terms, it could perhaps be tagged ‘Extreme Makeover’ time for Phuket’s hotels. This extends to the Greater Phuket region, where we see high profile hotel trades in Krabi and Khao Lak on the imminent list.

Shifting geographic preferences are also creating new hot spots of interest. One is Koh Siray, where the upcoming Park Hyatt project, and another nearby international-brand hotel in the planning, are forecast to create a domino effect and spawn more projects in the area.

Down south, everyone is looking at the redevelopment of the Evason in Rawai as a lead indicator for what will be a new upscale InterContinental resort. With other large land tracts nearby, and looking closer, in Phang Nga Bay, off Chalong, and on smaller islands, we are already aware of at least four projects in the planning stages.

Phuket’s west-side story is continuing apace, with new internationally-branded Patong hotel developments to be announced this year, and Kamala will also start to see reinforcement’s coming to the rescue. Trailing the pack is the east coast area of Ao Po, though time will sort this out.

After a stressed-out high season, there is

no reason to believe that the emerging eastern European market story will change in the 2013/2014 high season. What we are experiencing is more year round demand though, as this market matures. This year’s poster-child of mass tourism is, of course, China, with its remarkable appetite for all things Thai increasing on the heels of the mega-flick *Lost in Thailand*. This is further magnified by the geo-political tensions with Japan, which once upon a time had been a favored destination for Chinese tourists.

The increasing number of flights into Phuket airport, such as Cebu Pacific’s new route from Manila, seem set to fuel more regional business. How can our over-worked facility cope with the growth? Just check out the flight schedule and see how the arrival and departure times have been pushed into the deepest part of the night. Phuket, as with so many convenience stores, is open for tourism all night long.

But time marches on, and there simply isn’t time for nostalgia during daylight hours. This year’s tourism experience could be likened to an MMA (mixed martial arts) bout – chaotic, frantic, profitable, and most certainly, exhausting.

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



CROWDED HOUSE: With several airlines announcing new flights to Phuket, arrivals at Phuket International airport are set to soar even higher this coming season. Photo: Andy Mitchell

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Hotel branded residences capture investors' interest

Hotel branded residences in Asia are capturing the imagination of real estate investors and end users. Hospitality and property consulting firm C9 Hotelworks reports that buyers are attracted to the unique combination of brand pedigree, personality and a prestige associated with well-known hospitality brands such as Ritz-Carlton, Aman, St. Regis, Walford Astoria, Raffles, W and Hyatt. Exclusivity and attitude are two contributing factors pushing demand.

As C9 Hotelworks’ Managing Director, I am quick to point out that the storyline is changing in space from the resort markets to urban real estate. Asia’s luxury hotel

branded love affair began at the beach on Thailand’s resort island of Phuket. The birth of the tropical pool villa created a unique hotel experience for upscale travelers. An entirely newly defined luxury segment suddenly meant getting out of the box. Leading names associated with the phe-

nomenon were Adrian Zecha of Aman resorts and KP Ho of Banyan Tree.

As Asia headlined the post global financial crisis, old and new wealth was increasingly attracted to real estate. The region’s booming capital cities such as Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Manila are seeing a rise in urban hotel-branded residences.

Not only hospitality branded are playing the new name game, but celebrity faces such as Donald Trump and Philippe Starck are increasingly becoming familiar faces on the landscape.

– Bill Barnett



The luxury branded love affair began in Phuket. Photo: Yiyu173

Golden rules for investing



Finance

By Don Freeman

BEING a successful investor over the long-term is not going to be easy, but if you have been a bad investor in the past, who has lost money investing, chances are it is because you didn't follow these simple, yet essential rules for investing.

Educate yourself about investing

Walk into any bookstore and you will likely see several shelves of books covering investment topics. Certainly some books or authors are much better to read than others, but clearly there is no excuse for not educating yourself about basics of investing.

I have found that many people spend more time planning their summer vacation than they do reviewing their finances. Over the years, I have created a list of some of the best books on saving and investing for retirement. Some of my favorite books were written in the 1920s just before the Great Depression. Send me an email for a detailed list of books I recommend.

Invest in things you understand

Peter Lynch, one of the greatest fund managers of all time, once said to "invest in what you know" and that ordinary people were better able to spot good investments in their day-to-day lives before Wall Street fund managers were able to spot them.

This means you need to be careful about investing in stocks, industries or sectors you aren't personally familiar with, and if you are an expat, don't risk your money in complicated offshore investments that are difficult to understand.

Don't follow the herd into fads

Remember the dot com bubble? That was hardly the first new industry to turn into an investment bubble. Warren Buffett's mentor, Benjamin Graham, warned about investing in the new fangled airline industry when he wrote the *The Intelligent Investor* back in 1949.

It's not that investing in new industries like airlines, the internet – or whatever the latest hot new industry to appear happens to be – all are going to turn out to be bubbles for investors. It's just that most retail investors, don't have their ears as close to the ground and get in after the herd has already stampeded, while it's those who get in ahead of the herd who are the ones who make all the money.

Don't try to time the market

While buying low and selling high is the ultimate goal of professional traders, it's very difficult or next to impossible to consistently time the market correctly in the short term (1-6 months).

In fact, market timing or day trading by retail investors is not really investing as it's more like gambling and everyone knows the house always wins – eventually. You must approach the stock market, and investing, with a proven discipline that has withstood 'good and bad' markets. This discipline will help remove emotional decisions and help you reach your financial goals.

Don't trade too much or too often

Trading in and out of investments is a great way to reward your broker with commissions, the tax collector with short-term capital gains taxed at high tax rates and yourself with lower investment returns.

Instead, use a buy and hold strategy using low cost Exchange Traded Funds for most of your portfolio; these funds largely ignore short-term market volatility in favor of long-term returns. I review portfolios each quarter and make adjustments as necessary. This allows funds time to grow and prove themselves.

Get good investment advice

Financial advisors who earn a commission from trading or are paid to sell a particular financial product are inevitably working for themselves. Expats in particular need to be wary of dealing with or being approached by unregulated financial advisors who are merely salesmen working on commission. Ideally, the best financial advisors will charge a fee based upon a percentage of the amount of assets managed on your behalf to ensure he or she is working in your best interest.



Get good tax advice

If you are an expatriate and especially if you are an American expatriate subject to worldwide taxation, getting good tax advice, and properly structuring your investment accounts with taxes in mind, can help you save a considerable amount of money when it's time to sell an investment or when you receive income from one. Moreover, a good tax accountant who is an expert in your home country's tax laws may be able to provide you a better way to save on taxes than through the use of complex offshore investment schemes usually marketed to expatriates. If you are an expat not subject to taxes on capital gains, then you are in a good position. Get your account diversified and growing in the global markets.

Learn from your investing mistakes

If you have ever lost money in an investment of any kind, take a step back and a long hard look to

try and understand why you lost the money. This can be a difficult process, because no one likes to look at their mistakes. When doing this, put your ego aside and realize it is normal in life to make mistakes. Remember, it's okay to make mistakes when investing, but you should not be repeating the same mistakes over and over again. Analyze your past decisions, make a plan and learn from the past. Only then will you be able to get your money invested correctly and growing for you.

Based in Phuket, Don Freeman is president of Freeman Capital Management and a Registered Investment Advisor with the US Securities Exchange Commission (SEC). 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 Don at: freemancapital@gmail.com



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Tourist abduction, another sign of transport greed

THE allegations of abduction of a female Chinese tourist by an illegal taxi driver operating out of Phuket International Airport [see page 3] once again highlights the need for a comprehensive overhaul of Phuket's arcane and disreputable "public transport system".

The shocking allegations against the "independent" taxi driver Paitoon Kruain could not have come at a more conspicuous time: just days after Airports of Thailand (AOT) officials again partially caved to the demands of Mook Andaman, a local co-operative comprising "black-plate" taxi drivers using standard cars illegally as taxis.

AOT allowed Mook Andaman members to join the three groups that hold concessions to operate at the golden goose that is Phuket Airport, bending to their demands after drivers staged a series of protests coinciding with Phuket's hosting of the "Airports Council International Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly". This was a clear demonstration of the balance of powers at the airport for the entire Asia-Pacific region.

Past and present problems involving taxis and limousines serving tourists at Phuket Airport are innumerable. They are nevertheless just a microcosm of the greed-driven mess that passes for a public transport system here on our island.

Yes, there are some good taxi drivers operating in the industry – as we have seen many times from reports of valuables being returned to passengers – but the system itself is in desperate need of a complete overhaul.

Historically, local politicians have blamed Bangkok while handsomely profiting from the status quo, as AOT does from the concessions they charge. However, AOT, taking in over one million baht per month from each of the three taxi concessions alone, is unlikely to be the only one benefiting from airport concessions.

The danger of this greed to individual tourists and the tourism industry is made apparent in Mr Paitoon's abduction of his 19-year-old fare from China. Mr Paitoon, willing to undercut the inflated prices charged by legal operators at the airport, was able to lure this solo traveller into his taxi.

Exactly what fear and uncertainty filled the young woman's mind as her driver, high on methamphetamine, allegedly held her behind locked doors for five hours is anyone's guess; what is less in doubt is the impact this will have on Phuket's reputation as a tourist destination in China – Phuket's greatest tourism source market frontier.

Phuket is perfectly suited to become one of China's most popular tourist destinations – we have unbroken cultural traditions like the Vegetarian Festival that are immensely appealing to mainland Chinese, who saw much, if not all, of their own traditions expunged during the Cultural Revolution.

We plead, yet again, for government leaders, local and national, to deal with this issue, not only as a matter of national economic importance – but of local pride.



Power outage in perspective

Re: Gazette online, Phuket hit by major blackout, May 21

Being without electricity for a few hours is an inconvenience.

Imagine losing everything in a few moments of time, including loved ones and neighbors. Imagine not even recognizing your former home because it is completely gone.

Perspective, perspective. Watching the news about Moore, Oklahoma has reduced me to tears several times.

William
Gazette Forum

Passing the driver's test is too easy

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Opinion: Learning to drive, May 14

The day I spent taking my bike and car license test was my first real insight into why so many locals are dangerous drivers. The tests were ridiculously easy to pass.

The easy driving tests and useless motoring education is the root cause of 90 per cent of the road accidents in Thailand.

I'm glad I was trained and tested in my home country before coming here.

Vladdy
Gazette Forum

Small balls not likely to be good enough

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Governor starts to tame stench of Bang Yai Canal, May 10

According to an article in the Wall Street Journal, EM balls are of dubious benefit.

They quote Chulalongkorn University faculty claiming the use of EM balls may make the situation worse by depleting more oxygen.

The problem here is lack of oxygen in the water, oxygen re-

Letters to the Editor

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

quired for bacteria to break down pollutants.

This is made worse by the water being very warm – warm water doesn't hold much oxygen.

Anon
Gazette Forum

Put a secret agent in the back seat

Re: Gazette online, Phuket taxi meter cheats under fire, May 15

The solution to this perennial problem is obvious.

There are dozens of volunteer expats working for the police. I am sure they would be glad to go undercover as arriving tourists and nab taxis red-handed.

A hidden, wearable camera would provide irrefutable proof.

Catch a few taxis and the word would get around so fast they would never go without the meter.

Use Thais undercover as well, because they get cheated also.

Earmuffs
Gazette Forum

Driving a taxi under an assumed name

Re: Gazette online, Phuket taxi meter cheats under fire, May 15

I fly in and out regularly and used to use metered taxis.

Last time I arrived, in April, the metered taxi booth told me it was no longer a metered service, only fixed fare.

This is what metered taxi means now at Phuket Airport, legal or not!

John
Gazette Forum

Put the prisoners to work – at the beach

Re: Gazette online, Monsoon weather brings trash to Phuket shore, May 17

Phuket has a large population of people just sitting around doing nothing – prisoners. Why not use them to do this work?

The sheriff in Phoenix, Arizona uses the inmates to do all sorts of community projects that used to cost the taxpayers money.

And the fresh sea air would do them some good.

Me
Gazette Forum

Don't use a windfall for light rail

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Poll: What would you spend B2.6bn on?, May 13

Light rail systems typically cost about USD22m (THB 0.67bn) per kilometre, so you would only buy 4kms for THB 2.6bn.

There is no corridor on Phuket that would attract enough passengers to fill even a small fraction of the capacity provided by a rail system.

The alternative is a network of bus routes which, if properly planned and managed, would pay for themselves.

Nemo
Gazette Forum

Musicians to ban

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Opinion: For the Love of Bob, May 19

Could somebody please ask the writer if there is anything he might be able to do to help stamp out Kenny G? Most people around the world got rid of him about 20 years ago.

Roger Huntington
Gazette Forum

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Finding a cure for overloaded courts

FIRST PERSON

CIVIL cases in Phuket are quite different from those in other provinces. Here, they involve much more money and there are more cases about land ownership. Resolving land ownership is very complicated.

Land in Phuket is very valuable, and the less land there is available – after all, Phuket is an island – the harder people fight for it and the more complicated the cases become. Having foreigners involved in court cases complicates matters further.

Such cases take a long time to finish and many people are willing to take their cases to the Civil Court, the Appeals Court and even the Supreme Court.

In Phuket, our courts are overloaded. From 2008 to 2012, the number of cases to be heard rose dramatically, and is likely to keep going up. In 2008 there were 8,839 cases heard; in 2009 there were 10,159 cases; in 2010 it fell to 9,259 cases; but rose again in 2011 to 9,737 cases; and in 2012 there were 10,462 cases.

We have 21 judges to take care of all the cases. We need two more to cope with the workload. I have requested two more judges, but I am still waiting for a reply.

In the meantime, we will try to process cases as quickly as we



Parinya Chaowalittawin, 45, took up the position of Chief Judge at Phuket Provincial Court on April 1. Originally from Trang, Judge Parinya has Bachelor's of Law, Barrister-at-law and Master of Law degrees from Ramkhamhaeng University. He has served as a judge for 17 years.

Here, he explains what needs to be done to help clear the backlog of cases at Phuket Court.

can. The most important thing is to be fair and equal to everyone, Thais and foreigners.

We have opened a "night court" and a "weekend court" to help clear the backlog of cases. The night court is open from 4:30pm to 8:30pm, Monday through Friday. The weekend court is open from 8:30am to 4:30pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

Now, if people want to have their cases heard outside normal office hours – and if both parties agree – we will assign our judges to hear the case.

We had to open the night court and the weekend court because Phuket does not have a Municipal Court. The Municipal Court hears cases that carry punishments of not more than three years imprisonment, or a fine of not more than

60,000 baht, and any cases that involve damages of not over 300,000 baht.

I have assigned two judges to work only on Municipal Court equivalent cases to speed the flow. Phuket is now being considered for a Municipal Court, but we do not know when that decision will be made.

What worries me is the drug cases, especially those involving *ya ice* (crystal methamphetamine). Statistics show that over the past five years the number of drug cases being heard at the Phuket Court has increased dramatically.

Phuket has a lot of nightclubs, which makes it easy for drug dealers to sell drugs to tourists. Sometimes tourists are even drug dealers.

The police and the courts do their part, but everyone must be involved in keeping an eye on drugs, especially administrative officials. For us, we will do our best to deliver justice to everyone.



Taxis have a restricted existence on Phuket. Image: Gazette Graphics

Let the taxis go free

Island View

By Leslie Porterfield

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

I SAW many things of interest in Bangkok last week, including a woman riding a motorbike with a squirrel on her shoulder.

But the sweetest sights of all were the little red lights that peeped out here and there between tuk-tuks, trucks and cars on the busy streets of the capital.

They spelled out *waang* in Thai, or "free" in English, and they were on the dashboards of metered taxis.

In Bangkok, it is possible to see taxis in their native habitat, roaming the streets wild, foraging for customers.

The domesticated taxis of Phuket, for various reasons unable to look for sustenance themselves, live a captive lifestyle at the airport, big resorts and shopping centers on the island.

With limited resources available, it's no surprise unmetered taxis charge exorbitant fares and fights over customers break out.

And it's no surprise that the metered taxis don't turn their meters on – why shouldn't they make as much as their unmetered colleagues?

Worst of all, because the taxis all gather at the tourist water holes, they are not available on the streets of Phuket for travellers who need them.

The solution is clear. First, put a meter in every single taxi in Phuket. The two-tiered metered and

unmetered system is unworkable.

Then apply a loitering law that prevents taxis from staying in one spot for long periods waiting for customers. Let them run free.

Imagine being able to step to the curb in Phuket Town and flag down a taxi to go anywhere on the island.

I'd use one to go to Central Festival, and avoid the struggle to find parking in the overcrowded lot there.

And speaking of parking, if taxis were released into the wild, parking places at the airport would be freed up too.

Currently, taxis of both kinds and tour vans take up almost a third of the airport parking spaces, making it nearly impossible to find a spot.

I don't mean to exaggerate – I did once find a parking place there – at 5:45am. But when I returned from my trip, my car was blocked in by a tour van.

Last but not least, if taxis returned to the streets, meters in place and turned on, the scam-factor that tourists feel in Phuket would diminish considerably.

I say: Free the taxis!

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

Who to call if you suspect child abuse

I have neighbors with a child who often cries late at night. I can hear the parents shouting at the child, and sometimes I can hear them hitting the child.

This has happened many nights around 10pm to 11pm. Who can I report possible child abuse to?

Concerned
Kamala

Phatanajak Jakaphan, Kamala Police Superintendent, replies:

Thank you for your concern. If the same situation occurs again, you are welcome to contact us at the station.

We will take immediate action

and investigate the possibility of the child being abused.

We may have to involve a local official who is familiar with the local community, such as the *Kamnan* (subdistrict chief), to assist us.

Child abuse is illegal. However, the severity of the punishment depends on several factors, including the level of the abuse and the relationship between the child and the abuser.

Please, just call us at 076-385310.

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

Submit your issue at
www.PuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

Motorbike finance for foreigners

Is there a place that offers motorbike finance to foreigners who are living and working here?

I am not talking finance for a *Fino* or a *Scoopy*, something more like a *PCX* that's around the 80,000 baht range.

Clark Ryan
Phuket

A staffer at the Siam Commercial Bank Call Center replies:

Yes, you can get a loan.

Car and motorcycle loans are personal loans, and they are available to foreigners as well as Thais.

The bank grants them case by case, after considering the work situation and financial stability of the person applying.

If you are employed, you must have been working for at

least one year. The bank will need to see your passport and work permit (take copies of both) as well as bank statements and salary slips going back six months.

If you are not working but receive regular income from abroad – for example, from investments – show the bank your passport as well as bank statements and brokerage statements going back six months.

For more information contact Siam Commercial Bank Call Center at 02-777-7777. The call center is open 24 hours a day.



DREAM WHEELS: Some banks offer vehicle loans to foreigners and some do not. Photo: Fir0002

The Phuket Gazette notes:

An officer at Krungsri said her bank has a similar policy. Kasikornbank also offers finance to foreigners, but only as housing loans. Krung Thai bank offers loans to foreigners married to Thais.

YOUR Phuket

AUTO EXPRESS

Auto Express Yearly Monks Ceremony

Second from left: Saksri Kerdpol, General Manager of Auto Express; Vorapote Thuanthong (Timmy), Managing Director of Auto Express; Pol.Col. Deputy Commander Pol Col Arayapan Pukbuakaw, and Pimlapas Pukbuakaw.



SOFT OPENING - COCO KAMALA ON MAY 16, 2013



From left: Robert Krupica, Partner of Hughes Krupica; Dexter Norville, National Director, Head of Estate Management from Jones Lang LaSalle; Kenneth Gondry, Sales Manager of Phuket.net real estate; Angus Keeling, Partner of Coco Kamala; Authanop Pankamnerd, Managing Director of Coco Kamala; Tomas Noren, Sales manager of Jones Lang LaSalle.

IMPIANA PATONG RESORT & IMPIANA PRIVATE VILLAS - KATA NOI

Welcome Khun Nora Ismail, Senior Manager of Group Marketing, Communication Corporate Sales & Marketing Division from Malaysia and her photo-shooting team at Impiana Private Villas



Second from left: Sirigorn Nateetorn (Siri), Marketing Communications Manager; Nora Ismail; Wallee Chitmun, Room Divisions Manager.

HEALTH & FITNESS FESTIVAL 2013



Left: Dr Subhash Annoji Shanbhag, Ayurvedic Doctor; Daniel Baven, Executive Chef; and Hajo von Keller, Managing Director Mangosteen Resort & Ayurveda Spa.

The Phuket Gazette's weekly

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

BOAT of the week



See page 31

INVESTMENT of the week

Be different and boost your exposure

Phuket Pool Tables!



See page 28

JOB of the week

amanpuri

See page 26

PROPERTY of the week



NEW CONDO FOR RENT

See page 24

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Properties
For Sale

LAND FOR SALE



Nice plot of land in Rawai, 2.5 rai, 7 minutes from beach. Tel: 081-728 2638. Email: sippasini@gmail.com

NICE GARDEN
HOMES

3 houses in nice garden at Rawai, 2 rai, 7 minutes from beach. Tel: 081-728 2638. Email: sippasini@gmail.com

SEMI DETACHED
HOUSE IN RAWAI

For sale. Only 2.6 million baht. Tel: 082-420 7052. www.stayonphuket.com

HABITIA KOH KAEAW

Single-detached house near BIS. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, with clubhouse. Down payment selling 200,000 baht. Price: 3.69 million baht. Tel: 089-648 6914 (English & Thai). Email: sammie023@windowslive.com For further details, please see our website at www.sansiri.com/single house/Habitia_Kohkaew_Phuket/en/home/

BIG HOUSE PLUS
3 APARTMENTS

Overlooking Patong and sea view, house 260sqm plus 3 apartments. Total 120sqm. 8.6 million baht. Tel: 081-824 1385. Email: jbiwo@csloxinfo.com

HOUSE IN PHUKET
VILLA 5 FOR SALE

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

AMAZING VIEW-VILLA

New project, 150 meters walk to the beach. Pool is on the top floor—12 meters long, infinity edge, and has a see-through section that allows you to see all the way down to the bottom floor! Prices start at 16.9 million baht. Tel: 086-982 2888 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-374882. Email: prim_purdue@yahoo.com www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgIRI2yzDRs&list=UUJeOZvdI7-oV8oAa0WkxIHQ&index=1

SEAVIEW KARON

2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 pools, fitness rooms. Sale: 10.5 million baht. Or rent. No agents. Tel: 086-131 5458.

TOWNHOUSE - KATHU

Low selling price, very convenient location. For more information, please call 081-990 1844.

HABITIA KOH KAEW



Modern style, Chino-Portuguese, area: 36.50sq wah with 118sqm living space approx. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 car park. Sale down payment 500,000 baht. Tel: 087-270 9093.

LAND FOR SALE

18 rai of land with rubber trees in Phang Nga for sale by owner, 350,000 baht per rai. Email: patty.bamert@gmx.net

1-BEDROOM NEW
PATONG TOWER

Newly renovated spacious 1 bedroom apartment on the Beach Road, central Patong. 7th floor. Good rental possibility. 4.4 million baht. Tel: +45-5239 3777. Email: deherder@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR SALE IN
BAAN PROMPHAN

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

INVESTMENT PATONG
CONDO

Bangla Suites condo, 60sqm. For sale: 6 million baht. 2.5 million baht discount. Share transfer costs. Tel: 081-894 8446. Email: sfrkata37@gmail.com www.southernfriedrice.com

PHUKET VILLA 5
VILLAGE

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

HOT DEAL - CONDO
AT THE POINT

Opposite to Big C, one bedroom with nice view includes furniture. Price: 3.8 million. Negotiable. Tel: 082-276 1817, 081-614 5372.

CONDO IN
SUPALAI PARK

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

3-STOREY
SHOPHOUSE

372sqm ideal apartment/ office. All floors with air conditioning, bathrooms, phone lines, local phone network, internet, cable TV. Sold by owner directly. Tel: 081-958 3310 (English). Fax: 076-283574. Email: info@phuketdive.net

GREAT INVESTMENT
OPPORTUNITY

Completed show house and infrastructure, 7 further plots for development. 1.5km from Mission Hill Golf Club. Contact Aom for details. Tel: 087-888 1761.

LAND AT
CHERNG TALAY

1 Ngarn, nice flat land, quiet area, Chanote. In Pasak Soi 5. Price: 2 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118.

PATONG LUXURY
CONDO SALE

2 beds, 1 bathroom, living room and fully equipped kitchen, 98sqm. Very high standard, nice view. Big balcony, 2 swimming pools, gym, quiet location. 7.49 million or N/O. Tel: 088-413 8122 (English). Email: phkrealestate@aol.com

3MB SEA VIEW
CONDO

For sale. Must see! Best deals on the island. Please call 086-086 3845. For further details, please see our website at www.homesinphuket.com

LAND NEAR KATA
CENTER

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

LAND ON
KOH LON ISLAND

Flat land for sale. 3 rai, 150m from beach. Price: 6.5 million baht per rai. Email: kohlon@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR SALE:
URGENT

4.9 million baht, 89sq wah (includes furniture). Stone wall around the house & fruit garden. 4 air conditioners, telephone and internet, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 4 CCTV. Located near the Heroines Monument, towards to Tesco Lotus Thalang. Tel: 080-520 2989. Email: edc9designs@gmail.com

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CONDO AT
ROYAL PLACE

Condo at Royal Place Project, bypass road, opposite Tesco Lotus. 37sqm, 2fl, 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, kitchen, fully furnished (2 aircons, washing machine, refrigerator, TV, microwave, cable TV, 24 security with key card etc). Pls contact for more details. Tel: 086-476 9612. Email: annanoi1@hotmail.com

URGENT SALE

Pool villa in a quiet and safe estate for sale at 8.5 million baht. Email: 2711pb@gmail.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.

PRIVATE SALE OF
HALF A RAI

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

APARTMENT PATONG
SALE

1 bedroom, quiet location, parking, furnished, aircon. Sale: 1.3 million baht. Tel: 087-817 8045.

30 RAI IN TOWN

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

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Properties For Rent

RAWAI BEACHFRONT HOUSE

1, 2 storey short and long term rent, close to Fisherman's Way. Also for sale. Tel: 081-593 9559 (English & Thai). Email: supotpac@phuket.ksc.co.th

CHALONG HOUSE FOR RENT

New house for rent. 134sqm, only long term rental. Fully furnished, western kitchen. Laundry, fridge, 2 LCD TVs. 3 air conditioners. 3 beds, 2 baths and living room. Terrace, carport. 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-288 1629 (English & Thai), 081-824 1385. Email: panneesing@gmail.com

KATA OCEANVIEW APARTMENT

Quiet, furnished, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, gym, pool, 24hr security. Tel: 086-281 9311. Email: bao200@gmail.com

COZY HOUSE NEAR NAI HARN



A high-grade built house, furnished and conveniently located minutes from Rawai and Nai Harn Beaches. 2 spacious bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. 1 guest toilet. Aircons. Large living-dining room. Telephone line with ADSL. Free water supply and garbage removal service. 22,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-383 0936 (Khun Nui). Email: hunt17@hotmail.com

4-BED POOL VILLA CHALONG



4-bedroom, 5-bathroom pool villa in Chalong for rent. En-suite every room, home entertainment system all rooms, fully furnished. Swimming pool 5 x 10m. Long term preferred. Tel: 081-397 6921 (English), 081-956 1433 (Thai). Email: terryleetuck@hotmail.com

QUALITY APARTMENT

2 bedrooms in Patong 50 Pi Road. 120sqm. Western kitchen, new beds, curtains, sofa. Minimum 6 months, 20,000 baht per month + deposit. Tel: 089-000 4664.

PATONG FURNISHED 1-BED APT

Furnished 1-bedroom apartment in Phuket Villa Patong behind Jungceylon. Pool, gym. Long-term rent 12 months only. 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-881 7600 (English), 081-273 0956 (Thai). Email: cocodiorster@gmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT



In Chalong, 4 bedrooms, furnished, swimming pool. Contact Nokki at 080-144 1168. Contact Max at 081-088 0366. Email: max_mrpp@hotmail.com

PHUKET VILLA 5 VILLAGE



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

HOLIDAY RENTAL, BEACH 5 MINUTES

1, 2 + 3 bedrooms, modern, apartments & pool penthouses. Free WiFi, 5 minutes slow walk to 2 beaches + town. Email: resortgm@gmail.com

KATA OCEAN VIEW CONDO

Fully furnished, seaview and non-seaview apartments, available for long-term rental. From 19,000 to 40,000 baht per month. Located on Kata Hill. Tel: 076-330641. For further details, please see our website at www.oceanic-global.com

B.L. APARTMENT

At Kathu, 1 bedroom, 1 living room, aircon, cable TV, ADSL, hot shower, swimming pool, garden and car park. Rent: 7,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-692 3163.

WALK TO KATA BEACH

New 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, gorgeous furnished home. 500m to Kata Beach. 20,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-472 1010 (English & Thai). Email: kahunadan@hotmail.com

APARTMENT FOR RENT

Cherng Talay, Pasak 7, Phuket, on 43sqm, 2 rooms, shower, toilet, bathroom, balcony, cable TV, aircon, electricity and water supply included. Monthly rent: 6,500 baht. Tel: 081-737 0365. Email: utaipan@yahoo.com

KATA HILL-1 BEDROOM

Fully furnished: terrace, kitchen, bath, aircon, internet and cable TV. Price: 9,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-606 2827 (English & Thai). Email: nij017@hotmail.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: 089-615 9719. Email: nana1225@gmail.com

HOUSE AT PRIME PLACE VILLAGE



Near Heroines' Monument. Furnished, aircon, 3 bedrooms, cable TV, kitchen. 25,000 baht per month with 30,000 baht deposit. Tel: 086-607 7493.

URGENT RENT/SALE



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.

GUESTHOUSE PATONG FOR LEASE

20 rooms in Soi Banzan, near Jungceylon. Key: 300,000 baht. Deposit: 200,000 baht. Rent: 150,000 baht per month, payable 6 months in advance. 5+years on lease. Tel: 081-891 8132. Email: saowaleewhy@hotmail.com

2 & 3 BED PATONG APARTMENTS

Large 100sqm + units, big pool, gym, parking, maid, cable, WiFi, security. From 30,000 baht per month. Tel: 088-413 8122 (English). Email: phkrealestate@aol.com

3,000B/WEEK, 10,500B/MONTH, RAWAI



Furnished room, aircon, WiFi, LED 32"TV, desk, fridge, laundry, pool, 200m to Rawai Beach Pier. Tel: 084-242 8914. Email: rawai4@yahoo.com

1 BEDROOM FOR RENT



Fully furnished, 1-bedroom apartment with golf course view in Chalong. 13,500 baht per month. Tel: 089-922 2800. Email: simonchinner@yahoo.com

NEW CONDO FOR RENT



Short or long-term rent at Kathu, fully furnished, swimming pool, fitness, quiet and secure. Tel: 081-607 8567. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com

NEW HOUSE FOR RENT PATONG

1 bedroom with bathroom, living-room with full western kitchenette. All extras, aircon, internet, LCD, IBC. Modern furnished. Quiet setting near Na Nai. 12,000 baht per month. Please call 084-185 8536 for more information.

CONDO FOR RENT

1 bedroom, at Phuket Palace and Patong Tower. Long-term from 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-892 1621.

BUNGALOW RAWAI

1 bedroom, aircon, WiFi, kitchen, TV, large and quiet. 8,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-271 7092. Email: brico thailand@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT

Bang Tao Beach, 2 bedrooms, quiet area, furnished, Sat TV, ADSL. Tel: 090-156 7927.

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Simply write out your ad, pay and leave it with
Khun Anna: 076-388144, 086-4780201, 088-1685032

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The **Gazette Online** is always on top in **Google!**

STAFF WANTED

Cashier, Waiters, Thai cook, Cleaner. Location: Kata-Karon. Tel: 081-895 5852 (English), 089-401 8506. Email: vladim1r@me.com

NEED COOK (FEMALE) URGENT

Female cook, breakfast, Thai food and Euro. Urgently needed. Contact me on my mobile (as above). Tel: 076-396075, 082-270 6385. Email: tkoschig2000@hotmail.com

ASSISTANT BRANCH MANAGER

Phuket Pool Tables is looking for a new assistant branch manager to join our latest branch at Cherng Talay. 20,000 baht + excellent commission. Please send your resume or call us. Tel: 081-823 4627, 085-782 1200. Fax: 076-264461. Email: ying@phuketpooltables.com

ASSISTANT BRANCH MANAGER

Phuket Pool Tables is looking for a new assistant branch manager to join our latest branch in Cherng Talay. 20,000 baht + excellent commission. Please send your resume or call us. Tel: 081-823 4627, 085-782 1200. Fax: 076-264461. Email: ying@phuketpooltables.com

SALES & ADMIN JUNIOR

We are looking for young and energetic sales & admin staff. 20 to 25 years old. Good computer skills & English command a must. Thai national only. Call for an appointment now! Tel: 076-325419, 085-619 0380 (English & Thai), 081-400 4678 (English & Thai). Email: orientalsamui@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.oriental-living.net

COFFEE & ICE CREAM

Vacancies: coffee shop assistant manager, baristas, waiters, bar assistants, experience and English. Tel: 086-276 4914.

amanpuri

Multi award winning Amanpuri and Amanresorts' flagship property is currently looking for young, energetic and enthusiastic new team member for the following position:

ASSISTANT FINANCIAL CONTROLLER**Qualification:**

- Male or female
- 36 years up
- Year of experience – Financial Controller 1-2 years or Assistant Financial Controller 2-5 years in 4-5 star hotel

Other qualification:

The Assistant financial controller (AFC) will report to the Financial Controller and will be responsible for the accounting operation including monthly closing of accounts, taxation, etc. The AFC will also be required to help manage the implementation of new accounting software. In addition he or she will liaise with external auditors and improve the accounting operations to support the company's business expansion.

The successful candidate will require at least a bachelor's degree in accounting (B.A) with experience in managing a team of finance & accounting staff and have a proven record of accounting software implementation. The successful candidate will need to have good communication skills in both English and Thai, be very flexible and have a positive attitude. The AFC will receive a very attractive salary, medical coverage, life and accident insurance, etc.

We invite qualified Thai nationals to submit their resume stating present salary to the address below:

Amanpuri

118/1 Moo 3 Srisoonthorn Rd. Cherngtalay, Thalang, Phuket 83110
Tel: (66) 76 324 333 | Fax: (66) 76 324 100 | E-mail: pn@amanpuri.th.com

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT (FEATURES DEPARTMENT)

- ▶ Thai national (able to read, write, speak fluent Thai)
- ▶ Able to communicate clearly in English
- ▶ Able to do layout and design / willing to learn
- ▶ Basic administrative and secretarial skills (phone, email, word and excel)
- ▶ Interested in local lifestyle, events, business, property and/or sports
- ▶ Owns a digital camera / smartphone
- ▶ Has drivers license and reliable transport

Good salary for the right candidate

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV by email to swlayne@phuketgazette.net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew, A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555 Fax: 076-615240

TEFL QUALIFIED TEACHERS WANTED

Full-time/part-time positions available for native English speakers. Tel: 081-083 5735. Email: michael@misterenglishschool.com

RUSSIAN SALES CONSULTANT

Experienced Russian Sales Representative needed for Real Estate. Good command of English and Russian required. Tel: 081-968 5963 (English). Send CV to c@bayshoreprojects.com

RUSSIAN SALES CONSULTANT

Experienced Russian Sales Representative needed for Real Estate. Good command of English and Russian required. Tel: 081-968 5963 (English). Send CV to c@bayshoreprojects.com

TEACHERS WANTED

Chalermprakit is looking for native English speakers to teach English. A degree and TEFL are required. Tel: 085-781 9162. Please email your cover letter and CV to swpk_mlp@yahoo.com For info please contact Clarke.

EVENT/PR MANAGER

The Asia Superyacht Rendezvous is looking for a Thai/Foreign national. Successful candidate will have strong written and verbal English skills. Position can be full or part time, based in Patong. Tel: 076-346927. Fax: 076-346927. Email: gordon@asia-pacific-superyachts.com

MARKETING & GUEST RELATIONS

ApexAsia Group are now recruiting for its marketing & guest relations department to work at one of three hotels in Patong and Karon. Enthusiastic and of smart appearance with good English (written/spoken). Full training will be provided, excellent earning potential. Email Kevin Baker at kevin@apexasia.asia

DIVE AND SURF SHOP

Needs Thai female staff with basic English skills. Tel: 089-874 9147.

VILLA MANAGER

Property Management Company based in Rawai is seeking Villa Manager. Ideal candidate has minimum 3/5 years experience in same position and proven management skills. The position is open for foreigner. Perfect Is required English spoken and written. Additional languages will be considered as a plus. Tel: 076-383435. Email: eb@ebnetwork.it

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Are you someone who won't take **NO** for an answer?

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Due to further expansion in Asia we currently have immediate openings for Sales Representatives and working TO's in Bali, Indonesia. This is a superb opportunity to become part of a busy sales team with one of the finest brands in Asia.

Sales Applicants should be

- Highly motivated with excellent communication skills both written and oral
- Fun, energetic and committed to customer satisfaction, a real people person
- Success driven, stable & reliable
- A natural ability to overcome objections
- No experience in the industry is required as you will receive full training to build a career in an exciting environment

As well as the above, we are accepting applications for Sales Management positions. Management applicants should have the following attributes

- A proven track record of Sales Management and results
- Ability to motivate a multi-national sales team

For immediate consideration please send a recent CV to careers@absoluteworld.net to arrange a confidential interview

ACCOUNTANT NEEDED

Japanese wedding company Sa-mer Wedding at Boat Lagoon. is seeking an experienced accountant. requirements: over 3 years experience in accounts. Good command of spoken and written English. Good salary based on experience. Please contact us by email: fumiko@sa-mer.com

OAK MEADOW INTERNATIONAL

The following positions are open in our school:

- Qualified Thai Teacher
- Cook
- Cleaning lady

Tel: 084-847 0732. Email: intlicense@yahoo.com

Authorized Agents for Classified Advertising:**CHALONG**

- ▶ Julapan Stationery (Chaofa East Rd)
- ▶ KL Mart (Patak Rd, Chalongs Circle)
- ▶ Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe (Fisherman's Way Business Center, Chaofa East Rd)

Tel: 076-282254
Tel: 076-280400
Tel: 076-282403

PATONG

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

Tel: 076-344521-2
Tel: 076-290468
Tel: 076-342275

PHUKET CITY

- ▶ Earth Language Training Centre School (Phang Nga Rd)
- ▶ Sin & Lee (Thalang Rd)
- ▶ iTree complete printing service (Tesco Lotus Phuket Town) bank zone

Tel: 076-232398
Tel: 076-258369
Tel: 076-255425

CHERNG TALAY

- ▶ Chaba Supermarket (at the Laguna gateway)

Tel: 076-325586

RAWAI

- ▶ The Network property office (Saiyuan Rd)

Tel: 076-613173

KARON

- ▶ EuroStyle Tailors (Luang Por Chuan Rd)

Tel: 076-396911

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to join a lively team

- The ideal candidate will have a combination of the following:
- Strong spoken English with good written English + fluent in Thai
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 - The ability to prepare sales proposals, communicate benefits & close sales
 - Good understanding of social media
 - Organised and self-motivated
 - Competitive spirit with a customer service and team-work focus
 - Determined and driven to exceed targets
 - Good knowledge of the Phuket area
 - Thai driving licence (a company car will be provided)

Contact Khun Nittaya at nit@image-asia.com or 081 787 5938

British International School, Phuket

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

Accountant (General Ledger)

- Bachelor degree in Accounting / Finance / Business Administration or related field
- At least 2 years experience in accounting
- Experience in A/P, G/L area and closing accounts is preferable
- Knowledge in SAGE AccPac Accounting System would be an advantage
- Familiar with Thailand taxation and accounting system
- Computer knowledge in MS office
- Good command of English

Cook's Helper

- Male or Female
- Thai national
- Education certificate from middle school
- At least 1 year experience in food preparation
- Responsible, flexible and proactive

Steward/Gardener

- Male or Female
- Thai national
- Education certificate from middle school
- Responsible, flexible and proactive

Security

- Male
- Thai national
- Education certificate from middle school
- Have knowledge of safety rules and regulations
- Professional attitude, Responsible

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



British International School, Phuket (BISP)
59 Moo 2, Thepkasattri Road, Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83200
Tel. 076 335555 # 2113, 2110 Fax. 076 335573

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Thai lady with fluent written and spoken English. A lady that wants a challenge where rewards will be exciting. Good computer and social skills. Based out of Chalong. Tel: 080-695 3933. Email: Beachsando1@gmail.com

ESTATE/RENTAL MANAGER

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

ARCHITECT

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

WORK WANTED

Thai lady, speaks English, experienced, cook, maid, babysitter, can live in, looking for part-time job. Contact Taew. Tel: 081-084 2708.

WALK IN AUDITION 1st June

Our new BEACH CLUB opens soon and we are now looking for outgoing, fun and enthusiastic stars to join our pre-opening team in Surin.

ZAZADA Beach Club is looking to fill the following positions:

- Head Chef
- Chefs All Levels
- Kitchen Stewards
- Restaurant Manager
- Head Hostess
- Hostess
- Waiters / Waitress / Supervisors
- Head Barman / Bar Supervisors
- Barman
- Public Area Cleaners
- Maintenance Technician
- Resident DJ

If you want to be one of our rock stars, have passion for what you do and have the skills to rock our guests, then come show us your talent!

Audition with your resume at So FA Boutique, Phuket Town, 1100 - 1700 on Saturday 1st June.

www.zazadabeachclub.com

ZAZADA

The PARADISE KOH YAO

Boutique Beach Resort & Spa

'Island hideaway near Phuket'

The Paradise Koh Yao, a contemporary 70 room boutique resort is located on Koh Yao Noi Island, a 60 minute boat trip from Phuket

Our eco-chic environment is complemented by our 'conscious living' ethos of barefoot luxury philosophy – NOW complimented with the yoga and wellbeing center

We are looking for superb leaders to join our dynamic team

F&B/RESTAURANT MANAGER (1 position)

In charge of the two restaurants / two bars – continuously working on further enhancing the service experience for our guests via team training programs and improved service procedures

- 3 - 5 years experience in equivalent property/position
- Fluent in English language
- Leader personality, creative with new product innovations
- Thai National

BAR MANAGER (1 position)

SERVICE SUPERVISORS (2 positions)

Comprehensive remuneration/incentive package – we are looking for the best team leaders – please send your resume with picture to

gm@theparadise.biz

www.TheParadise.biz or [facebook/theparadise.biz](https://www.facebook.com/theparadise.biz)

ASSISTANT SALES MGR - 1 PERSON

Real estate agency is looking for an assistant sales manager. Thai national, female, good command of English, private car. Please send resume to sales@rt-pro.ru

MAID/HOUSEKEEPER

Expat (American) requires an experienced housekeeper/maid with good English and Thai speaking ability. Cooking experience a plus and can be live in or live out. Experience letters and recommendations from previous employers are a must. Top notch salary will be paid for the right person! Contact Robert. Tel: 089-765 3126.

ACCOUNTANT FOR REAL ESTATE

We are looking for an experienced accountant that can handle government officials and tax related issues. A high salary will be given. Tel: 076-341045. 081-459 0152 (English). Contact us at the number above or send your CV to info@phuket-condos-homes.com

SALESMAN WANTED

We are selling a state-of-the-art pipe system for hot and cold water applications and for A/C systems. Qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree
- Able to communicate in English: speaking, reading and writing
- Energetic and enthusiastic with a positive attitude
- Highly motivated, disciplined and hard working
- Experience in working with architects for specifying products The work can be full time or freelance. Tel: 081-374 0494. Email: klaus.bauer@pimatec.com

DJ NEEDED

Full time or part time, weekend negotiable. Enjoy sounds like Leomeo, Tiesto and Guetta. Call Adrian. Tel: 081-561 9114 (English & Thai). Email: oat.pada@gmail.com

HOTEL RECEPTIONIST WANTED

Thai citizen, aged 21-40, basic computer skills, good spoken English. Salary is 12,000 baht + big commissions on sales. Tel: 076-333079. 080-698 8335, 082-417 9299. Email: iphone.dez@gmail.com

ACCOUNTING BOOKKEEPER

Full time. Start immediately. Accounting degree or equivalent. Driver's license. Experience. Tel: 085-783 0141. Email: info@thailandcamp.com

HOUSEKEEPER WANTED

Thai trainee housekeeper, English speaking, start from 10,000 baht, nice increase and work place. Tel: 081-787 9774. Email: phuketreasure@gmail.com

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Articles For Sale

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Dragon Punch, 2 players. 10 baht per punch. Sale: 85,000 baht. For more information, please call 086-283 9100.

KAYAKS, SEA CANOES

Brand-new kayaks for sale - still in shipping wrapper. FeelFree - Gemini 2-person kayaks include paddles and seats. 25,000 baht or best offer. Tel: 089-044 0623. Email: kayak@worldwidealoha.com

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Almost new tables with 2 chairs, gasoline lawn mowers, electric hedge trimmer, office tables, more. Tel: 085-470 7009.

MINI LATHE SALE

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LARGE INDOOR SPACE FOR RENT

Mid-Soi Bangla, Patong. 20-1,000sqm. Great for discotheque, nightclub or entertainment. Please call 085-887 7414. Email: nimirphuket@gmail.com

2 BUSINESSES FOR SALE

Good location, Rawai area. 1) Restaurant: 40 pax, leased for 8.5 years. 2) Indoor pub: fully equipped, stage, 70 pax, 8 years and 6 months left on lease. Sale: 2.9 million baht - negotiable! Lease money pays rent. Tel: 087-244 1322, 087-892 6204.

GUESTHOUSE KARON

5 luxury rooms. Cafe bar. Recently undergone a major refurb. 6-year lease contract (paid in full). Low rent. Excellent location. 2 minutes to Beach. 5.5 million baht o.n.o. Tel: 081-891 9461.

HOT DEAL IN PATONG

Businesses for sale. 6.5 million baht, includes: 5 years left on current lease (key money paid until May 2018), Thai-registered company (1 work permit), all forward room bookings in baht, website, all stocks, furnitures, fittings. Rent: 105,600 baht per month. Prime location at Patong Beach, 28 rooms, 3 shops, 2 storeys, big bar, restaurant with a huge kitchen. Must see! Tel: 086-943 4447, 084-306 2440 (English). Email: hollywoodbeach@hotmail.com

GUESTHOUSE + RESTAURANT FOR RENT

4 storeys: restaurant on the first floor, 7-room guesthouse on the second to forth floor. 10 minutes from Patong Beach. Tel: 076-345604, 084-189 3509, 089-971 3301.

PATONG RESTAURANT AND BAR

Great business opportunity. 80m from beach. Fully equipped, long-term lease, ground floor double unit. Key money: 1.2 million baht. Monthly rent: 60,000 baht. Contact Tony for viewing. Tel: 081-271 5811 (English & Thai). Email: aslaferme@hotmail.com

BEAUTY SHOP BANG TAO

Fully equipped, on main road, with customers, parking, all furniture and fittings like new, 3 massage beds, and 2 hairdressing stations. Monthly rent: 10,000 baht. For more information, please call 089-592 8228.

SHOP FOR RENT PATONG

Located in Sawatdirak Road, near the beach, 15x5m, fully furnished. For more information, please call 076-342108, 081-607 5716 (English & Thai), 081-719 0256 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-342087. Email: Nanzz86@gmail.com

MASSAGE / BEAUTY SALON

Top location in Kata for sale. Can sell 50% this year and the rest later. Contact Ulf for information. Tel: 087-281 7233.

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Big discount on startup companies. Good name, paperwork, advice on accountant. Call for more details. Tel: 084-063 0620.

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Call now 081 823 4627, 085 782 1200

Find out more exciting news & promotions at www.facebook.com/thailandpooltables

3 BUSINESSES FOR SALE

Good location, Rawai area. 1) Big bar: 3 televisions, 2 pool tables, 60 pax, parking for 10 vehicles, good business. 2) Massage parlor: leased out. 3) Beauty salon: fully equipped. 8 years and 6 months left on lease. Sale: 2.9 million baht - negotiable. Lease money pays rent. Please call 087-244 1322, 087-892 6204.

RESTAURANT FOR SALE

Steveos tasty burgers for sale. 800,000 baht o.b.o. For quick sale. Contact Steve. Tel: 089-918 3718. Email: steveastray@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.stev.eostastyburgers.com

BAR FOR SALE BANGLA AREA

Bar for sale. Bangla Square. Stunning lounge bar over 2 floors. Beautiful layout, complete with accommodation above. Over 300sqm of area. 2.9 million baht with 3 years on lease: 120,000 baht per month+key money. Please call 087-881 7600 (English). Email: cocodiorster@gmail.com

BAR FOR SALE SOI BEL AIR

Busy mushroom-style bar for sale. All stock, fridges and sound system included. Price: 600,000 baht o.n.o. Rent: only 10,000 baht per month. All licences paid up until end of 2013. For more information, please call 086-725 0771 (English). Email: warrenmecca4@gmail.com

BAR FOR SALE! NEW TIGER!

New Tiger. Bar for sale. As soon as possible. Reason: health issue. 4th from the front. 3 million baht o.b.o. Tel: 086-048 8394 (English). Email: Yellowfeverbar@gmail.com

RESTAURANT FOR SALE

TEX-MEX Steakhouse near beach. 4.5 years old. 2.9 million baht. Quick sale, fully equipped, staff. For more information, please call 086-943 6574 (English). Email: fstailslide@hotmail.com

RESORT FOR LEASE

In the heart of Patong. 20 rooms well furnished, fully operational with very good occupancy rates. 6-year lease for 6 million baht + rental fee 150,000 baht per month. Tel: 088-765 0165.

BAKERY & RESTAURANT FOR RENT

3 years on contract or more. Ao Nang, Krabi, great location amidst lush garden surroundings. Fully furnished and equipped, ready to move in. For more information please call 075-637190, 086-270 8223.

RESTAURANT FOR SALE IN CHALONG

Located next to Ao Chalong Sauna. Including company with 2 work permits. Price: 600,000 baht only. Tel: 081-893 4900 (English).

HOTEL + RESTAURANT
For sale. Chanote title, central position, new building, 4 years old, 20 rooms, reception and restaurant fully furnished, lift. 38 million baht negotiable. Contact Stefano. Tel: 086-279 8175 (English/Italian). Contact Ning. Tel: 084-840 1566 (Thai).

Bulletins

SPONSOR A CHILD

The Phuket International Women's Club is a volunteer organization raising funds for educational scholarships. We rely on the goodwill of donors and sponsors - small and large. If you would like to put something back into the community in which you live, contact us to find out more about giving a prize or being a sponsor. Contact Carol. Please call 087-417 8860 or contact Sue. Tel: 087-277 6948. For more information please email us at info@phuketiwc.com

Alcoholics Anonymous

If you want to drink that is your business
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Patong, Phuket Town, Chalong, Surin, Karon

081-895 4763

081-956 4031

email: phuketaa@yahoo.com

Google AA Phuket

Would you like to keep up on what's happening in Phuket - the good, the bad and the bizarre?
Let us share it with you - every week!

TO: The Phuket Co Ltd, 79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd
T. Koh Kaew, A. Muang, Phuket 83000

YES, I want to receive the PHUKET GAZETTE for a full year - 52 issues!

I hereby authorize payment against my Visa ☐ / Mastercard ☐

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Professional coaching, train with ITF players. All ages - all levels. Tel: 090-706 6674, 090-071 7163. www.tennisjuniorpro.com

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Phuket's oldest international child care facility. High-quality, time-proven schedule and curriculum. Now in brand-new purpose-built school. Experienced native English teachers to teach ages 1.5-8. Monday-Friday 8am-5pm. Bus service available from Patong, Karon, Kata, Phuket, Rawai and Chalong. Tel: 076-384638, 080-624 7060. www.buds-phuket.com

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Central Festival, Koh Samui. Opening Jan 2014. Excellent opportunity. Contact Brain Gray. Tel: 087-080 4258. Email: sushiboxthailand@gmail.com

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Club Memberships Available

BLUE CANYON AND LOCH PALM

Blue Canyon corporate: 500,000 baht and Loch Palm, full membership: 525,000 baht plus transfer. Tel: 086-277 2691 or email to davidinasia@hotmail.com

PHUKET COUNTRY CLUB

Full membership includes transfer and 2013 fees. 585,000 baht. Best price. No offers. Contact Pum. Tel: 085-299 9437 (English), 081-493 9617 (English). Email: Alanhoppen300@gmail.com

PHUKET COUNTRY CLUB

Full membership, transfer fee and 2013 maintenance fee included. Price: 650,000 baht. Contact David. Tel: 087-881 7545.

PHUKET COUNTRY CLUB

Full family membership. Price: 560,000 baht (includes membership, transfer fee, and 2013 maintenance fees) For more information please call 087-895 8160, 087-890 3685. Email: fase rio@gogoltd.hk

PHUKET COUNTRY CLUB

Family (up to 4) membership. 600,000 baht, including transfer and annual fees. Tel: 076-283288, 081-273 7326. Fax: 076-283288. Email: keithmarshall747@gmail.com

BLUE CANYON GOLF MEMBERSHIP

Blue Canyon golf membership available 700,000 baht excluding transfer. Email: hemalegdr@hotmail.com

BLUE CANYON GOLF MEMBERSHIP

Lifetime membership. Good savings. 895,000 baht. Tel: 084-052 2277 (Thai). Email: samverow@gmail.com

PHUKET COUNTRY CLUB

Full membership, transfer and fees. Price: 595,000 baht. Quick sale. No offers. Tel: 081-676 0740 (English & Thai). Email: dconbeer@hotmail.com

PHUKET COUNTRY CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Full membership. Price: 640,000 baht (included transfer). Contact Mary. Tel: 087-266 7140. Email: mary9543@hotmail.com

Pets



I'M LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME!

At Doggie Heaven we have several rescue dogs who are looking for loving homes. All are healthy, well behaved and groomed. For more photos view at www.doggieheaven.net or contact Sherin.peace@gmail.com. All vaccinated & sterilised

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In box, never used, brand-new. New: 8,000 baht. Sale now: 5,500 baht. Please call 089-590 1087. Email: cyberwalkie@hotmail.com

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Intel Core Duo, 112GB memory, Macbook 5.2 model, white color, works perfectly, OS 10.5.8, comes with mouse. Price: 14,500 baht or highest bidder. Tel: 089-590 1087. Email: cyberwalkie@hotmail.com

DESKTOP PC

Brand-new with Logitech keyboard and mouse, never used. New: 7,800 baht + keyboard and mouse. Sale now: 5,500 baht. Tel: 089-590 1087. Email: cyberwalkie@hotmail.com

Personals

BACKGAMMON

Players wanted. Tel: 081-577 8443. Email: phuketconnection@yahoo.com

MUM & PUPPY NEED A HOME



Lady & Yam-Lai are abandoned and in desperate need of a loving home. Mum 1.5 years & female puppy 4 months old. I have boarded them at Surin Beach Pet Hospital. But this is not a long-term solution and the dogs can not just be put out on the street as they need an owner. They are both the most beautiful girls who want nothing more than you to love them. Wonderful with other dogs and great with children. Beautiful loving well mannered girls. They can go together or separately. Tel: 081-271 3211. Email: sonyakla pko@yahoo.com

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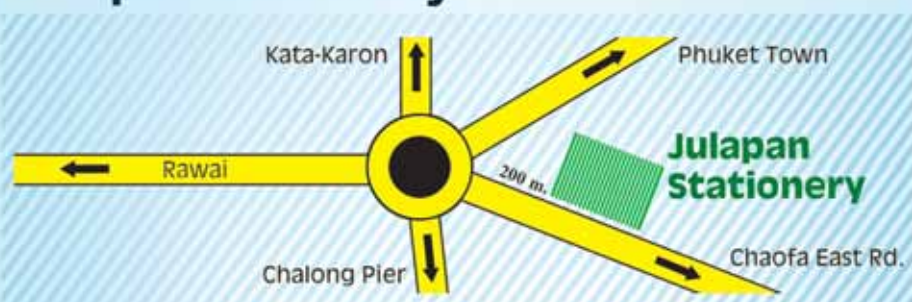
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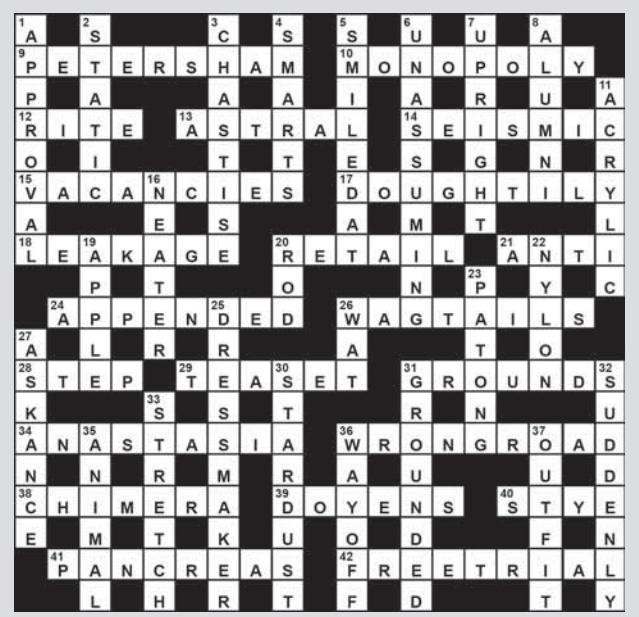
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PHOTO: Dane Low

Where should I trek in Chiang Mai?

By Vipasai Niyamabha

THERE are many trekking routes in Chiang Mai. Some are short hikes near the city and take only one afternoon to complete. There are also many long treks, the most attractive of which is Doi Chiang Dao, located at the Chiang Dao Wildlife Sanctuary to the north of town. This route takes you to visit the ethnic hilltribe villages of Chiang Dao and requires a strenuous walk up the mountain ridges to the top.

Every trekker must obtain a permit to enter the wildlife

sanctuary park. On the way back, many trekking companies stop at Mae Tang River for whitewater rafting and to visit elephant camps.

For a more remote trek, go to Mae Hong Son's Mae Sariang and Sop Muai districts. Here, surrounded by nature, trekkers can spend a night at Lawa and Karen hilltribe villages. Again, many people end the trekking trip by heading out for a rafting trip at Mae Sam Lap and exploring the border between Thailand and Myanmar. Another rare gem for trekkers in Chiang Mai is Doi Mon

Jong in Om Koi Wildlife Sanctuary. Located in Chiang Mai's Om Koi district, it borders Mae Sariang. The highest peak, Hua Sing, is one of the last few places in Thailand where you can spot rhododendrons blooming in the sun during winter. This forest is home to many species of wildlife including sambar deer and barking deer. It's a less visited district of Chiang Mai and most of its residents are ethnic Karen. To go trekking here, you need to get advance permission from Om Koi Wildlife Sanctuary Musoe Unit.



ELEPHANT HAVEN: Going on an elephant trek when in Chiang Mai has become a right of passage for many travellers to Thailand. Photo: Bfick

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May 31, 7 to 11pm: Indian Curry Buffet at the 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, mouth-watering Chicken Tikka, Samosas, freshly baked Naans and more. For reservations contact Jaspal Singh on: +66-76-286464.

June 7-8, 9pm-1am Black & Gold party with Jeremy Healy

The UK's Jeremy Healy will be playing at XANA beach club for Attica's 'Black & Gold' party. The event will see Phuket's glitterati take to the dance floor to hear one of Healy's legendary flamboyant sets, supported by XANA's Friday night resident DJ Kensho. The theme for the evening is black and gold; from sassy accessorising to daring costumes. Face and body painting on the night will complete the look! Entry to the event is free of charge Contact Annabel Fox on: +66-76-324101 or by Email: annabel@xanabeachclub.com www.xanabeachclub.com

June 8 - 9, 4:30am to 12pm: 8th Laguna Phuket International Marathon at Laguna Grove, Laguna Phuket



Laguna Phuket International Marathon June 8-9

Thousands of runners from around the world will "Run Paradise" in this, the eighth Laguna Phuket International Marathon to reaffirm its status as Asia's most popular family-friendly destination marathon. In addition to the full 42km marathon there's a 21.1km half marathon and 10.5km run.

Families will be catered for with the 91.5FM 5km community walk and 2km children's race. "Run Paradise" is an apt description, with runners of all ages and abilities on a mainly flat course that takes in rubber and pineapple plantations, beach views, local villages and the tropical lagoons of Laguna Phuket – all in a family-friendly carnival atmosphere. For more information, please visit: phuketmarathon.com

The *Phuket Gazette*, PGTV and the *Gazette*'s 'Phuket Today' show are proud sponsors of this iconic annual event, segments of which will be broadcast daily by True Visions (channels 99 and 58) during the week of June 17.

June 20, 11:30am to 2pm: Phuket International Women's Club monthly lunch

The June lunch will be held at two Chefs Bistro in Karon. All are

welcome but registration is essential. Members 500 baht, guests 650 baht. For more information, please contact: Carole Dux: Phone +66-76-316711; or email: info@phuketiwc.com.

July 6-7, 10am to 8pm: Phuket Airshow & Family Picnic at Phuket Airpark

Two full days of entertainment for local area charities. Support this great non-profit event by becoming a sponsor, volunteer, or vendor. For more details please visit navyleaguephuket.org. This event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*, PGTV and the 'Phuket Today' show.

July 22, Arsarnha Bucha Day

This full-moon day of the eighth lunar month commemorates the Buddha's first sermon to his disciples after attaining enlightenment.

August 12, Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday

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

September 19, 11:30am to 2pm: Phuket International Women's Club monthly lunch

September's lunch will be at The Holiday Inn, Patong. Members 500 baht and guests 650 baht. Contact: Carole Dux on +66-76-316711 or info@phuketiwc.com

October 8, 6-10:30pm Wine List of the Year Thailand Awards 2013

The Wine List of the Year Thailand Awards is a National competition recognizing the efforts and expertise amongst the hotels, restaurants, cafes and wine bars in the development of wine culture in Thailand. The Wine List of the Year Thailand Awards promote and

reward excellence in these venues and convey this message to the media and wine and food consumers in Thailand and abroad.

The competition is open to all food and beverage establishments with wine lists. The online registration opens in May 2013 and culminates in the announcement of Thailand's best wine list at the Awards ceremony in October.

This event is proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*, PGTV and the 'Phuket Today' show, broadcast nationally eight times a week on True Visions (channels 99 and 58). Location to be confirmed for information contact Jon Hyams: Phone +66-80-471 8713; Email info@winelistoftheyearthailand.com

October 17, 11:30am-2pm. Phuket International Women's Club monthly lunch

Another new and fascinating location for our October lunch: the historic Panwa House at the Cape Panwa Hotel. As usual, booking is required but all are welcome. Members: 500 baht; non members and guests: 650 baht. Register at info@phuketiwc.com Email info@phuketiwc.com

October 23, Chulalongkorn Memorial Day

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

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If you need to talk with someone, drop by one of the informal Sunday morning computer discussion groups, starting about 10am every Sunday at Sandwich Shoppe Chalong (about 1 km north of Chalong Circle on Chao Fah East road). Consolation, commiseration, and old fashioned help await – for free.

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Phuket Today is a 30-minute lifestyle show about Phuket. The show features resorts, villas, restaurants, yachts, private aircraft, nightlife, sports, leisure activities and events. Produced by PGTV, the television arm of the Phuket Gazette, the show is designed to promote Phuket to tourists and the international community resident in Thailand.

Catch the show at these times

Channel	Shows a week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
TrueVisions HD Channel 99	8 shows a week - MCOT World	05:10am	11:10pm	10:10am	01:10pm	04:10am & 07:10pm	01:10pm	06:10pm	
Phuket Cable Company (PC)	Covers all Phuket. Channel 1 - 19 shows a week	Monday - Friday: 10:30am, 6:00pm, 9:00pm. Saturday & Sunday: 10:30am, 9:10pm.							
Rawai Cable	Covers Rawai, Chalong, Kata, Karon. Channel 1 - 28 shows a week	Monday - Sunday: 10:00am, 1:00pm, 7:00pm, 10:00pm.							
True Friesview Channel 58	8 shows a week - MCOT World	05:10am	11:10pm	10:10am	01:10pm	04:10am & 07:10pm	01:10pm	06:10pm	
Channel 43	8 shows a week	05:10am	11:10pm	10:10am	01:10pm	04:10am & 07:10pm	01:10pm	06:10pm	

Online: www.phuketgazette.net/tv | www.youtube.com/PGTVPhuket
And in 4,600 hotel rooms around the island, international hospitals and Phuket Immigration Office.



DIVINE DESSERTS: The range of desserts on offer at the Durian Festival is extensive, these macaroons in durian mousse highlight the complex taste of ripe durian. Photos: Mark Knowles

Discover the delights of durian

By Mark Knowles

THE ineffable flavor of the durian has been a source of intense debate among locals and visitors to Southeast Asia for centuries. There have been countless attempts at describing the fruit's pungent smell and unique taste; it has been likened to roast almonds, rotten onions, old gym socks and even turpentine. While everyone has a different way of describing it – all seem to agree that there is nothing else quite like a durian. Its fans call it the 'King of Fruits'; its detractors say it's revolting and akin to "eating sweet strawberry blancmange in a lavatory". Love it or hate it, tasting this exotic wonder-fruit is an essential experience for anyone who comes to Thailand.

The second annual Durian Festival, held at Thanyapura's DiVine Restaurant, is a celebration of the beloved fruit and a tribute to its many culinary qualities. The festival is the brainchild of DiVine Restaurant Food and Beverage Manager Sereymony Or, who first struck upon the idea of showcasing durian dishes to guests while he was working at a hotel in Cambodia.

"When we did it there, we only had durian in a few dishes, but now we are using durian in almost all our dishes. The chef is very creative," he said.

"When I came to Phuket, I saw that no other restaurants were using durian, so I saw the opportunity to show people the

quality of Thai durian."

Mr Sereymony said that many chefs are intimidated by the fruit's reputation and fearful that guests will avoid dishes that incorporate it.

"We want to try to make everybody understand it's not that bad to eat durian. It's not a difficult food to eat."

"Traditionally, people believe that durian can only be used for dessert, but we wanted to show that it can be used in many different ways," he said.

DiVine Restaurant Director of Kitchen Operations, Sathaporn Boodmeechai, is a durian-lover and wants to banish any negative perceptions that surround its consumption – his inventive and extensive festival menu aims to do just that.

When Mr Sereymony suggested the idea of the Durian festival, Chef Sathaporn immediately took up the challenge and began experimenting with new ways to integrate durian into a range of dishes.

In order to minimize the strong smell of the fruit, Chef Sathaporn came up with the novel idea of using it unripened. In its unripe state, it has a much milder taste and can be used in a similar way to traditional ingredients like potato, green papaya and eggplant.

To incorporate the infamous taste of ripe durian, without overpowering the other ingredients, small amounts of the ripe flesh has been blended into drinks, sauces and vinaigrettes to create subtle new flavors.

"We tried many types of durian, some were very sweet and some less sweet. For many of our dishes we used the less sweet variety and selected ones that were not too young, but also not too ripe," said Chef Sathaporn.

The *Gazette* visited DiVine Restaurant recently to sample some of chef Sathaporn's creations, which fuse high-quality ingredients with in a multitude of forms of the fruit, to put a twist on some of the restaurant's classic dishes.

Upon arrival, we were served an infused soda, a refreshing introduction to the complex taste of the ripe fruit, before we moving on the much more subtly flavored dishes. Next came a plethora of delicious starters, including chili shrimp tacos with durian salsa, Thai style salad with durian, and crisp, spicy durian samosas with papaya chutney.

The highlight of the starters is the tuna tartar with durian, roasted capsicum and coriander salsa. The melt-in-the-mouth cubes of raw tuna are perfectly married with the coriander and contrasted by the crunchy-fresh texture of finely cut fruit and vegetable salsa.

Soon, a series of impeccably presented Thai and western style dishes arrived, running the full gamut of meat varieties including duck, beef, chicken, crab, scallops and fish. The pan-fried sardine stuffed with durian and pineapple with sweet chili sauce is a delight, the oily sardine flesh



Chef Sathaporn relishes the challenge of creating new durian infused dishes.

is perfectly cut by the sweetness of the stuffing, creating a perfect balance.

The roasted duck curry with young durian, longan, apple and basil highlighted our champion ingredient's potato-like properties, but when you bite in to a piece, you can still detect a hint of the creamy texture that ripe flesh is famous for.

The durian *gnocchi* with scallops and durian scented mushroom cream was the perfect combination of ingredients, covered in a rich and creamy sauce to make a hearty dish.

After grazing on the many plates on offer, all so inviting that it is impossible not to try each one, it's time for dessert. This is where the taste of the ripe fruit shines, in a selection of crepes, tarts, cakes, puddings, and even macaroons, all featuring the sweet, complex, rich and more-ish flavor of durian. The durian ice-cream is to die for; it has a hint of coconut, and perfectly compliments any of the delicious desserts.

Finally, we are invited outside, where fresh durians of many varieties are cut open and served to complete this ultimate durian experience.

Experience the unique taste of Asia's 'King of Fruits' at the Durian festival at DiVine restaurant, Thanyapura, May 25-31 from 6:30 to 10pm. Food is served buffet style and the cost is 780 ++ baht per person.



The peak of the durian season in Thailand is between May and August and its start usually heralds the beginning of the rainy season.



FRESH FLAVORS: Succulent tuna tartar with durian, roasted capsicum and coriander salsa.

Attawich Techakunbundit

IN THE past, wood has invariably been the building material of choice in Thailand. But with decades of heavy deforestation, this vital resource has become scarce. Builders and house owners alike are forced to turn to alternative and more sustainable materials.

Spotting this rising demand, civil engineer Attawich Techakunbundit and a group of friends set up a company called Solumat in the mid 2000s. Solumat, short for 'solution material' offers a unique building material called Hybridwood, a composite made of wood fiber and plastic polymer. Hybridwood comes in many shapes and forms, but notably decking, planks and railings. It is made to look like wood but, unlike real wood, is maintenance free and durable.

Now branch manager of Solumat in Phuket, Attawich is here to oversee the company's sales and operations using his engineering know-how and business acumen to drive Solumat forward.

A civil engineer by training, Attawich developed a love for business at the end of his degree course at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

"It was accepted as truth that engineers were good at drawings and numbers. I thought myself quite the opposite – I like human contact and love networking.

"True, I was first an engineer but I became interested in business,



so I combined the two areas and became a sales engineer," he said.

Attawich established himself in his chosen field while working for five years as a sales engineer in Bangkok, and later obtained an MBA from Kellstadt Graduate School of Business at De Paul University, Chicago, USA. He returned to Phuket to represent Solumat in 2011.

Here, Attawich works hard to promote what he believes to be an excellent product, which not only fills the need for construction materials left by the shortage of wood, but one that takes environmental issue into consideration.

"Hybridwood is made from 100% recyclable plastic and wood fiber and is absolutely maintenance free. To some who argue that real wood has inherent beauty lacking in most man-made materials, Attawich says: "I totally agree. But can you find real wood these days? And even if you do, should you not turn to substitute material and put less burden on our planet?"

It seems that many agree with him, judging from the company's brochure showing Hybridwood being used by plush hotels and

many housing projects on the island and in other provinces around the country. In the past, he says, many dismissed the idea of using substitute wood, but that's about to change. His background in engineering will help clients with proper installation of the product, which will "make or break the look of the project."

Attawich is not a complete stranger to Phuket – he was born here but left when his parents moved to the capital when he was only two. Now that he has returned to his roots, his numerous relatives make sure he feels at home here.

Attawich is married to Jee Sun Park, a Korean he met while studying in the US. Having to travel often to South Korea, both for business and visiting his in-laws, Attawich observes that: "As a country, South Korea has developed leaps and bounds. There, people are really hard working and quite nationalistic. Most will only use Korean products even if it's more expensive. We Thais are more easy-going in that respect," he laughs.

And about Phuket.

"This island has grown a lot since I left. Now that I am back, I am happy to play my part in its economy. There are many clever Phuketians who have left to work in Bangkok. Imagine what a commercially vibrant place this will be if only they'd all return to help develop it."



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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ABC of plants: 'A' is also for almond



BOLD COLORS: The bright reds and yellows of several varieties of Aloe Vera contrast with their spiky light green leaves and create a beautiful effect in any garden. Photos: Carrotmadman6



SOOTHING SPIKES: Despite their formidable appearance, the leaves of the Aloe Vera plant contain a translucent gooeey sap that is used in many skin treatments. Photo: Carrotmadman6

A COUPLE of recent inquiries reminded me of another omission in my opening sorties on the subject of 'A' plants..

Chris Sieber wrote to ask how he could find a source book where he could "find plant names in English, Latin and Thai." And on the subject of almonds, he added: "About three years ago I brought three green almonds from Cuba and put them in the soil. [One of the trees is] now three meters high.

"I wonder if I will ever get some nuts from it. Do you think I should prune it?"

Second things first. Congratulations, Chris, on growing an almond tree (*prunus dulcis*), presumably from a drupe (nut). Phuket is frankly a bit hot for almonds and I have seen few here. So, one out of three sown is a good return. Of the three main strains of almond trees, two are self-pollinating. The one that is not self-pollinating is called the *tuono* – with a hairy shell and smaller drupes – and has the virtue of being disease resistant. The *nonpareil* is less impervious to attacks, but has a smoother shell, larger kernels and is self pollinating.



Gardening
By Patrick Campbell

In California horticulturalists have developed a commercial hybrid, based on both varieties, which has the virtues of each. So if your tree is either of the two latter strains – and it probably is – it should be self-sufficient, and not reliant on activity by bees or other insects.

As to *when* it will bear fruit, I cannot say, but three years is probably too soon to expect a result. For example, avocados take seven years to produce the goods. Almonds can reach 20 feet in height. I would refrain from pruning the tree, unless it is getting too big for its boots. Almonds are relatively slow-growing anyway.

On the subject of books, the most comprehensive guide with Thai names, botanical names, and everyday English names, is a weighty tome called *Plant Materials in Thailand* which is written by Uamporn Veasomai. It contains photographs of 1320 plants that

will grow in this country. At 1800 baht, it is expensive, but it is an indispensable reference book for the serious gardener. I bought my copy from the bookshop in Central Festival. My only concern is that the order of material means that you will probably need to consult the index. The much more selective *A Field Guide to Tropical Plants of Asia* by Engel and Phummai, published by Marshall Cavendish, also has the linguistic information you require. Since it is a smaller book, I carry this around with me when I visit nurseries.

Returning to plants, another 'A' plant worth a mention is the aloe. It's probably more familiar to many as *aloe vera*, an ingredient in body creams and lotions, but the plant itself, a succulent which hails from South Africa, is a fine sculptural addition to any garden. The lance-shaped leaves grow in rosettes or spirals at the stem or branch tips, and are usually toothed or spiny. Tubular red, orange or yellow flowers burst upwards from bare stems at the center of each crown.

Their striking architectural form means that aloes are popular as

landscaping plants, and are often used on roof gardens. Widely cultivated is *A. arborescens*, which is bushy and stemless, a low-growing species with red or yellow spikes of flowers and fleshy, blue-green leaves, curved and tapering, and up to two-feet long. It is resistant to salt wind and drought,

and is thus a sensible choice for your Phuket garden.

A. bainesii looks rather different: it has a sturdy trunk and has dense terminal rosettes of green leaves. But be careful, they are tipped with sharp teeth. Finally, there is *A. ferox*, and as its name implies, it is even more fiercely armed.



FLOWER SPIKES: Aloe arborescens is a widely cultivated species of aloe vera with large red or yellow flower spikes. Photo: Andrew Massyn



ALMONDS: Phuket is slightly too hot to be ideal for almonds. Photo: Yves Remedios; (Inset) One Phuket Gazette reader was lucky enough to germinate an almond tree from green nuts, known as drupes. Photo: 6th Happiness

Tip of the Week

Tropical triumph: Tropical plants in cool climates

I HAVE always taken the view that no more than 20 per cent of tropical plants could survive being transferred to a Northern European climate – say from Phuket to London – and even fewer if the temperature dropped below zero. But keeping tropical plants indoors as our 19th century forebears knew is a different story. Short on sun but protected from frost, they can and do survive.

Visiting my sister in Devon, I noticed she had three plants in the

bathroom, all of which also grow in my Phuket garden. They are *schefflera*, a pinkish leaved variety of *dracaena* and a *spathiphyllum*, which was actually in flower. None of them looked very happy but then they were more-or-less in a state of waterless hibernation awaiting return of spring sunshine.

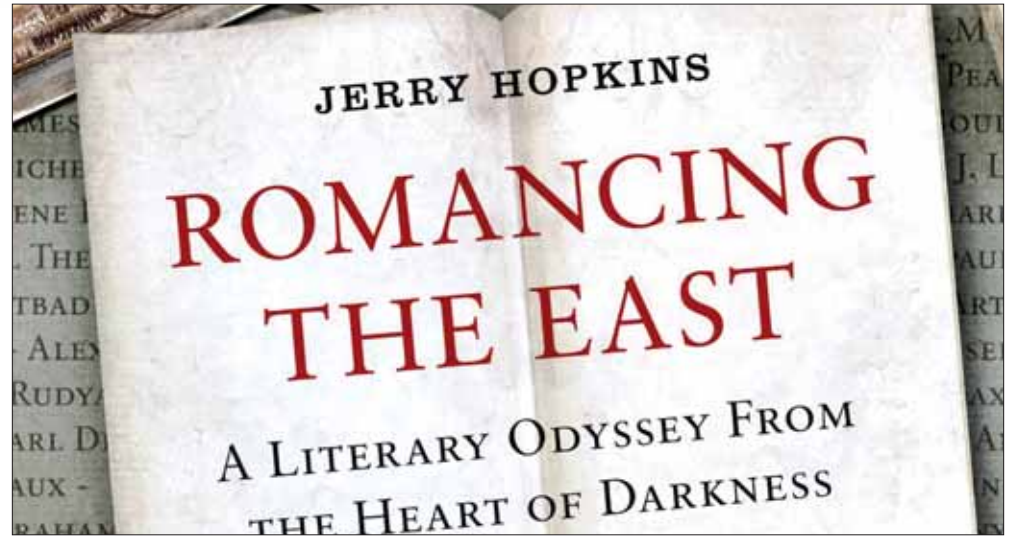
On the other hand, popular herbs cultivated in Thailand, such as sage, thyme, rosemary and chives, were thriving in the cold conditions.



Spathiphyllum is known as the 'peace lily'. Photo: Forest and Kim Starr



Pierre Boulle's book *Bridge over the River Kwai* was part of a long tradition of crude Japan-bashing. Photo: Mattmangum



Jerry Hopkins's portraits of 32 Western writers range from Conrad and Kipling to Greene and Burgess to Theroux and Naipaul. Photo: blogAsia

An education of life in the East

JERRY Hopkins was present at the creation of *Rolling Stone* magazine and the early hippie days of West Coast rock. After penning the definitive biography of Jim Morrison – *No One Here Gets Out Alive* – he took off for a long sojourn in Hawaii. He's been in Thailand now for 20 years, still writing books, three dozen of them so far. My favorite is *Bangkok Babylon* – profiles of 26 well-known expatriates in Thailand.

He's done the same now with 32 Western writers in *Romancing the East* (Tuttle, Rutland, Vermont, 2013, 287pp). His portraits range from Conrad and Kipling to Greene and Burgess to Theroux and Naipaul. A common theme is how these writers view the East – India, China, Burma, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong – and how well they have informed or misinformed their readers.

Each essay has a common structure: a biography of the author, a critical appraisal of his work, and suggestions for retracing the author's steps in the modern world. Hopkins' scrutiny ranges from high literature to low-rent pulp novels. For example, Sax Rohmer's tales of the Chinese arch-villain Doctor Fu Manchu – inscrutable, alien, devious and deeply evil – warn his credulous readers of the "Yellow Peril" while Earl Derr Biggers presents the condescending counterpart of detective Charlie Chan and his hopelessly mangled English. Perpetuating the myth of a brutal, barbaric and comically benighted Siam was that gaudy fraud Anna Leonowens, subsequently immortalized in the equally

fraudulent musical *The King and I*.

Young Americans, the beneficiaries of a booming Asian population, might be shocked by the virulent racism of a previous era.

But the best of these writers have embarked on a literary odyssey to understand the East. Just take Japan as one example. Lafcadio Hearn delighted in turn-the-century rural Japan, adopting the dress and language, marrying a Japanese and taking a Japanese name. He concluded: "There can remain no doubt in the mind of one who even partly understands the Japanese, that they are still the best people in the world to live among." Similarly, James Clavell overcame his experience with the Japanese as a POW in Singapore to write the culturally sensitive epic *Shogun*.

Taking their own stab at understanding Japan were James Michener in *Sayonara* and Arthur Golden in *Memoirs of a Geisha*, while continuing a long tradition of crude Japan-bashing are Pierre Boulle in *Bridge over the River Kwai* and Michael Crichton in *Rising Sun*.

E.M. Forster through his masterwork *A Passage to India* comes to regard his own countrymen as "elitist, prudish, censorious, lacking subtlety, complacent, self-satisfied, racist and dull". George Orwell came to much the same conclusion in *Burmese Days*, a novel based on his five years as a colonial policeman.

Presenting two opposing versions of Vietnam are William Lederer and Eugene

Burdick's pedestrian *The Ugly American* and Graham Greene's tortured *The Quiet American*. Tossing off this thumbnail portrait of Greene, Hopkins writes: "A lifelong manic-depressive, his Catholicism denying him divorce, chronically unfaithful to his subsequent partners, a habit of whores, probably alcoholic, and an opium smoker, not to mention his secret life as a spy, he didn't need to look far for material."

He offers equally devastating vivisections of Andre Malraux, Paul Theroux and V.S. Naipaul. In contrast to Anthony Burgess' genial picture of Malaysia (*The Malaysian Trilogy*) after years as an English teacher, Naipaul savages the country (*Among the Believers*) after just a brief visit.

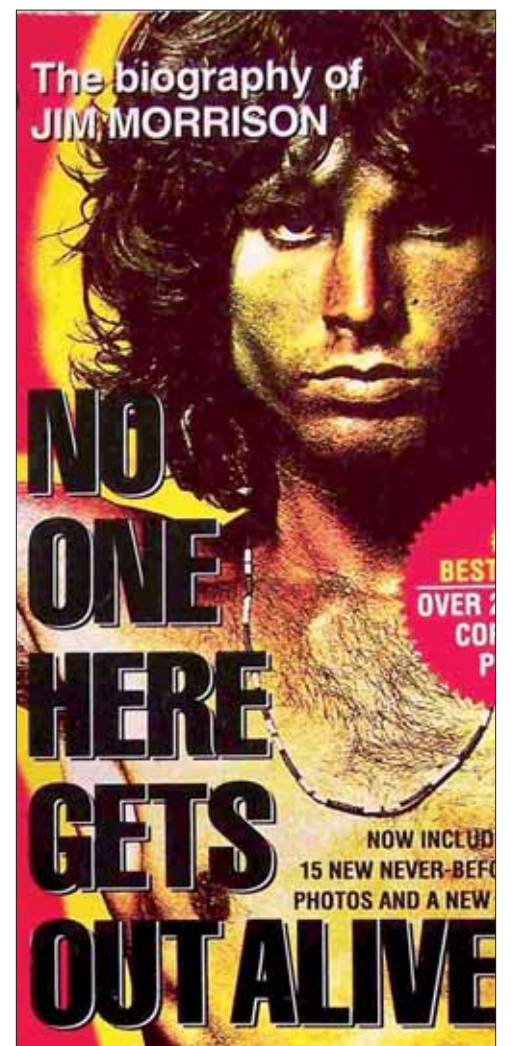
Thailand has been particularly ill-served by a horde of Western hacks fixated on bar girls. A major work of literature awaits.

And finally there is a contemporary insider view of Asians written by an American, Amy Tan. Hopkins observes that her characters – Chinese mothers and American daughters – make it clear that "they" are just like "us".

I would have preferred that weak chapters on Richard Conlon and Ian Fleming be replaced by more serious observers of Asia like Paul Scott (*The Raj Quartet*, *The Chinese Love Pavilion*) and Christopher Koch (*The Year of Living Dangerously*), but this is to criticize Jerry Hopkins for the book he did not write. The one he did is shrewd, fascinating, trenchant, an education and a joy to read.

Books

By James Eckardt



Jerry Hopkins is renowned for his definitive biography of Jim Morrison. Photo: cdrummbks

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Learn to feel good

By Baz Daniel

LAST weekend Phuket hosted the second Rawai-Nai Harn Health and Wellness Festival during which a gathering of highly qualified practitioners led various sessions designed to help us all lead healthier, happier, more well-balanced lives. Phuket is certainly privileged in having so many of these health practitioners living and working here, but their presence begs the question: "Why choose Phuket to practice? Is the populace so dreadfully unwell that your business is always going to be thriving?"

I set out to talk to many of these practitioners during the wellness-fest to discover whether Phuket was in fact healthier and happier, or conversely, distinctly unhealthy and unhappy, compared to the rest of the planet.

What I learned was encouraging and depressing in equal measure and at the heart of it all there lurks a savage paradox of inequity.

If you Google 'best detox programs' you will see that Thailand features heavily on the all-important first Google page, beyond which almost no one has the time to read these days. Clearly Phuket is a hotbed of wellness, or at least it is to a well-heeled international elite who can afford to fly here to detox or get their head together in order to fly back to the rat race and start their lives again.

In addition, Phuket is full of highly regarded wellness practitioners and it turns out the reasons they are practicing here, rather than say Grimsby, are the exact same reasons that bring millions of hedonistic tourists. The answer is simple – sun, sand, sea, a laid-back tropical isle, friendly natives, great food and a relatively

inexpensive cost structure compared to most of the alternatives.

Michael Massey is the Director of Atmanjai Wellness Center and a major driving force behind the Wellness Festival itself. He summed up the reasons people seeking wellness tend to gravitate to our warm sunny climes most eloquently, saying: "Let's face it, if



STRETCH IT: A yoga instructor demonstrates a pose to her class.

you are having to do daily coffee enemas to cleanse your system, you're more likely to buckle down to it overlooking beautiful Friendship Beach, rather than on a cold, grey winter's morning in London."

Sharon Cassius, the Wellness Director at Atmanjai, agrees: "Getting out of the everyday groove is an important part of doing a successful detox and getting your life back on to a positive track. Here at Friendship Beach, we find clients become relaxed and comfortable, and are more able to do the often difficult emotional work that they need. In addition, Phuket offers many interesting complementary activities that our clients can enjoy while they are here."

Geti Pici is the vivacious Zumba teacher who led both adult and kids' classes at the Festival. Originally from Venice, she says: "Italy is all stress and chasing money these days and no-one has any time for themselves any more. I came to Phuket to escape all that and now I am living my dream, sharing the music and energy of Zumba, which I love, and living on this delightful island."

Tobi Warzinek originally came to Phuket as a backpacker after spending seven years at the Center of Higher Tibetan Studies in Switzerland. Fascinated by Theravada Buddhism, he gravitated towards Thailand and in 2009 founded Phuket Meditation, where he teaches Buddhist Dharma and mindfulness.

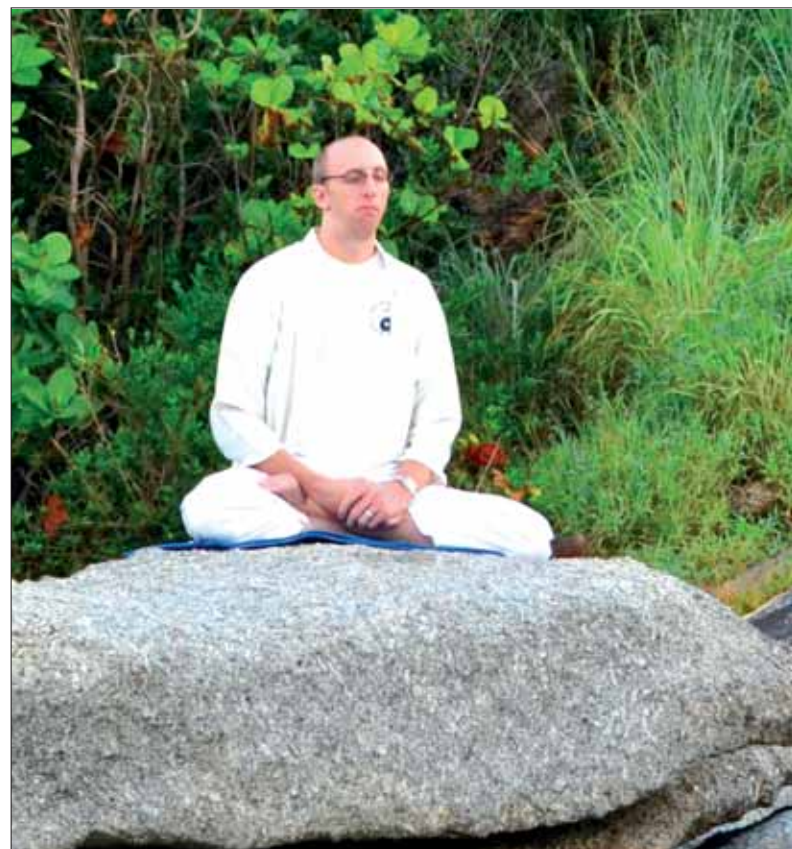
Tobi says: "There's a global trend of increasing health and nutritional consciousness in response to the increased levels of stress caused by living in overcrowded cities chasing money and materialism."

Tobi agrees with Michael Massey, saying: "The main stressors are money, time pressure, relationship problems and substance abuse, and increasingly, young people are questioning their way of life and looking for more balance. In Phuket they can find that, at least while they are here, but it is what they take back home with them that really counts."

Clearly Phuket is something of a Mecca for health and wellness practitioners and their usually young, international, up-market clients who fly here to cope with the travails of modern life back home.

But this is where the paradox in all this arises. Phuket recently achieved the decidedly grumpy score of just 24.2 per cent on the 2013 Thailand Happiness Index, making it the third most unhappy place in the country, with only Bangkok (20.8 per cent) and Samut Prakan (22 per cent) rated as even more dour!

The Academic Network for Community Happiness Observation and Research (ANCHOR) at Assumption University surveyed opinions of 12,429 people nationwide. The resultant index scores the local Thai populace's self evaluation of how happy they are on 17 specific cri-



ON THE ROCKS: Tobi Warzinek, the founder of the Phuket Meditation and Retreat Center, meditates by the beach in Phuket.



BEACH YOGA: Michael Massey, one of the Wellness festival organisers, practicing what he preaches. Photos: Baz Daniel

teria. These include family relationships, current occupation, physical and mental health, culture and tradition, community relationships, housing and infrastructure, access to medical services, financial security, education, safety in life and property, natural resources and environment, and social justice.

Specifically, Phuketians rated themselves as less than happy because of increasing urbanization and materialism; high crime rates; relationships in family and community in crisis; drug problems and alcoholism; disunity and bias in society; anger; public antipathy to government and local authorities. Tellingly, there was almost total distrust in the government's sin-

cerity or ability to do anything about the problems that make Phuketians so unhappy.

It is both sad and ironic that Phuket attracts wellness professionals and their clients from around the world to come and re-balance themselves amidst the pleasures of a tropical isle, but also increasingly disbars local residents from feeling good about themselves and their lives.

Surely a good place to start to redress this paradox is to encourage local people to get outdoors onto our glorious beaches and parks and move their bodies.

So don't just sit there, move it Phuket! Get out and enjoy some of the fantastic amenities and beautiful nature our great island has to offer and start on the path to your own health and wellness goals.

See this week's Phuket Today show - Truevisions ch 58 & 99 and local cable ch 1 - for more on this year's Health & Fitness Festival.

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Tourist Buddy Android app released

By Saran Mitrarat

THE Phuket Tourist Police are urging visitors to the island to download and register the agency's Tourist Buddy application, which is now available on Google Play for devices running the Android platform. The Tourist Police launched its Tourist Buddy app on Apple's iTunes store last month, making it instantly available for iPhone and iPad users.

Tourist Buddy, available in English and Thai, allows users to quickly access local maps, find out where tourist attractions are, and learn about local events and even discounts at local restaurants and other businesses.

"But more importantly, it also allows tourists to quickly contact the Tourist Police if they need to," explained Phuket Tourist Police Inspector Urumporn Koondejsumrit.

When users first launch the Tourist Buddy app, they are asked whether or not they want the Tourist Police to know their location, delivered through the

phone's GPS facility.

"If tourists in danger use the app to call the Tourist Police 24-hour national hotline, 1155, we will know exactly where they are [within 10 meters] and will be able to go immediately to the right location to help," Maj Urumporn said.

Other important features include an "email us" button, which allows users to send images and video directly to the Tourist Police headquarters in Bangkok.

"Bangkok officers will send the email directly to us in Phuket," Maj Urumporn said.

Not many tourists have downloaded the app, but so far all of the feedback we have received has been positive, Maj Urumporn explained.

"I would like more people in Phuket to use this app, because it will make it safer and more convenient for tourists to travel anywhere in Thailand," he explained.

"There are many millions of Android users now and we want to make sure they can use Tourist Buddy, too," he added.



Phuket Tourist Police Inspector Urumporn Koondejsumrit is calling for all tourists to download the Tourist Buddy app, which is now available for Android in Thai and English on Google Play. Photo: Saran Mitrarat

Microsoft encourages SMEs to upgrade infrastructure

THOUSANDS of small and medium-sized enterprises all over Asia are being enticed by Microsoft to modernise their information-technology infrastructure before the end of support for Windows XP and Office 2003 on April 8, 2014.

This involves a multi-pronged approach including a 15-per-cent discount on Windows 8 and Office 2013 through the company's volume licensing programme, notebook and tablet upgrade offers,

and an "SME IT Makeover" contest in Thailand and across the Southeast Asian region.

SMEs running Windows XP and Office 2003 need to be aware that after these products no longer receive support from Microsoft, they will be exposed to security and privacy risks and software incompatibility. Should such problems occur, they will not have anyone to call, and may experience downtime and higher

total cost of ownership.

Microsoft's "Security Intelligence Report, Volume 14", which was released last month, highlighted that personal computers running Windows XP with SP3 were 2.5 times as vulnerable as Windows 7 SP, and about 14 times as vulnerable as Windows 8.

Since May 1, SMEs in Thailand have been able to participate in the "Get2Modern SME IT Makeover Contest" giving them a chance to

modernise their operations with free Windows 8 Pro notebooks and tablets, Office 365 Small Business Premium subscriptions and migration services worth US\$6,000.

All country winners will also qualify for an Asia-Pacific-level contest, where one final winner will be crowned by votes across the region in July and will receive an additional \$9,000 worth of Microsoft software, notebooks,

tablets and migration services.

Interested participants can choose to upload a video or photo of their current work space through the Microsoft Business website and fill out an online form on why they are interested in modernising their desktops with Windows 8 Pro and Office 2013.

The Get2Modern SME IT Makeover Contest ends on June 15. - The Nation

Ethernet marks 40 years

LEADING innovators, top-level executives from international telecommunications and networking agencies met this week in Mountain View, California, to celebrate 40 years of the Ethernet, a computer networking technology and architecture for local area networks (LANs).

The event "NetEvents - Global Press & Analyst Summit" ran from May 21 to 24 and was attended by the movers and shakers in cyber world business as well as researchers and academics in the field.

Ethernet co-inventors Bob Metcalfe and Dave Boggs came along to the international summit and recounted the early history of the Ethernet. Metcalfe gave the opening keynote presentation, explaining his early choices and challenges and what is called 'Metcalfe's Law.'

On May 23, the keynote speech focused on the vision for the Internet age, informing participants

"Where the Internet might at best take us and what are the human and societal factors that could disrupt that progress"

Further presentations were given on the relationship between Ethernet and the Cloud, as content and telecommunication providers scramble to build a data centre that offers comprehensive software and platform services. However, questions still remain on how to deliver Cloud services widely, reliably and securely to the client base.

Another session was entitled "The enemy at work, in the home and on the network." The speakers, who are top security solution vendors, spoke about whether Ethernet, the world's common business language, has become the common language of crime. They will also explain what their companies and the industry are doing to meet the challenges of increasingly sophisticated cyber crimes. - The Nation



The ethernet is the backbone of business computing world-wide. Photo: Point d'Appui National ANT

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Service-minded sailors to shore up



INVOLVED: A sailor interacts with a school child. Photo: US Navy



Volunteers pose for a picture at the Home & Life orphanage.



LABOR: American and Thai volunteers pulling their weight.

AS THE end of May draws near, the crews of the *USS Nimitz*, a prominent American Navy supercarrier, along with the *USS Princeton*, a Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser, are set to moor off Phuket for three days of shore leave – but it's not just leisurely R&R that the crews have their sights on.

Faithful crew, male and female, will once again be making a positive impact on Phuket and the surrounding region through a handful of community service projects (COMSERV) organized by the Navy League of Phuket (NLP).

To ensure that such projects break ground smoothly, the NLP – officially known as the Thailand Southern Seaboard Council, and a division of the Navy League of the United States – has joined forces with the Rotary Club of Patong Beach, the Lions Club of Patong Beach and the Glenn Defense Marine Group, the husbanding contractor for the US Navy in Thailand.

Adding to the 109 COMSERVE projects that have previously been

completed on, off, and around the island, the upcoming supercarrier visit will see 13 more projects carried out at various locations.

Highlighting the nature of the COMSERVE efforts, the following are details about two ongoing model projects.

River erosion control and land recovery @ orphanage

Just across the Sarasin bridge, north of Phuket island in Phang Nga province's Tai Muang district, is the Home & Life Orphanage, the humble abode of a wonderful family unit comprising 26 children, orphaned as a result of the devastating 2004 tsunami, and four gracious caretakers.

On the premises of the orphanage are several buildings, including dorms, an office, bakery, and coffee shop. The property is beside a river that had eroded the land, making it unfit for use, while the integrity of the bakery and several other buildings has also been threatened.

Over the past year, the river bank has been shored-up a bit thanks to generous donations from

the Rotary Club of Patong Beach, in addition to the dedicated service of US Navy and Marine volunteers partaking in a series of COMSERV initiatives. This ongoing effort has been fueled by the hard work of members of the *USS Comstock* (LSD-45), *USS Green Bay* (LPD-20), *USS Kidd* (DDG 100), and the *USS Ford* (FFG 54), as well as volunteers from the Royal Thai Navy from the nearby Thai Navy Region 3's Phang Nga Naval Base.

The next and current phase is to recover and backfill some of the degraded land so that a playground can be built in the near future. This job will utilize about 40 volunteers, 15 to 25 of whom will be dispatched from the US Navy, along with another 15-20 volunteers from the Royal Thai Navy.

In preparation, top soil has been delivered to the site using a small tractor. The first day will commence with hard labor to backfill the area behind the latest row of gabion cages already in place. On the second day, the volunteers will install another row of gabion cages, which will be filled with

heavy rocks. Then, on the final day, the area behind the new row of gabion cages will be backfilled with soil to recover the land, which will be the site of a playground to be built at a future date.

Maintenance jobs @ migrant workers' children's school

The Bang Jo Learning Center is a school for migrant workers' children in Cherng Talay, Phuket, that was set up in 2010 by the Rghmonya Labour Union's Operation Learning Projects Center, which is based in nearby Ranong province.

Legal Burmese migrant worker families living in construction worker camps in Bang Jo and other Thalang areas requested that a Burmese Learning Center be built so their children could receive education equivalent to what they would receive in their home country, Myanmar.

The children are taught Math, Social Studies, Dance, History, Science, English, Burmese and Thai – reading and writing. The school began with thirty students and two teachers, but is now growing to accommodate sixty children and three teachers.

The school is currently run and supported by the Good Shepard Phuket, which is part of the Good Shepard Sisters Thailand. A major part of this foundation's objective is to empower the students to be productive members of society when they return to

their home country.

There are many small projects at the Bang Jo Learning Center which will be accomplished over three days. These include:

- Repairs to the school's basic electrical system. Thai electricians will do some wiring for safety, while volunteers will install four wall fans.
- Installation of new playground equipment. This needs to be assembled and installed after the playground is cleaned of rubble. The equipment includes a small trampoline.
- Fitting of locks and latches to classroom doors for better security.
- Tiling of two playrooms, which will be completed in collaboration with local Thai masons.
- Painting of the outside of the building's walls with another coat of paint.
- Playing and interfacing with the 60 children, possibly teaching them some basic English.
- Numerous other clean-up and small painting jobs if time permits.

– *Phuket Gazette*

For more information and inquires on how to contribute, volunteer or become a sponsor of COMSERVE initiatives, contact Brad Kenny, Charter Member and COMSERV Coordinator, US Navy League, Thailand Southern Seaboard Council, on 081-633 4279 in Thailand, or, from outside of Thailand, on 66 81-633 4279; email: esp pkt@ksc.th.com

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The Navy League Phuket is pulling out all the stops for this year's American Independence Day weekend celebrations, with a family picnic, live music and the grandest of air shows to showcase aerobatic planes, hot air balloons and a death-defying skydiving stunt. Other free-of-charge activities include ATV riding; swimming and kayaking on the on-site canals and lake; and an array of games and contests. Tickets for hot-air balloon and airplane rides will also be available. All are welcome – Thai, American, and everyone else. Admission is free, as is parking for up to 400 cars. American food and beverages will be sold at the event. All proceeds will go to charitable initiatives, as directed by the NLP.



The USS Nimitz (foreground) in the South China Sea. Photo: US Navy.



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James Anthony Tan is the youngest pilot to complete a solo circumnavigation of the globe.



The young pilot completed his journey in a single-engine Cessna 210 Eagle aircraft.

Asian pilot youngest to go solo

By Saran Mitrarat

MALAYSIAN, James Anthony Tan, 21, became the youngest pilot to complete a solo circumnavigation of the globe when he landed at Kuala Lumpur on May 14.

On his way to Kuala Lumpur, James stopped off in Phuket to attend a party in his honor hosted by Tourism Malaysia, who sponsored his epic journey under the banner 'Malaysia Around the World', at the Dewa Phuket Beach Resort.

"I started learning to fly when I was 18," Capt Tan told the *Phuket Gazette* during his stopover.

"My motto is: If you can't fly, you drive. If you can't drive, you run. If you can't run you walk. And if you can't walk, you crawl," he said.

After departing Phuket at 11am on May

14 he landed safely in Kuala Lumpur at 4:51pm local time.

Captain Tan's journey began when he took off from Subang Airport, Malaysia on March 26 and concluded 50 days – 120 hours (flight time) – later.

The journey covered more than 22,000 nautical miles over four continents: Europe, Asia, Africa and North America.

Capt Tan's first stop on his historical flight was Bangkok, before he flew on to Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, Russia, Canada, the USA, Europe, the Middle East, India and

Phuket – making Thailand the only country he visited twice. He achieved this feat in a single-engine Cessna 210 Eagle aircraft.

The most challenging moment during his record flight was when James was grounded by ice in North America.

"It was minus 20 degrees Celsius. My aircraft was frozen. So I pulled myself together and tried everything I could think of and I finally got the engine started," he said.

"I didn't worry because I had lots of support from my fans. It was luck. Luck is very important, along

with dreams; believe in your dreams and do it," he laughed.

Asked which country he was determined to revisit, Capt Tan said: "Of course, Thailand."

"It was my chance to fly to many countries around the world, like a tourist. I found many different cultures in each country, but the cultures I liked the most were Thai and Malaysian," he added.

The previous record holder, Carlo Schmid of Switzerland, was 22 when he completed his solo circumnavigation last year.

James had a final message for those who helped him during his record breaking flight.

"Thank you all for supporting me, my fans in every country where I visited and especially the Malaysian Government and Tourism Malaysia who helped keep me safe everywhere," he said.



James lands safely in Kuala Lumpur to complete his journey. Photo: Facebook fanpage.

Thai AirAsia expects fleet expansion

ASIA Aviation, the listed owner of low-cost carrier Thai AirAsia, is confident of achieving its performance goal for the year of increasing the number of passengers carried to 10 million.

Thai AirAsia carried 8.3mn passengers last year.

This confident outlook follows the airline's recent acquisition of a new Airbus A320, increasing its fleet to 28, and helping strengthen its network both internationally and domestically.

Over the course of the year, ThaiAirAsia will see the arrival of eight new aircraft in total, up from the seven that were previously planned.

Tossapon Bijleveld, CEO of Thai AirAsia, said its growth was in line with the rising number of seats.

Moreover, relocation to Don Mueang International Airport from Suvarnabhumi Airport led to more effective cost management, especially on-time performance, which averaged 90%, he added.

The resulting increase in seat capacity provided by the 35-strong fleet will help drive sales performance, Tossapon said.

According to the Tourism Department, more than 850,000 Chinese tourists entered Thailand via air transport during the first three months of 2013, an increase

of 97% compared to the same period last year.

Of the total, 50% flew with AirAsia, representing a year-on-year 140% rise for the carrier in this segment.

The company has also been boosted by the airline's first-quarter financial results. Net profit grew 55% y-o-y to 739mn baht on the back of sales of 6.02 billion baht.

The number of passengers carried during the quarter increased more than 20% y-o-y, to about 2.6mn. In March alone, the number stood at 920,000 – a record high for the airline. – *The Nation*



Thai AirAsia's recent acquisition of a new Airbus A320 increased its fleet to 28 planes. Photo: Mikecogh

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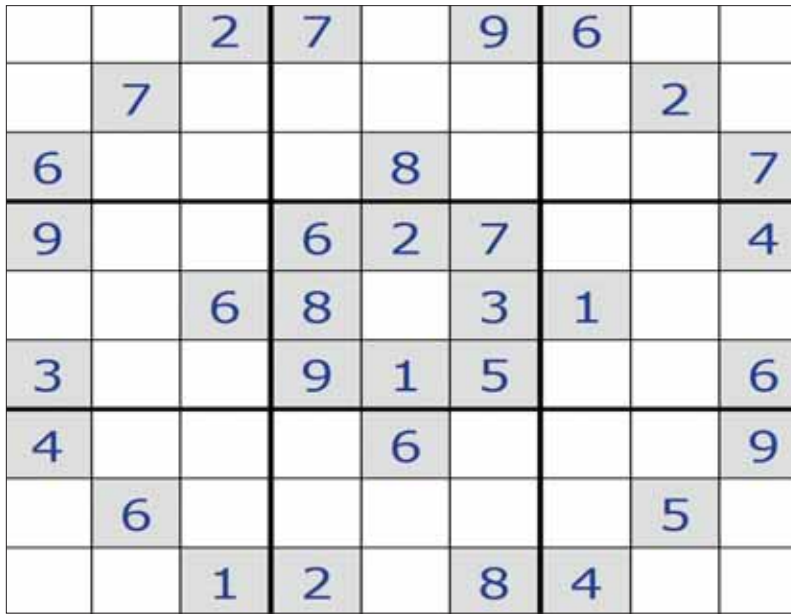


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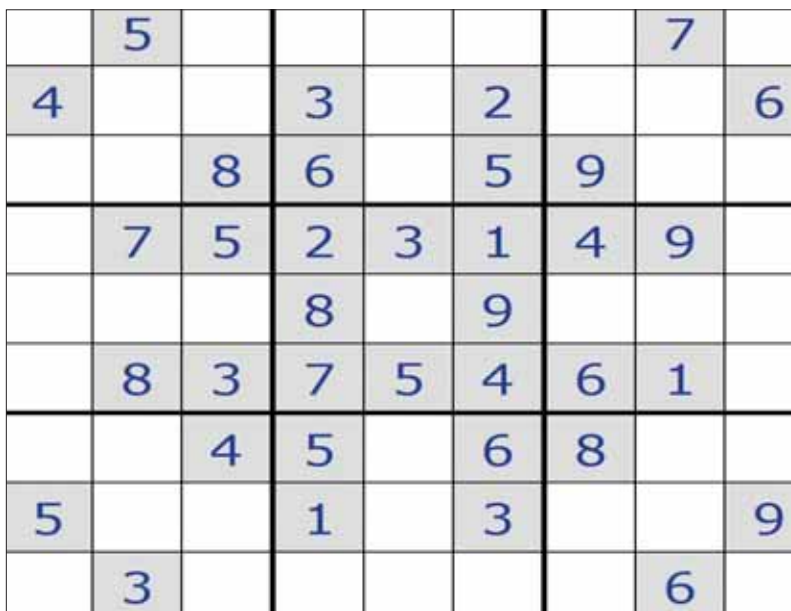
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SUDOKAREN: Each row, column and 3x3 sub-grid must contain the number 1-9 once only. Kevin Stone (brainbashers.com)



Your weekly pith: "It's not so much how busy you are, but why you are busy. The bee is praised. The mosquito is swatted."

- Mary O'Connor

This quote was taken from Ian Hewitt's book
'QUOTES for PROSPERITY'

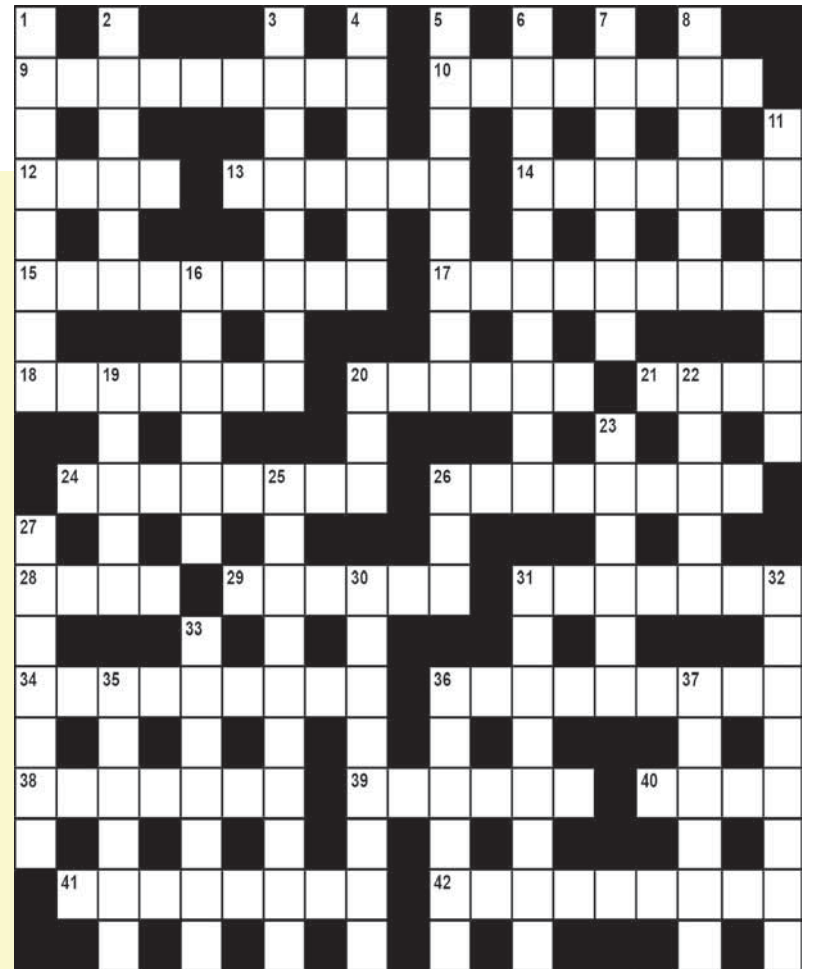
COFFEE break

Across:

9. Possibly he tampers in material (9)
10. Game arranged on my pool (8)
12. Tire out in ceremony (4)
13. Rats upset a liberal like the stars (6)
14. Out East, maybe miss one century of earthquakes (7)
15. In caves I can find unoccupied positions (9)
17. Hold it guy! Maybe bravely! (9)
18. Loss of water from lake, perhaps a long time (7)
20. I alter, possibly recount (6)
21. Ain't possibly agin! (4)
24. Added application finished (8)
26. Joker follows birds (8)
28. Pet's back a short distance (4)
29. Out East, note time for meal service (6)
31. Justification for grand golf games (7)
34. A saint as a disturbed Tsar's daughter (9)
36. Nor war god diverted incorrect way (5,4)
38. i.e. march out an animal said to be mythical (7)
39. So deny possible respected members of society (6)
40. Second, yet different, facial disfigurement (4)
41. Can pears upset digestive organ? (8)
42. Fear liter wasted in test drive, for example (4,5)

Down:

1. Acceptance of application with valor, perhaps (8)
2. Sat around with spasm, unmoving (6)
3. Sit up, chase round in censure (8)
4. Small markets show ability to deal with difficult situations (6)



5. Looked kindly on least dim, perhaps (6,2)
6. Modest, sung a minus variation (10)
7. Ugh! Trip bad on one's feet (7)
8. Maul in fall out of old pupils (6)
11. Account Cyril responsible for plastic (7)
16. Smarter to enter a variation (6)
19. Messy pap the French make of fruit (5)
20. Staff run. Do turn up (3)
22. New, only restyled, artificial cloth (5)
23. Gap not opened into Phuket beach (6)
25. Outfitter marks reeds unusually (10)

26. What a Buddhist temple sounds like (3)
27. Indirectly request new cane (7)
30. Upset, sad, trust in a magical feeling (8)
31. Golf, as close as possible to being banned from leaving the house (8)
32. Den's duly moved without warning (8)
33. Prolong the period (7)
35. Main change, a Liberal becomes a beast (6)
36. Route bad, not near (3,3)
37. Not in suitable clothes (6)

Cryptic crossword compiled by Patong Bill. Answers on page 31.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):

Changes in a family member's circumstances can affect those born under the sign of Gemini this week, but the stars suggest that this will be to your advantage. As the end of May approaches, your luck with money improves and there are signs that you will end the month relieved of a financial burden. Those with a birthday in the days ahead are predicted to coast through the coming year with less stress.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):

Friendships that fell apart can be refreshed this week. The stars support your attempts to mend bridges, which also applies to contacts in the world of work. On a personal level, a fire sign's forgiveness should make your weekend; if this relates to a romantic connection, there are hints that commitment will strengthen. Your luck with finances takes a dip on Monday and Tuesday, but improves at the end of the month.

LEO (July 24-Aug 22):

Taking on too much could be tempting for many Leos this week. The stars suggest that free time will be affected by extra responsibilities that won't bring anticipated

rewards. It would be wise to wait until the start of June before branching out at work. Where affairs of the heart are concerned, your charm is appreciated by another fire sign this weekend. Fortunate days for money matters are Tuesday and Wednesday.

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept 23):

Virgoans who have tightened their purse strings should end the month with a balanced bank account, but those who couldn't resist spending unnecessarily will have to juggle their money to meet all expenses. The stars suggest that June will be a less costly time, although travel plans may have to be put on hold. Your tendency to keep emotions to yourself can affect romance with an air sign this weekend.

LIBRA (Sept 24-Oct 23):

Dreams of relocation can fade into the shadows when Librans see new opportunities this week. The stars advise that staying in familiar surroundings will become more attractive when you realize that change is possible. In the realm of romance, compromise is the keyword. An earth sign partner is ready to back down as long as you become more flexible. Socializing is fun this weekend, with an impromptu party highlighted.

YOUR horoscope By Isla Star

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22):

It can take some extra effort for Scorpios to get moving this week, but your energy should pick up after Wednesday. The stars suggest that improvement in your working life is imminent – expect another water sign to break some good news before the end of the month. Family will appreciate your help this weekend, but you should not go overboard. Glowing days for romance are Monday and Tuesday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21):

In the world of work, your ideas are about to be taken more seriously. Those born under the Sagittarius who have been waiting for the right moment to break away from a stale situation will end the month on a promising note. Where affairs of the heart are concerned, there can be confusion this weekend. Mixed messages from an earth sign may prompt you to put this relationship on hold.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20):

The stars are smiling on your efforts to make a lasting impression at work. Capricorns who have been frustrated by others being favored are forecast to see a radical change in this situation. Promotion is highlighted to be a reason for celebration at the end of May. The sudden ending of a rocky romantic relationship will come as a relief for those who have been seeking a way out.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19):

Forces beyond your control will be at work this week. Most of what occurs should be pleasant, but Aquarians could experience one or two tricky moments where finances are concerned. This astral atmosphere should calm down by the end of the month and June is forecast to be a quieter time, with more focus on relaxation. In the realm of romance, a fire sign is determined to make you pay attention this weekend.

PISCES (Feb 20-March 20):

Certain people may try to dampen your good spirits this week. The stars suggest that other water signs and air signs could be affected by jealousy. If this relates to your

social circle, it would be advisable to play down any recent good fortune that has brightened your life. Impulsive buying could be regretted – those whose partner has put on pressure to make a generous purchase need to be firm.

ARIES (March 21-April 20):

Information is easy to come by at work and this helps you to make an important decision. Watching an air sign friend head in the wrong direction can be upsetting for some Arians, but there are hints that your advice will fall on deaf ears. Emotions run high this weekend where a bitter sweet romance with a water sign is concerned. The stars suggest that time out may be the only answer.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21):

Connections can be career boosting for those born under the sign of Taurus. The stars advise that people from the past who you had forgotten about are likely to come back into your life this week. Your charisma is strong as the end of the month approaches and this should be put to good use. Those who are single and seeking can be smitten by another earth sign this weekend.

International Sport

Laying odds for French Open

By Patrick Campbell

IF I WERE a gambling man, which thank the lord I'm not, then a punt on Serena Williams and Rafael Nadal would seem an obvious bet for the French Open.

But even linked together as a double, the odds would be prohibitively short. Why? Just look at their 2013 records. Rafa, back after a seven month lay-off, has reached eight finals in eight tournaments – and won six of them. Before the climax of the Italian Open in Rome, he declared with his usual modesty: “These are emotional moments for me ... after many months of doubt, I am able to play at a level I would not have dreamed of four months ago.” He then went on court to dismiss Roger Federer while only losing four games.

Serena Williams has also been playing with enormous authority and conviction. At the women's final in Rome, she made relatively short work of Victoria Azarenka, herself a world number one not so long ago. It was the American's fourth consecutive tournament victory and the score of 6-1, 6-3 reflects her dominance, despite some spirited early resistance. Even more telling is her tally of wins: Fourteen to the Belarusian's two. Williams dropped only fourteen games in five matches during the



Serena Williams has been playing with enormous authority and conviction. Photo: Reuters

Rome tournament, and at thirty one, when most players are beginning to feel their age, she is going from strength to strength. To the most powerful shots off the ground and the heaviest serve in women's tennis, she has added mental resolve, conviction and, above all, consistency. As she declared after

the win, much to the chagrin of her competitors: “I feel great. Never felt better.” Sharapova, who defends her French crown at Roland Garros, pulled out of her quarter-final match in Rome against Sara Errani due to a recurring sickness, but in the previous tournament had already lost to

the American. Azarenka got it right when she said of her opponent: “She's been playing her best tennis for the past year and a half or so.”

What of other men's chances in the first Grand Slam of the summer? Djokovic, beaten by Berdych in Rome, seems to have lost a little of his luster. Although he has been number one for what seems like an age; he can never be discounted. Moreover, his record against Nadal is impressive.

Murray, still the world number two, has a lower back injury and is not even sure that he will make the starting blocks. His confidence is on the wane and, frankly, he has not played enough competitive tennis this year.

Federer, despite his wonderfully consistent record in reaching tournament finals, is not the irresistible force he once was, and his record on clay against Nadal – eleven losses out of thirteen – speaks volumes. Of the other contenders, only big hitting Del Potro and Berdych have a game that is conceivably powerful enough to trouble the favorites.

Fortunately, things rarely go entirely according to plan in tennis. Let's hope the cavernous amphitheater of Roland Garros generates its share of high drama.

The French Open starts May 26 until June 9.

Andy Murray ruled out of Roland Garros

WORLD number two Andy Murray has pulled out of the French Open after failing to recover from a lower back injury which he aggravated at the Italian Open last week.

“It's a really tough decision and I love playing in Paris, but after seeking medical advice, I am not fit to compete,” Murray said in a statement released by his management company.

“Apologies to the organizers and thanks to everyone for the

messages of support. Now my complete focus is on getting back on the court as soon as possible.”

Murray retired injured in the Italian Open second round in Rome on his 26th birthday last Wednesday after leveling his match with Spaniard Marcel Granollers by winning the second set.

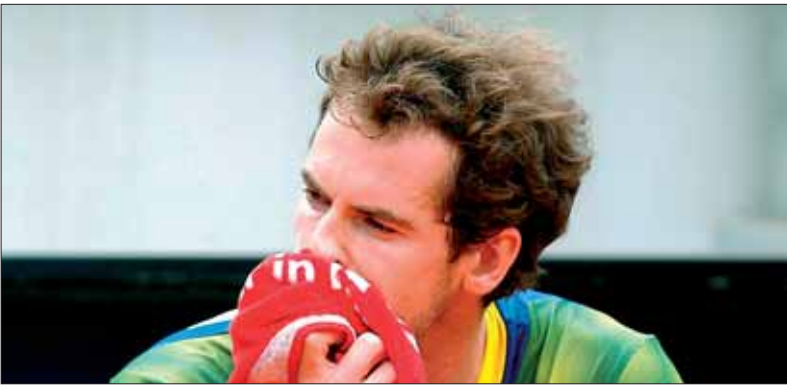
“I'd be very surprised if I were playing in Paris,” he said after having treatment on court. “I want to make sure that it's something

that I can sort out. It's not enjoyable to play now.”

The French Open, which starts on May 26 at Roland Garros, will be the first grand slam Murray has missed since Wimbledon in 2007 when he had a wrist injury.

He will now focus on preparing for the grass court season and set his sights on being ready to play at Queen's Club, the warm-up event for Wimbledon starting on June 10.

– Reuters



Murray injured himself at the Italian Open. Photo: Reuters

European football round up

ARSENAL beat North London rivals Tottenham Hotspur to England's fourth Champions League spot, their 1-0 victory over Newcastle on the final day of the Premier League season was enough to ensure their place in Europe's showpiece competition.

In Serie A, AC Milan scored twice in last six minutes to snatch a place in the Champions League qualifying round, while Porto clinched their 27th Portuguese Premier League title.

Chelsea sealed third place on 75 points with a 2-1 win at home to Everton, while champions Manchester United said farewell to retiring manager Alex Ferguson with a 5-5 draw at West Bromwich Albion.

AC Milan scored twice in the last six minutes to beat relegated Siena 2-1 and finish third in Serie A, clinching a place in the Champions League qualifying round.

Champions Juventus completed

their campaign with a 3-2 defeat at Sampdoria while Walter Mazzarri announced his resignation as coach of second-placed Napoli, immediately after the 2-1 defeat at AS Roma.

Inter Milan finished their miserable season in ninth after being thrashed 5-2 at home by Udinese, who were fifth and joined Fiorentina in the Europa League.

Champions Barcelona moved closer to matching Real Madrid's record haul of 100 points from last season when they beat Real Valladolid 2-1 at home on Sunday.

League runners up Real Madrid lost 2-1 to third-placed Atletico Madrid after extra-time in the King's Cup final on Friday.

Real Sociedad's hopes of claiming Spain's fourth and final Champions League spot remain alive after coming from behind to beat Sevilla 2-1 on Saturday.

With two matches remaining they are tied on 62 points with

Valencia, who beat Getafe 1-0, but are ahead in the standings thanks to a superior head-to-head record.

Champions Bayern Munich needed some Franck Ribery magic to end the Bundesliga season with a dramatic 4-3 win at Borussia Moenchengladbach as they prepare to face Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League final this week.

Second-placed Dortmund, also in their Champions League final dress rehearsal, suffered a late meltdown, conceding two late goals as Hoffenheim staged a last-gasp relegation escape with a 2-1 victory, earning them a relegation playoff with second division side Kaiserslautern.

Schalke 04 beat Freiburg 2-1 to grab fourth place and a Champions League qualifying spot, with their opponents settling for the Europa League along with Eintracht Frankfurt.

– Reuters

PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE			
	TEAM	P	PTS
1	Man Utd	38	89
2	Man City	38	78
3	Chelsea	38	75
4	Arsenal	38	73
5	Tottenham	38	72
6	Everton	38	63
7	Liverpool	38	61
8	WBA	38	49
9	Swansea	38	46
10	West Ham	38	46
11	Norwich	38	44
12	Fulham	38	43
13	Stoke	38	42
14	Southampton	38	41
15	Aston Villa	38	41
16	Newcastle	38	41
17	Sunderland	38	39
18	Wigan	38	36
19	Reading	38	28
20	QPR	38	25

Champions League final

BORUSSIA Dortmund central defender Mats Hummels looks set to be fit for Saturday's Champions League final against German rivals Bayern Munich, despite an ankle injury picked up in the Bundesliga season finale.

Dortmund midfielder Mario Goetze, who will join Bayern next season, is also racing to recover from a muscle injury in time for the final at Wembley.

Dortmund are looking to win their first Champions League trophy since 1997 with four-time European champions Bayern aiming to make it five in their third final appearance in four seasons after the 2-0 defeat in 2010 to Jose Mourinho's Inter Milan in Madrid, then the acute disappointment of losing last May's penalty shoot-out in Munich to Chelsea.

The final kicks off at 01:45am Sunday morning.

– Reuters

May the tread be with you

LAST week, the world's press was attacking Pirelli for its tyres. This column supported Pirelli, and received grumpy responses from those who supported the Red Bull tirade.

When Pirelli agreed to change their tyres from the Canadian GP, Ferrari and Lotus felt Red Bull had pressured Pirelli into conforming to their demands. The 'Tyre Wars' heated up and Ferrari accused Red Bull of having a selective memory and Pirelli of bowing to pressure. Ferrari said "maybe the brain cells that control memory only operate selectively, depending on the results achieved on track by their owners It's a shame that these worthy souls kept quiet two years ago when, at the very same Catalunya Circuit and on the Istanbul track, five of the six drivers who got to those two podiums made exactly the same number of pit stops as did Alonso and Massa last Sunday in the Spanish Grand Prix." Force India and McLaren also seem to be with Pirelli.

Following the Ferrari blast, in a further volte-face, Pirelli then announced they will now make only minimal changes to the tyres for Canada and beyond.

Even Mercedes, which has suffered badly from tyre wear, said there was no case for Pirelli to change. It seems Mercedes is essentially focusing on the 2014 car and, as if to prove that, Lewis Hamilton is taking every opportunity to get non-racing press space.



A Red Bull employee with Pirelli tyres.



Tales of arguments with his dad, his sense of freedom after leaving McLaren, and his confidence in potentially teaming with Alonso or Vettel, compete with photo opportunities with his British Bulldog. It was finally announced that Paddy Lowe is to join Mercedes on June 3rd with the title of 'Executive Director (Technical)'. Lowe stood down as Technical Director at McLaren at the beginning of the year. It is unclear how he will fit in at Mercedes, which says he will 'work closely with Ross Brawn [who] will retain overall responsibility for technical and sporting matters'.

McLaren will have Mercedes engines for the critical 2014 season, but have selected a return to Honda for 2015, so the team may be playing an even longer game than Mercedes. BMW has hotly denied that it is returning, and may be telling the truth.

Bernie Ecclestone, never shy of controversy, lined up with Red Bull in the 'Tyre Wars'. But Bernie's future was the discussion after news that German public prosecutors were preparing to start a court action against

him on bribery charges. Bernie said "The



EXPECT ANYTHING: Mercedes Formula One driver Nico Rosberg (front) of Germany is followed by his compatriot Red Bull driver Sebastian Vettel. Photos: Reuters

[F1] board agrees I should stay unless I'm convicted"; bad news for those who think Bernie is past his 'sell by' date. Speculation over a successor spiked, with Sainsbury's Chief Executive Justin King a leading candidate. Bernie was contemptuous. "I've never met him and there's no way I'm going to. I'll work till I drop and then they can bury me in my bus."

I mentioned in a previous article that Catalunya allows a fully charged KERS (kinetic energy recovery system) to be deployed twice per lap, and that a double KERS release stresses the KERS cooling system. Responding to questions, KERS recovers a moving vehicle's kinetic energy under braking. The recovered energy is stored in a reservoir – typically a flywheel connected to a battery for later use under acceleration. Keeping the flywheel spinning uses a very high amperage power system, like that in an MRI. High power flows through a wire which creates heat, and wastes energy. Worse, the hotter a wire gets, the higher its resistance becomes, so temperatures escalate. The answer could be superconductors. These provide zero resistance to electrical current. The good news is that 70% of metals can be superconductors. The bad news is that this

is only true at very low temperatures. In fact temperatures of near absolute zero are required (-273°C), usually involving liquid helium. But there are now ceramic superconductors that can operate at a balmy -183°C. I know that F1 teams are actively looking at this. And KERS will not be an add-on next year, but an integral part of engine design. A Heat Energy Recovery System will be the add-on.

Back in 2013, it's on to Monaco this Sunday – a highlight of the year. Expect two pit stop strategies with very low tyre degradation. Cars that are good on soft tyres should do well. Qualifying is everything – and nothing so far this season has prepared us for that. The set-up will be the same as at Catalunya, but using the fastest tyre choices in qualifying will be critical to winning. Red Bull might fancy their chances at pole, and Webber might be the one to do it. But every driver in F1 will fancy himself. Mercedes, Ferrari and Lotus drivers must all be feeling papabile. What chance for Force India, McLaren, Sauber or Williams? Expect anything.

Join me for a fascinating qualifying at The Green Man on Saturday at 7pm, and on Sunday at the same time for the race.

Rugby's last hurrahs before Lions tour

MOST recent rugby action and most of the announcements affecting the Lions' tour to Australia – the team leaves on June 1 – has taken place outside the British Isles.

Leinster, who supply three players to the Lions' squad, comprehensively defeated Stade Francais (34-13) in the final of the Amlin Challenge Cup Final, despite the unavailability of key players, Brian O'Driscoll, Gordon D'Arcy, Richardt Strauss and captain Leo Cullen. Jonny Sexton, man of the match and favorite for the Lions' number ten shirt, converted four tries and kicked two penalties.

Leinster maintain their remarkable record in Europe, having won four trophies in five years.

In the most important game of the European club season, the Heineken Cup Final, Toulon, marshaled by 'Le Petit General', Jonny Wilkinson, miraculously squeezed past star-studded Clermont Auvergne, the form



Australia's coach Robbie Deans' team selection was full of surprises. Photo: Reuters

team of the season, despite being on the back foot for most of the afternoon. Lots of heroic, last ditch defending, spearheaded by the immense Bastereaud. The score, 16-15. A gratifying result for all the foreign players in the Toulon ranks, including their four Englishmen – Sheridan at prop, both Armitage brothers and of

course the evergreen Wilkinson. In a rare outburst of emotion, Wilkinson waxed poetic: "this is my world now. This team, this game." At 33 he is short-listed for European Player of the Year.

Both Leinster and Toulon won with scant possession. Toulon enjoyed a mere 25 per cent of territory; Leinster 39 per cent. A

fascinating statistic, which shows how crucial defence is in the modern game.

Down under, the domestic competition produced an unwanted rash of injuries, as the Waratahs overcame the League-leading Brumbies by 28 points to 22. Most crucial was the loss of Talah Polota Nau, comprehensively ruled out with a

broken arm. He has been the starting hooker in 14 successive appearances for his country, but will surely miss the Tests. Veteran wing forward George Smith, a wonderful ball-winner on the ground, and widely touted to make a comeback to international rugby, suffered medial ligament damage to his knee in the same game. He too will be lucky to recover in time.

Coach Robbie Deans' selections, already compromised by these injuries, contained a few more surprises. Both fly-half Quade Cooper, infamous for his remarks about a "toxic" environment in the team, and Kurtley Beale, who was involved in unsavory night club incidents, miss out. In fact, the new fly-half is likely to be the outrageously gifted James O'Connor, who can, according to Deans, "traumatize defenses". There are three uncapped players; another six will be added to the squad on the June 11, just ten days after the Lions set foot on Antipodean soil.

– Patrick Campbell

Asia's top sailors set for Samui

THE line-up of boats for the 2013 Samui Regatta, set to take place from May 25 to June 1 off Chaweng Beach, features a strong mix of top international racers and regional regatta veterans.

Organized by Regattas Asia, a leading regatta and marine-based sporting event management company in Asia, Samui Regatta is celebrating its 12th year.

Familiar faces on the Asian regatta scene, Frank Pong and Geoff Hill, will be leading the charge with the two largest boats in the fleet – *Jelik* (75ft) and *Antipodes* (72ft), respectively. Battling it out with them in IRC Zero will be Sam Chan's *TP52 Freefire*, a team from the Royal Malaysian Navy sailing their *DK47 Uranus* and the Aquila Reichel Pugh *45 Katsu*, skippered by owner Ben Copley.

In the ever-growing 40-foot fleet, the top contenders are converging on Samui Regatta to battle it out, in this, the final event of the prestigious 2012/13 Asian Yachting Grand Prix Championship.

Competing in IRC One, *EFG Bank Mandrake*, skippered by Nick Burns is back to defend their title on the well campaigned Mills 40. After losing the title on the final day of last year's regatta, Bill Bremner and crew on *Foxy Lady VI* are back to make amends, and will be up against *Walawala 2*, *WindSikher*, *Rikki Tikki Tavi*, *Elektra*, *Siren*, *El Coyote* and *Dynamite*.

"It's great to see such a competitive fleet of boats lining up for the Samui Regatta.

Indeed, across all the classes there are some very evenly matched boats and crews and I'm sure all will enjoy the five days of

racing we have planned for them," said Simon James, race director.

Having lost out on the IRC Two title by a single point last year, Lennart Fahlgren is back with *Amanda* and will be racing against *Souay 1*, *Moon Shadow*, local favorite *Royal Thai Navy 1*, and Rolex Sydney Hobart veteran Matt Allen on his *Adams 10 Ichiban*. With victories at the Phuket King's Cup and Top of the Gulf regattas in the last 12 months, *Ichiban* looks the one to beat.

A battle of the SunOdyssey's is set for the Charter class with the *SunOdyssey 43 DS Paprika II* up against two SunOdyssey 409 2.10 – *The Waugh Ship* (Ti-Punch), skippered by Barry Waugh and *Andaman Sea Pilot*, skippered by local regatta veteran Andy Dowden.

With last year's winner of the Multihull class *Fantasia* unable to defend their title this year, a new winner is set to be crowned from a line-up of some of the region's best multihull sailors. Largest in the class is the *Crowth 42 Sonic*, skippered by Kirati Assakul who will be up against the well-traveled *Corsair 38 Miss Saigon*, skippered by David Liddell, Radab Kanjanavanit and his all-Thai crew on *Cedar Swan*, and locally-built *Crazy Horse*, skippered by Kunta.

If the winds are blowing, one to watch out for in the Multihulls is Henry Kaye's *Seacart 26 Sweet Chariot*, which favors the strong winds Samui Regatta is famous for.

"Samui Regatta has become well known for its top quality racing and professional on-water race management, and again this



A strong line-up of sailors from around Asia and beyond will compete at the Samui Regatta.

year, the ISAF International Race Officer Ross Chisholm will be calling the shots on-the-water," commented James.

The regatta is equally well known for its onshore social scene, and the beachfront Regatta Tavern, which becomes the focal point in the early evening as the sailors come ashore.

The five days of racing is combined with six nights of parties, including the off-site Beach Republic Party – a mid-week highlight – and the closing Gala Dinner and presentations under the stars hosted by Centara Grand Beach Resort Samui – a fitting finale to the 'Tropical Island Regatta'.

– *Phuket Gazette*



FAT head Worawi Makudi postponed the planned presidential election. Photo: Reuters

SAT threaten FAT

THE Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) has threatened to intervene if the Football Association (FAT) fails to hold its presidential election by July 16.

The FAT had originally scheduled the election for June 15 but postponed the poll in order to approve new FIFA statutes at the suggestion of a FIFA official last week.

The move, however, raised doubts as to whether the association had the right to postpone the vote, with FAT president Worawi Makudi repeatedly claiming it needed to be conducted in accordance with FIFA's new statutes. That prompted Anop Singtotong, the vice president of Thai Premier League club ChonBuri FC, to seek clarification on the issue from the SAT last week.

SAT governor Kanokphand Chulakasem responded that the Thai FA had acted within its legal rights in postponing the election

but warned that it must hold the vote no later than July 16, otherwise his office would intervene.

"The mandate of the incumbent FAT president expires on June 17 and the rules state that the election must be held within 30 days. In this case, the deadline is July 16, so if they fail to hold the election by then we'll stage it ourselves."

Asked about the controversy over the FAT's planned move to reduce the number of voting members, Kanokphand said his office did not have authority to rule on the matter.

"We urge every sports association to abide by international rules. But, they come under the country's own regulations. We cannot do anything if the FAT wish to reduce the number of voting members. However, such a move must be approved by a two-thirds majority of members," said Kanokphand. – *The Nation*

Benefit cycle for soldiers

LOCAL cyclists traveled to Nakhon Sri Thammarat for a 100km bike race to benefit the soldiers currently fighting in the South of Thailand.

Over 2,000 riders took part in the event. Competitors were separated into three categories: Open category, Under 40 and Over 40 in both Mountain and Road bike divisions.

The racers will travel to Surat Thani next month for another race.

– *Phuket Gazette*



Pictured from left to right: Khun Kay, 4th place Over 40 Road Bike, Khun Nat and Khun Max both placed in the top five for the Under 40 Mountain Bike and Jonathan Fowler placed 2nd in the Over 40 Road Bike. Not pictured is Khun Chet, owner of Naka Bike shop, who placed 2nd overall in the Road Bike Open category. Photo: Jonathan Fowler

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Sport

TSLC welcomes Paralympians

THANYAPURA Sports and Leisure Club (TSLC) is currently hosting the Dutch National Paralympic Swim Team for an intensive three week training session in its Olympic-standard swimming facilities.

Phuket Director of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), Virat Patee, along with the Thai Paralympic Swim Team, welcomed the accomplished visiting team, led by manager Marco Van den Brink and which includes multiple gold medalists.

In addition, Thanyapura hosted an exclusive training observation session for the students of Phuket International Academy Day School (PIADS) and TSLC's Silverfinz junior swimming team, allowing them to witness both Paralympic teams in training. This was followed by an inspirational meet and greet session with the youngsters.

TSLC Director of Sports Academy, Craig Johns is proud that Thanyapura is hosting



INSPIRING: Silverfinz and the children from PIADS with the Dutch Paralympic team.

another important international sporting event.

"It's a privilege to work with such accomplished and esteemed athletes at TSLC and reinforce Thailand's reputation as a key

sports figure in the global field," said Mr Johns.

"It's also an exceptional pleasure to introduce our younger generation of budding sports stars to these true champions."

"Meeting world-class athletes of this caliber is an exciting opportunity for the local children. Seeing such prolific achievers training in the very same facilities as themselves is an encouraging and inspirational experience," he said.

Among the swimmers training in Thanyapura's state of the art facilities are men's Olympic gold medalists Marc Evers (100 meter backstroke and Bronze 100m breaststroke) and Michael Schoenmaker (50m breaststroke), as well as a host of women's champions including Lisette Teunissen (Gold 50m backstroke).

Silverfinz and the children from PIADS met the Paralympic teams on Friday, May 17.

— *Phuket Gazette*

Learn more about the Dutch Paralympians' visit to Phuket on this week's *Phuket Today* show on Truevisions ch 58 and 99, and local cable ch 1.



One of the Dutch Paralympians training at TSLC'S 50 meter pool. Photos: Andrew Scott



Phuket Director of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), Virat Patee (third from left) along with the Thai Paralympic Swim Team welcomed the accomplished Dutch team.

Buriram progress, Muang Thong's short lead

BURIRAM United continued their remarkable AFC Champions League run by knocking out the two-time semifinalists Bunyodkor from Uzbekistan to progress to the quarter finals on Tuesday.

The Thai FA Cup winners went into the match with a slender 2-1 advantage from last week's first-leg home win.

Buriram, who beat Brisbane Roar in the qualifying round to make the AFC Champions League, weathered a constant barrage of attacks to hold out for a 0-0 draw.

In only their second appearance in the continent's elite competition, Buriram became the first Thai team, since inaugural finalist BEC Tero Sasana in 2003, to reach the quarterfinals. The draw for the quarter finals had not been made when the *Phuket Gazette* went to print.

The Thai Premier League (TPL) fined Muang Thong United's Macedonian midfielder Mario Gjurovski 20,000 baht

for taking his shorts off to celebrate scoring a goal in his teams 2-1 TPL win against TOT SC last Saturday. After scoring his teams second goal, Mario took off his shorts and put them on his head before pretending to fire a machine gun at the Muang Thong fans.

The referee deemed this a yellow card offense and subsequently brandished Mario with his second yellow card of the game and then a red card.

Muang Thong, who have played one more game, are four points ahead of Buriram at the top of the TPL.

Last weekend's TPL results.

Army 1 - 1 Songkhla Utd
Osotspa Saraburi 0 - 1 Chiang Rai Utd
Samut Songkhram 2 - 1 Police Utd
Bangkok Utd 1 - 2 Bangkok Glass
Ratchaburi 2 - 3 Chainat
TOT 1 - 2 Muang Thing Utd

— *Andrew Scott*



Buriram's Thunder Castle Stadium has a capacity of 24,000. Photo: Kokoliz

Phuket Soccer Schools second in Patong tournament

PHUKET Soccer School's (PSS) under-10 team played in a tournament at Patong FC's home ground last Sunday. The wet conditions didn't affect PSS as they brushed aside Kamala 5-2 in their first game. Their next match against Cherg Talay was decided by penalties after normal time finished 4-4. Cherg Talay kept their nerve to win the shootout 3-2.

The last game was for second place, and PSS easily beat Eangyol 3-1.

Standout performances for PSS

were from DC and Luke Carrick, who scored five goals, three with his left and two with his right.

Head Coach Martin Hill said after the rain swept tournament: "Thanks to all the players and parents of PSS who didn't let the weather spoil the day. To finish 2nd and win a trophy was a pleasing outcome and we now look forward to Phuket Soccer Schools end of season local tournament to be held at TSLC on June 15".

— *Phuket Gazette*



Players line up. Photos: PSS



PSS's under-10 team and coach David Seago with their 2nd place trophy.

Sport

Rayong Stallions seize draw in Phuket

By Steven Layne

THE island's pro soccer team, Phuket FC, let a two-nil lead at home slip away in a 2-2 draw against Yamaha League One (YL1) rivals, Rayong FC, last Saturday evening in Phuket Town.

The match, both sides 11th of the 34-fixture YL1 2013 season, was played in front of a crowd of 2,753 (not counting several hundred children and youth admitted for free), at Phuket's Surakul Stadium on Wichit Songkhram Road.

The crowd, dominated by green, red and black-shirted home fans, also included a contingent numbering in the dozens of yellow and blue clad Rayong fans, who had bused it down from the Eastern Seaboard province the previous evening.

Rayong is a 13-15 hour bus ride, about 1,000 kilometers from Phuket.

Going into the match joint 5th (with BBCU) in the 18-team league, Phuket – players, fans and staff alike – were expecting nothing short of victory against newly promoted, (and bottom of the table) Rayong, nicknamed the Wild Horses.

Following the less-than-spectacular opening exchanges, the Islanders took the lead in the 30th minute, through a spot kick by midfielder Geoffrey Doumeng.

On the other side of the pitch, Korean striker Kunsik Choi proved somewhat of a nuisance for Phuket's defenders, but Ivorian stalwart Nenebi Sylvester, along with dependable Japanese defender Yusuke Sato were able to eliminate any real threat for hometown-hero keeper, Kamphon.

Phuket's leading scorer, Brazilian striker Luiz "Dudu" Eduardo failed to threaten Rayong's backs or their keeper, Phuket native Leuchar Jantawong, who was once a reserve Phuket keeper.

The home fans' mood was high as Phuket went in to the half time with a lead of 1-0.

In the second half, Dudu was subbed for what appeared to be a



DEJECTED: Phuket FC's coaching staff are starting to feel the pressure.

minor injury, and replaced by Georgian forward, Giorgi.

The substitution proved to be a smart move, with Giorgi doubling his side's lead just seven minutes into the second half; an unmarked Giorgi converted a beautiful cross from Doumeng, sending the fans into a frenzy; victory seemed almost certain at that point...almost.

The Wild Horses went on the attack and the home side had no choice but to adapt to a defensive formation to ward off a determined Rayong side, who dominated possession.

The visitor's attacking front finally paid off in the 73rd minute with a goal by Cameroonian defender Henri Walther, who converted a well-placed corner kick to score from his position in the center of the area.

Phuket were unable to retake control of the match, but held on to their lead up to the end of 90-minute regulation.

To the dismay of home fans, the equalizer came three minutes into the five minutes allocated for injury time, through Rayong's Nattawut Khamrin.

Positioning himself at the end of a perfectly-weighted cross into the area, Nattawut diligently penetrated

a tired Phuket defensive line, prompting the visitors' bench to explode as though they had just won the World Cup.

Phuket dug deep trying to find a last minute winner, and an on-target shot by Doumeng, who was subsequently voted Man of the Match, looked promising, but it went straight into the gloves of Rayong's Phuket-born keeper, Leuchar.

The single point might as well have been three points as far as the away supporters were concerned, with fans lighting red celebratory flares in tribute to their second-half comeback.

Despite a mood of defeat overcoming the disappointed home fans, the draw and its point did ensure that Phuket remain in fifth place, now with 18 points, seven points behind league leaders Air Force United.

Other YL1 results from the weekend are as follows:

Air Force Utd 2 – 1 Saraburi
PTT Rayong 0 – 0 Khon Kaen
Bangkok FC 3 – 1 Si Racha
TTM 2 – 1 BBCU
Nakhon Pathom 5 – 2 Rayong Utd
Ayutthaya 2 – 2 Trat
Korat 5 – 0 Royal Navy
Krabi 1 – 0 Singhtarua

YAMAHA LEAGUE ONE FIXTURES

SATURDAY, 25 MAY 2013		16:00
Rayong Utd	VS	Air Force Utd
SATURDAY, 25 MAY 2013		18:00
BBCU FC	VS	Nakhon Pathom
Sriracha FC	VS	TTM FC
SATURDAY, 25 MAY 2013		18:30
Siam Navy FC	VS	Bangkok FC
SUNDAY, 26 MAY 2013		16:00
Singhtarua FC	VS	PTT Rayong
SUNDAY, 26 MAY 2013		18:00
Khon Kaen FC	VS	Korat FC
Rayong FC	VS	Krabi FC
Saraburi FC	VS	Ayutthaya FC

YAMAHA LEAGUE ONE TABLE

	TEAM	P	GD	PTS
1	Air Force Utd.	11	8	25
2	PTT Rayong	11	7	21
3	Bangkok FC	11	4	21
4	Singhtarua FC	11	4	20
5	Phuket	11	4	18
6	Korat FC	11	6	17
7	Krabi FC	11	3	17
8	BBCU FC	11	3	17
9	Nakhon Pathom	11	1	14
10	Trat FC	11	-1	13
11	Saraburi	11	1	12
12	Siam Navy	11	-4	12
13	Khon kaen	11	-4	11
14	Rayong Utd.	11	-4	9
15	Si Racha	11	-7	9
16	TTM FC	11	-7	8
17	Ayutthaya FC	11	-7	8
18	Rayong FC	11	-7	6

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— See full story on page 47 —

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