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INSIDE TODAY

February 22 - 28, 2014 | PhuketGazette.Net | In partnership with The Nation

25 Baht

Boat hazards cleared away

■ Moorings thought to have sunk two boats within a year removed from Chalong Bay

By **Saran Mitrat**

EIGHT unmarked concrete moorings near the Chalong Pier fairway that are believed to have sunk two boats since they were installed in 2012 were removed on February 14.

"I think it is best to have the blocks near the fairway removed to prevent further accidents," said Phuket Marine Office Chief Phuripat Theerakulpisut, maintaining that no blocks exist within the approach channel itself.

Chief Phuripat has consistently denied that there were problems with the mooring placements, redirecting accusations toward reckless driving; illegal moorings established by locals; and the theft of mooring buoys.

"The buoys are constantly being stolen – we cannot keep replacing them forever," Chief Phuripat explained this week.

The first boat to fall victim to the unmarked mooring blocks was the *Darunee*, better known as the "Booze Cruise". The ship, returning from a...



Continued on Page 5

Eight of the 2.5 ton moorings were removed for the safety of vessels using Chalong Pier.

Six seeking asylum to be released

FOUR Syrians and two Lebanese that have been stuck in limbo at Phuket International Airport after Chinese Immigration Officers seized their passports and sent them back to Phuket are expected to make forward progress in their journey this week.

Full story on Pages 4

Divers save reef from illegal net

A GROUP of dive instructors and dive masters saved dozens of reef fish that were tangled in a drift net draped over the popular dive destination and marine protected area Shark Point.

Officials praised the divers' work and asked for help in their battle against illegal fishing as it continues to take a toll on the reefs.

Full story on Page 7

Four more booze bans on horizon

TWO national elections, in March and April, will usher in weekend droughts as alcohol retailers, restaurants and bars are forced to lock away the wine, beer and liquor.

Full story on Page 9

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This Week



Property

Outdoor furniture that is stylish, classy and will go the distance. **Page 13**



Business

Mobile music devices see strong demand in SE Asia. **Page 17**



Food

Asian cinema does well at Berlin International film fest. **Page 37**



History

The story of Thalang's heroic nine rulers – part one. **Page 42-43**



Aviation

Somchai examines the viability of key regional flights. **Page 44**



Sport

Phuket United win their first match of the futsal season. **Page 51**

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Sunday



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Monday



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Tuesday



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Wednesday



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Thursday



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Crepe vendor sees livelihood blazed

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

A LONGTIME vendor of Thai mini-crepes saw his sidecar shop burned to a crisp after a gas leak on February 13.

It took firefighters 20 minutes to put out the fire, near Muang Municipal School in Phuket Town.

"I've been selling mini-crepes (*kanum tokyo*) to Muang Phuket School students every evening for a long time," said the 44-year-old owner of the stand, Prayoon Inpuang.

"Today when I started to make the desserts, I smelt gasoline and heard the sound of it leaking."

As Mr Prayoon was searching for the source, the sidecar caught fire. He shouted for help from nearby vendors, but the stand was quickly engulfed in flames.

"I couldn't believe my eyes; the crepe stand was my only source of income," said Mr Prayoon.

When officers arrived at the scene, they found a crowd of people gathered around the blazing sidecar, said Capt Porntip Choomsri of the Phuket City Police.

The flames had gotten high enough to reach and burn the electrical wires hanging above the



Mr Prayoon had been selling mini-crepes to school children for years.

stall, the cost of which Mr Prayoon will have to cover.

"I don't have money to pay for the burnt electrical wires. I just lost my job. I don't know how I

will make money in the future," said Mr Prayoon.

Firefighters managed to subdue the flames, but the damage to the sidecar was already done.

Frenchman's pointed request for refund sends him to jail

POLICE arrested a Frenchman for threatening a Phuket convenience store clerk with a pair of scissors in an attempt to get a refund last Saturday.

Riad Lahkim, 37, had bought a mobile phone at the 7-eleven the previous Thursday. Dissatisfied, he took it back to the store two days later – at 4:30am.

"He bought the phone for 1,200 baht and asked for his money back," said Sunisa Mueanlamai, a clerk at the store.

"I told him I didn't have the authority to give him a refund, and he would have to wait for the manager to come to work," said Ms Sunisa.

Mr Lahkim left the store, but returned a few minutes later. Picking up a pair of scissors, he demanded Ms Sunisa give him the money. She handed over 2,000 baht and Mr Lahkim fled.

The event was captured on CCTV, and by 1pm, police had located the thief at his hotel in Patong.

He confessed to the robbery and was charged, said Maj Suthichai Tianpho of the Patong Police.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong



Mr Lahkim

Cops arrest Italian drug dealer in sting operation

AN ITALIAN man was busted for selling *ya ice* (crystal methamphetamine) to undercover cops in a sting operation in Patong Monday evening.

Fabio Milan Bocca, 35, was arrested at a rental house on Pisitkoranee Road in possession of 8.52 grams of *ya ice*, 6.79g of marijuana and a single *ya bah* (methamphetamine) pill.

"Our superintendent asked us to stomp out drugs in Patong, so we chased up a lead about Mr Fabio," Lt Col Khunnadet Na Nongkhai of the Patong Police told the *Gazette*.

"We went to the house to buy drugs as part of a sting operation. As soon as he opened the door, we



Fabio Bocca after his arrest.

entered and identified ourselves as officers. Inside we found his stash of drugs and drug paraphernalia."

Mr Bocca was charged with possession of a Category 1 Drug with intent to sell and with possession of a Category 5 Drug with intent to sell. – Thawit Bilabdullar

Swede falls to his death from bar top

A SWEDISH tourist fell to his death early Tuesday morning while dancing on top of a bar counter in Patong.

"Witnesses in the bar said that the man had been drinking before he decided to climb onto the countertop and dance," said a Patong Kusoldharm rescue foundation worker.

"The bar was wet and slippery. He lost his balance, fell and hit his head hard on the ground," said the worker.

Rescuers were alerted at 1am of the accident and rushed to the scene, near the OTOP Market in Patong.

When they arrived, they found the body of Lars Hasselberg, 57, on the ground.

"We did not see any blood or wounds on his body," said the rescue worker.

The cause of Mr Hasselberg's death was confirmed at Patong Hospital.

"He died as a result of severe head trauma," Patong Hospital Director Dr Sirichai Silapa-acha told the *Gazette*.

The Swedish embassy has been notified of Mr Hasselberg's death.

– Thawit Bilabdullar

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V/Gov tackles metered taxi on tourist's behalf

By Saran Mitrarat

PHUKET Vice Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada stepped forward to champion a complaint about an airport taxi driver who refused to use his meter to take an Australian expat home to Kamala.

The 51-year-old man arrived at Phuket International Airport last Sunday and was met by a metered taxi tout, who explained that it costs 650 baht to go to Kamala.

"I said, 'No, no. Have to use the meter,' pointing to the sign on the booth. He said, 'No, only use meter to Patong - company says Kamala is 650 baht,'" the man explained in an email to the *Gazette*. "After much discussion, I gave up and took the taxi."

When informed of the case by the *Gazette*, V/Gov Chamroen said, "Please forward me the message and copy of the [receipt]. I will start investigating the matter immediately."

"This is an important issue that can affect our tourism industry. I personally would like to apologize to the customer who was put into



Taxi drivers who refuse to use their meters can be banned from servicing the airport after two complaints.

that situation by a bad taxi driver."

If the driver is found to be in the wrong, V/Gov Chamroen said he would issue a warning. If a complaint about the driver arises again, he will be banned from servicing the airport.

A staffer at the call center for the metered taxi service company

said, "It was an agreement between the passenger and driver. Almost all passengers choose to take a fixed price instead of the metered price."

"It depends on what the customers want. Our drivers will not threaten passengers."

Airports of Thailand (AoT) are

responsible for taxi drivers at the airport. An AoT officer who declined to be named asked the Australian man to file a formal complaint, including the time and date of the incident, the license plate number of the driver, a copy of his passport and the ticket voucher for the ride.



Mrs Pranit was struck by a motorcycle while crossing a road.

Alzheimer's mum killed in accident

A WOMAN with Alzheimer's disease who had wandered away from home was killed in a hit-and-run motorbike accident in Talang on Sunday night.

Pranit Partee Na Talang, 75, first went missing from her home in Ban Don at about 2pm Sunday afternoon.

"My mother had Alzheimer's, but she could walk well for her age and often went missing because of her illness," said her son, 49-year-old Manas Partee Na Talang.

"She was last seen in the early afternoon. She left the house and no one knew where she was. We searched for her until a neighbor told us about the accident at about 7:45 pm."

"Eyewitnesses said that Mrs Pranit was crossing a road but didn't see a motorcycle speeding toward her, as the road was dark," said Lt Peerasit Noopayan of the Cherg Talay Police, who responded to the accident near Ban Suan Yu Charoen 5 housing estate on Srisoonthorn Road.

"She was struck by the motorbike and hit her head on the ground. She died instantly," he said.

Eyewitnesses were not able to see the motorbike's license plate as the driver sped by.

"I hope my mother is at peace and no longer in pain," said Mr Manas.

- Thawit Bilabdullar

Booze ban violators caught only in town

POLICE discovered one shop in Phuket Town illegally selling alcohol during the celebration of Makha Bucha Day on February 14.

The bust was made by Phuket City Police, who arrested two other vendors for trading after hours, said Phuket City Police Superintendent Sermphan Sirikong.

"We apprehended three local shop owners: one in Phuket Town near Surin Circle at 11pm and two in Samkong after 1am," Col Sermphan said.

Col Sermphan declined to name the shops, saying, "We don't want the locations publicized because

we want to prevent residents from knowing which venues are willing to sell alcohol on banned days or at banned times."

The shop near Surin Circle was charged for selling alcohol on a public holiday and fined 3,000 baht.

"The two shop owners in Samkong were charged for trading after hours and will have to be seen by a judge in court," Col Sermphan said.

The maximum penalty for trading after hours is imprisonment of up to six months, a fine of up to 10,000 baht or both.

Col Sermphan said that police had warned alcohol vendors and business operators of the ban starting on February 12.

On the other side of the island, Patong Police reported that no fines were handed out and no arrests made in Phuket's bar capital.

"Our area was clean of alcohol sales and purchases," Patong Police Deputy Superintendent Nikorn Choothong told the *Gazette*.

"Patrols went out three times between 8am on February 14 and 8am [on February 15]. Checkpoints were also established in two different locations at 11pm last



Col Sermphan. Photo: Saran Mitrarat

night," Col Nikorn said.

"I would like to thank everyone for their cooperation."

- Ifarn Jamdukur

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Limbo to end for asylum seekers

Six men kept at airport for a month after passports seized in Beijing

By Irfan Jamdukor

THE six stateless asylum seekers who have been housed under guard at Phuket International Airport for over a month may soon be leaving the island.

Malaysia has agreed to take the four Syrians in the group, and the two Lebanese men will be sent to Bangkok, said Prapansak Prasansuk, Chief of Immigration at the airport.

How the men, said to be fleeing violence in their countries, arrived in Phuket on a flight from China without passports is still not entirely clear to Immigration officials.

Their story began sometime in December when they arrived in Bangkok. They next appeared on immigration radar when they boarded a Beijing-bound China Airlines flight in Phuket on January 13.

Their ultimate destination was Sweden, where the men all say they have relatives, Mr Prapansak told the Phuket Gazette. They planned to transit in China and fly on.

However, the forward direction of their trip ended abruptly in Beijing, where Chinese Immigration officers declared their passports to be fake, seized them, and ordered China Airlines to return the men to Phuket, said Pensirit Pantachinatat, Deputy

Chief of Immigration at the airport.

International transit passengers at Beijing Capital International Airport must pass through immigration, but the seizure of the men's passports has perplexed immigration officers here.

"We'd like to know why Immigration in China didn't arrest them if they believed their passports were fake," said Ms Pensirit.

"And if they just wanted to expel them, why didn't they return their passports to them?" she added.

Once the six arrived back in Phuket, they could not be allowed into the country without passports.

"We did not want to send them back to Syria, because it is a country at war," said Col Prapansak. "But without passports, we couldn't send them anywhere else either."

The men were housed, under guard, at the airport while Immigration officials sought a way out of the dilemma.

"China Airlines is responsible for them, but we are trying to help them out," Col Prapansak said.

China Airlines contacted the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ask for help last month. UNHCR said they could not come to Phuket and asked China Airlines to send the men to



Four Syrians and two Lebanese have been housed under guard. Photo: Saran Mitratat

Bangkok, where they have an office.

Last Tuesday, Malaysia agreed to take the Syrian men.

"We have received informal confirmation that Malaysia will accept them," Col Prapansak told the Gazette.

"We are waiting for the official documents and expect them to arrive in 2-3 days," Col Prapansak said.

In Bangkok, UNHCR officials and Chinese immigration will work together to find a solution for the Lebanese men, he said.

Teen bodyguards face gun possession charge



Mr Siriboon (left) and Mr Weerasak (right) after their dip in the pond.

TWO men arrested on Thursday for brandishing a firearm at Phuket City Police officers and attempting to flee the scene were not charged with attempted murder.

First reports alleged that the two 18-year-olds, Weerasak Bangroy and Chaityuth Siriboon, had been hired to make a pre-Valentine's Day hit by an ex-girlfriend.

Tinnakorn Suwan, 21, reported the duo to police after a violent argument broke out between the three men earlier that morning.

"Mr Tinnakorn's ex-girlfriend had asked Mr Weerasak and Mr Chaityuth to protect her later that day when she moved out of Mr Tinnakorn's room near Soi Phaniang," Lt Col Chao Phomna of the Phuket City Police explained.

"After the argument, the men warned Mr Tinnakorn that they would be back."

Police staking out the apartment

found knife slashes across Mr Tinnakorn's door.

When Mr Weerasak and Mr Chaityuth arrived, officers approached the pair and asked to search them.

"Mr Weerasak then pulled the gun on the officers and the suspects took off," Col Chao said.

Police followed the men to a nearby pond where officers found two motorbikes parked next to two pairs of flip flops, a handgun and a single red shotgun shell.

"We assumed they swam for it, so we scoured the pond. Eventually, we found the suspects hiding in some trees near the water's edge. Mr Weerasak confessed to holding the gun, but claimed that it belonged to Mr Chaityuth," said Col Chao.

Mr Weerasak and Mr Chaityuth were both charged with for illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition he said.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

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Bank rushed over rice loan

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

PHUKET residents flocked to several branches of the Government Savings Bank (GSB) on Monday to withdraw money and close accounts after the bank lent 20 billion baht to the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) on Sunday.

"Monday is always a busy day, since it is the first of the week. However, we admit that 10 per cent of our customers withdrew money and closed accounts [that day]," GSB Phuket Branch Manager Yadaporn Sripat told the *Gazette*.

"Customers have every right to withdraw their money and close their accounts," said Ms Yadaporn.

"We could only give cash to customers who withdrew less than 10,000 baht. If they withdrew more than that, we paid them with cashier's cheques. We need to keep cash in store for other customers."

GSB has 13 branches throughout the island.

Although the headquarters lent money to the BAAC, Ms Yadaporn is confident that the loan will not



Phuket residents throughout the island fled to Government Savings Bank branches to close accounts in protest of the 20bn baht loan.

affect the bank's capital.

The BAAC Phuket Branch on Monday posted a sign at the entrance stating that they will not spend a single baht of their customers' money to support the rice-pledging scheme.

"We had just as many customers as we regularly have," BAAC

Phuket Branch Manager Sitthiporn Petchnui said on Monday.

"We have had many new customers opening accounts and patrons who continue to deposit money into their accounts. We now have more than 200 million baht to lend to local Phuket farmers," he added.

Meanwhile, many bank patrons expressed concern about the loan and expressed distrust in GSB.

"I have closed four bank accounts with GSB today. I am not happy that they lent money in order to support the government," Niyod Acheewarangabrok told the *Gazette*.

"I am no longer confident in the bank's liquidity after they lent so much," she added.

"My father saw the news of the loan on television this morning, so he asked me to withdraw his money. We are not confident in the bank or the government," said Suksri Liponpol.



Some 192 heavy concrete mooring blocks still lie in Chalong Bay.

Mooring issues resolved

From page 1

...snorkeling trip to Koh Hei (Coral Island) with 15 tourists on board was about 500 meters from Chalong Pier when it hit and got stuck on a mooring block, explained Chief Phuripat after the accident in late February last year.

"All of the tourists jumped into the water without life jackets. Boat operators in the area saw the incident and rescued them," the chief said.

Mr Phuripat attributed the cause of the crash to reckless driving.

"The concrete mooring was installed to mark a boat anchorage. It has been there for months. Every boat driver in the area knows where the moorings are located and where the rocks are. The boat driver did not drive along the right path," he said.

About 11 months later, on January 21, the 10 million baht luxury cruise boat *Lady Andaman* sank after striking a concrete mooring in the approach channel, explained

Australian boat owner "Sando", who declined to be named in full.

"It was about 4:30pm, coming up to low tide, when we hit the mooring. We were coming back from a trip with Australians, New Zealanders, Americans and Thais – who all took part in a Muay Thai fitness training session," Sando told the *Gazette*.

"The mooring didn't have any buoys attached to it. I've been told that many of the moorings now don't have any buoys tied to them [to show where the concrete blocks lie beneath the surface]."

No further plans have been made to remove any of the other 192 moorings placed around Chalong Pier, despite concerns voiced by local yachties, notably that some of them are located too close to existing moorings, risking collisions between neighboring vessels.

"The rest of the moorings aren't causing any problems for boats," Chief Phuripat said.

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Ms Siriporn apologized for any inconveniences caused.

Passport Office back offline after false start

THE Phuket Passport Office had a false start this week as it reopened its doors for service on Monday, just to close them again on Friday.

Protesting has forced the second closure of the Passport Division in Bangkok, the first of which closed the Phuket office for nearly a month. The headquarters in the capital terminated its server connection to provincial offices again as a precaution.

"We have to temporarily close the office until the server is reconnected. I do not know when we will be able to re-open," Phuket Passport Office Chief Siriporn Tantipanyatthep told the *Gazette*.

"It all depends on the head office in Bangkok."

The Phuket Passport Office opened its doors on Monday even though Provincial Hall remained closed. The office has had to call the almost 400 people who turned in their paperwork this week to inform them of the closure, said Ms Siriporn.

"Most were understanding, as they knew that this might happen," Ms Siriporn said.

"We apologize for any inconvenience. We will make an announcement as soon as we resume our services."

Meanwhile, people can check the Department of Consular Affairs website for any updates, she added.

— **Kritsada Mueanhawong**

Baby girl goes home despite scary start to life

A PHUKET baby who survived surgery after being born with her intestines protruding from her abdomen was discharged from the hospital this weekend.

Ornpreeya "Ang-Sing" Saisrikosol was born earlier this month with a rare condition called gastroschisis, and immediately underwent emergency surgery, explained Vachira Phuket Hospital Director Jessada Chungpaibulpatana.

"The first thing I saw was her beautiful face, and I was so happy," said her mother, Phiphitsara Sangthong, 22.

"A couple of seconds later, I got the shock of my life – I saw her intestines hanging out of her stomach."

Ang-Sing's parents, at first devastated by their daughter's condition, were delighted when they were told on Valentine's Day that she could be taken home.

"What a Valentine's Day message," the 26-year-old father, Kriangkrai Saisrikosol, told the *Gazette*.

"No words can describe how happy we are. We feel much better now than we did when we first saw our daughter. We hope that she grows up without any more pain."

Ang-Sing does not need any medical assistance to function normally, her father said.

On Saturday he took his new daughter home to the room he had prepared for her.

— **Chutharat Plerin**



Ang-Sing went home at last with her parents.

Faucets back to providing water after 'dry' months

By Saran Mitrarat

AFTER close to two months with no running water, life for residents on Phang Muang Sai Kor Road in Phuket returned to normal on Tuesday morning.

"We had no running water for almost two months, since December 25," said a resident of the Patong road who declined to be named.

"We have had to buy water from a water truck every week, which is very expensive. Sometimes the water we bought was clean, sometimes it wasn't."

"Meanwhile, the cost of water in condominiums in this area is up to 173 baht per unit. Normally, water ranges in price from 12 to 40 baht per unit. The higher prices have increased the cost of living for residents and tourists."

"I contacted the Phuket Provincial Waterworks Authority [PWA] several times. Officers there only told me that the water would be running soon, without offering any sort of explanation."

The company that provides water for Patong roads such as Phang Muang Sai Kor had temporarily cut off the water supply, explained Pisak Chonlayut, manager of the PWA.

"The company is improving the water treatment process and re-arranging the water management systems to support the



Pisak Chonlayut, PWA manager, assures there will be no water shortages this year. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

increasing number of consumers in the area. They expect it to be finished on February 18," Mr Pisak said.

As of 10:30 Tuesday morning,

the water was back on, confirmed the resident.

Mr Pisak assured the *Gazette* that there would be no more water shortage problems in

Phuket this year.

"Even if the number of visitors continues to increase, we have enough water to serve everyone," he said.

Holiday rush for temples, flower shops

REVERENCE for Makha Bucha Day outshined Valentine's Day, but flower shop owners still benefited from the lovers' day rush.

Local temples and flower shops had a busy day as residents flocked to make merit for Makha Bucha Day and order flowers for their loved ones.

"Makha Bucha Day is an important day for Buddhists. We should concern ourselves with making merit at the temple and listening to sermons from the monks," said 21-year-old Prattana Na Takuathung.

"Valentine's Day is very popu-



Students gather to worship at temple on Makha Bucha Day.

lar for teenagers. I think we can show our love every day, but Makha Bucha Day only happens once a year."

"I am more concerned with

Makha Bucha Day," said 17-year-old Sumphan Tantisatrungsri.

"However, Valentine's Day is a good day. This year, I will show my love for my religion and family by participating in temple activities."

Meanwhile, shop owners were busy with customers and pleased by the jump in flower prices caused by the increase in demand.

"Red roses went from 12 baht to 15 baht and white roses went from 22 baht to 25 baht," said a shop owner in Phuket Town.

— **Kritsada Mueanhawong**

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Illegal net tangled in reef

Divers save dozens of fish in marine protected area

By Chutharat Plerin

DIVERS saved dozens of reef fish earlier this month that were trapped in an enormous fishing net draped over one of Phuket's most popular dive sites: marine conservation area, Shark Point.

"We had just spent five or six minutes watching a leopard shark swimming around us, and then, as we came around the corner, we saw a blanket of net covering a large amount of Pinnacle One," said a Phuket diver asked to be identified only as Instructor Vinnie. "It was an awful scene."

Dive masters and instructors in the area began cutting entangled fish free. Another team slowly worked on pulling the net away from the corals.

"Most of the fish were alive. There were a few dead ones," Vinnie said.

"I thought I was going to see a dead leopard shark in there."

Twenty to thirty reef fish were cut free. Many more, trapped in the middle of the tangled netting, were also saved.

The drift net, measuring an estimated 25 meters by 20 meters, was finally removed from the water.

"At the surface, you could see the boat boys pulling sea cucumbers and other bits out of the net," said Vinnie.

On December 13, a member of marine conservation group Go Eco Phuket brought the incident to the attention of Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) Region 5 Chief Tanet Munnoy.

"We have a mission planned tomorrow (February 14) to drop artificial reef blocks in Koh Mai



A scorpion fish was one of the many marine animals dive instructors and dive masters saved from the enormous drift net. Photo: Instructor Vinnie

Thon and Koh Racha. If we have time, we will go to Shark Point. If not, our staff will inspect the area on Saturday," Mr Tanet said last Friday.

Mr Tanet confirmed on Monday that his team did go to Shark Point, but did not get in the water, as dive boats had customers at the site.

"My staff did not want to hurt the image of Phuket diving," Mr Tanet said.

However, he explained that those who are regularly at the site should feel free to protect it as necessary.

"I've instructed a member of Go Eco Phuket to let everyone know that if they find a fishing net in a marine protected area, that they should not fear any repercussions for removing the it, as they will have my full support.

"If you see the net, and don't have means to remove it, just call my on my mobile any time of the day, and I'll start organizing a team to remove it."

Mr Tanet's mobile is 081 636 8099.

This is not the first time large fishing nets have been snagged in

the marine conservation area. In July, a Sea Bees staff member captured video footage of an enormous fishing net at the site. Go Eco Phuket quickly scrambled divers and two dive boats to remove it.

Mr Tanet reiterated that though fishing in the area is illegal, it is difficult for his officers to make arrests, despite having bolstered patrols starting in August last year.

"When fishermen see our patrol boats while fishing in restricted areas, they release any

fish they have already caught. We must catch them in the act of fishing illegally in order to make an arrest," Mr Tanet said.

"However, we recently had a meeting concerning this issue. We are developing several methods for apprehending illegal fisherman."

Those caught illegally fishing can face penalties of up to a year in prison, a fine of up to 10,000 baht or both.

"Even though arresting fishermen in the act is not easy, we will continue to do our best to protect the environment," Mr Tanet said.

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Volcanic ash forces Australia-Phuket flight cancellations

ASH fall from a volcano that erupted on February 13 on the heavily populated Indonesian island of Java forced an Australian airline to cancel flights to Phuket, Denpasar, Christmas Island and Cocos Island the following day.

"We are sorry for the inconvenience. However, the safety of our customers is our highest priority," Virgin Australia airline said in a statement on their website. "Our meteorologists are continually monitoring the weather situation, in consultation with the Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre in

Darwin, and we will recommence normal operations as soon as the volcanic ash cloud safely allows it."

Airports of Thailand (AoT) confirmed to the *Gazette* that the Virgin Australia flight from Phuket to Perth was cancelled.

Flights were back on schedule the next day.

The eruption from Mount Kelud sent a huge plume of ash and sand 17 kilometers into the air, forcing the closure of three airports, reported Reuters (see page 11).

— *Saran Mitrarat*



Three airports on Java were closed due to visibility problems caused by ash. Photo: Reuters

Phang Nga ports developed to cater for boom in island tourist numbers

By Chutharat Plerin

THE Marine Department last Friday announced plans to develop two major seaports at Phang Nga jump-off points to the popular Similan and Surin islands.

"Our aim is to promote sustainable tourism for Phang Nga's Andaman islands. We also want to promote it as another diving location," said Marine Office 5 Director Wichai Khamkong.

The news follows two public hearings led by Marine Department Director-General Sorasak Saensombat on February 10 and 11 at the Thap Lamu and Khura Buri ports.

"Thap Lamu is a major gateway for visitors to the Similan Islands. Khura Buri is the gateway to the Surin Islands," Mr Wichai said.

The ports were first built for local use only, he said. Over time, they have become overloaded in the effort to serve both locals and

tourists.

"The new ports will be safer and more convenient for all parties involved."

The Marine Department has hired experts from Khon Kaen University to undertake feasibility studies for the development of the ports. The research and development plans should be

'The new ports will be safer and more convenient for all parties involved'

— Marine Office 5 Director Wichai Khamkong

completed by October, explained Mr Wichai.

Officials have plans to further develop the six Andaman provinces' marine infrastructure.

"This port development is one of our projects in the six Andaman provinces. Next year, we will conduct a feasibility study at Pak Meng Port in Trang and two ports in Krabi: Rai Lay and Nam Mao," said Mr Wichai.

As for Phuket, officials have asked for a 240-million-baht budget to build an airport-to-Patong "sea taxi" and develop Palai Port.



The development of the Thap Lamu Port will make travel easier for those heading to the Similans. Photo: Supplied

The sea taxi is meant to be an alternative route for tourists between the Phuket International Airport and Patong Beach.

"We really want to help allevi-

ate the traffic problems on the island and offer tourists a better way of travelling from the airport to Patong," Mr Wichai said.

"Tourists can enjoy sightseeing

on the way there."

"The two Phuket projects are marked for the 2015 fiscal year budget; they have yet to be approved," he said.

Tourist Police help bag-snatch victims obtain new passports

A CHINESE couple who lost their passports to a bag snatcher on Sunday were en route to their embassy in Bangkok by Monday, with a little help from the Phuket Tourist Police.

After the couple were robbed while walking to a market along the Baan Don-Kok Tanod Road, Thalang Police got in touch with Sub Lt Jessada Wichien of the Tourist Police.

"We contacted the Chinese Embassy for them," he said.

"We also provided the couple with a document they can present to the airline that will allow them to catch their flight from Krabi to Bangkok today and go to their embassy to get temporary passports for their trip home."

A man described as having long, curly hair snatched the bag containing the couple's passports from He Ting Ting, 29, as she walked with Gu Jun Fang, 30 at about 3:30pm on Sunday.



Tourist Police ensured the couple were able to get to their embassy in Bangkok to secure passports.

"Their passports were in the bag, along with 2,000 baht, some yuan and their travel itinerary," said Capt Narong Muangdong of the Thalang Police.

"Fortunately, they had an e-ticket, so they can print out the itinerary again," said Lt Jessada.

Police are continuing to search for the long-haired suspect.

— *Thawit Bilabdullar*

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Booze bans to keep island dry

By Saran Mitrarat

PHUKET will see four Saturday night alcohol bans in coming months, as polls open for senator and MP selection in March and April.

The four dates selected for voting, March 23 and 30 for the senator election and April 20 and 27 for the MP election, fall on Sundays. In accordance with the law, alcohol bans will begin at 6pm the night before and extend to midnight on the day of the election.

Anti-government protesters managed to shut down national elections in Phuket and elsewhere in Southern Thailand on February 1.

With that in mind, Phuket Election Commission (PEC) Director Kittipong Thiengkunakrit encouraged protesters not to boycott the

senatorial election, noting that candidates do not register with a party affiliation.

"I personally believe the election represents the kind of reform protesters are after, since the candidates don't register under a specific party," he said.

Mr Kittipong said he had no inkling as to whether protesters would mobilize to block the vote.

"We are following the protest situation one day at a time. Protesters have yet to mention the senator election."

However, if circumstances change, we will have to discuss a plan of action," he said.

Senators' terms end on March 3 and the PEC will accept candidate registrations from March 4 to March 8 at the Phuket Community Hall. So far, five people have expressed interest in enrolling as

candidates, Mr Kittipong said.

Advance voting in the senatorial election will be on March 23, and the election itself on March 30.

As for the MP election, there will be only one candidate, Mr Kittipong noted.

Jirayos Songyos of the Pheu Thai party was the sole candidate to successfully navigate the blockade by anti-government protesters during MP enrollment in December.

No new candidates will be allowed to register in Phuket.

"We will not re-open candidate registration. According to election law, if we re-open registration, the previous election would be void, which means we would be forced to have a new national election," said Mr Kittipong.

Mr Jirayos is registered in District 2; District 1 has no candidates. Residents of District 1 will receive only a party list ballot, while those in District 2 will get both the party list and MP candidate ballots.



Mr Kittipong explains that two of the bans are due to the need for another round of MP elections since protesters blocked the vote in February.

"The Election Commission (EC) headquarters in Bangkok will decide what to do with District 1, as it has no candidates," he said.

Advance voting for the MP election will take place on April 20, and the election itself will be on April 27.

Deaf foreigner caught selling Angry Bird key chains

PHUKET Tourist Police arrested a deaf Ukrainian tourist last Sunday for disturbing restaurant customers in Central Festival Phuket.

Mykola Chorny, 30, was dropping cards on restaurant tables that said he was deaf and asked for patrons to either donate money or purchase an Angry Bird key chain for 100 baht, Wichit Police Superintendent Chawalit Phetsipear said.

"The cards explained that he was deaf," said Col Chawalit.

"We were notified by a restaurant customer at about 6pm," said Urumporn Koondejsumrit of the Phuket Tourist Police.

"We arrived at the scene, but could not find him. We told restaurant staff to inform us if he came back."

Mr Chorny returned to the restaurant at about 7pm, after which police apprehended him.

"We asked Mr Chorny for his passport, but he said he had used it to rent a motorbike and did not have it. He only showed us the documents proving that he is deaf," Maj Urumporn said.

"We contacted the Immigration Police in order to verify his visa information. He came into the country on a tourist visa which will expire in March," said Col Chawalit.

"He was fined 1,000 baht for disturbing customers and 2,000 baht for failure to provide his passport as requested," said Col Chawalit.

Police seized the cash, cards and Angry Bird key chains.

Mr Chorny was released after he paid the fines.

— Irfan Jamdukor

Elephants tagged for agricultural tourism sector

GOVERNOR Maitri Inthasut's charge into the province's agricultural tourism sector led him to an elephant ranch on February 12.

"The inspection of this elephant ranch is a continuation of our surveys of a pineapple garden, goat farm and vegetable farm. We are visiting them to raise awareness of Phuket's potential for agricultural tourism," Gov Maitri told the *Gazette*.

Governor Maitri was joined by Phuket Provincial Livestock Chief Weerasit Putthipairoj on his trip to Siam Safari Nature Tour Company.

The company has been operating for more than 20 years and has 17 elephants on 20 rai of property.

"The inspection focused on three main top-



Gov Maitri continues to push agricultural tourism.

ics: the health of the animals, the environmental health of the farm and surrounding area and the development of ecological tour-

ism," Gov Maitri said.

"Elephant ranch owners in Phuket are required to regularly check the health of their animals through the Phuket Provincial Livestock office."

In addition, the owners must protect their land and neighboring forests from pollution to ensure that the land remains healthy, he added.

"Finally, they should teach tourists about the environment and also provide them with activities that allow them to participate in protecting it," Gov Maitri said.

Chief Weerasit said the farm passed the inspection with flying colors.

— Irfan Jamdukor



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Schoolchildren have not received tablets this year. Photo: The Nation

New bids called after Chinese fail to deliver school tablets

NOT a single student has received a tablet computer from the government this academic year because of procurement problems.

Shenzhen Yitao Intelligent Control, which won the e-auction in Zones 1 and 2, has failed to make any deliveries and has initiated termination of its contract.

Bidding documents for the fresh e-auction will be sold from February 20 onward.

"The new e-auction will take place on March 27," caretaker Education Minister Chaturon Chaisang said yesterday, with the results announced March 30.

The chosen suppliers are expected to deliver the computer tablets between May 5 and June 30.

Shenzhen Yitao Intelligent Control, meanwhile, will be asked to pay a hefty fine of Bt108 million plus compensation.

"The fine will be imposed on the firm for its failure to deliver the tablets. We will also ask for compensation to cover damages. We may have to pay more for tablets when we get new suppliers compared with prices offered by Shenzhen Yitao Intelligent Control," Chaturon said.

The firm submitted Bt120 million as a security deposit for the tablet purchase deal with Thailand's Office of Basic Education Commission (Obec).

The supplier for Zone 4, Jasmine Telecom Systems, has not made delivery either, but promises to do so before the end of February.

In Zone 3, Obec was initially reluctant to endorse Supreme Distribution (Thailand) but after problems emerged with other suppliers, will do so on February 28, with deliveries in April and June.

Yingluck charged with graft, dereliction of duty

THE National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) found grounds last Tuesday to press charges against caretaker Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra for alleged negligence and dereliction of duty over the controversial rice-pledging scheme, according to commission spokesman Vicha Mahakun.

The move is seen as a step towards initiating impeachment proceedings against PM Yingluck, and to press charges against her.

However, she can continue her duties as

caretaker PM until the NACC decides to indict her, Mr Vicha said.

PM Yingluck has been summoned to officially acknowledge the charges on February 27.

Mr Vicha said the decision was made after the agency's investigation found evidence – both from witnesses and documents – that the premier, who is chairwoman of the National Rice Policy Committee, had been warned by many organizations of possible corruption in the scheme.

The NACC had warned in a written document that the scheme could cause widespread corruption.

Moreover, PM Yingluck was informed of the alleged corruption in the project during a censure debate.



PM Yingluck. Photo: The Nation

Four die in Bangkok clash

Violence erupts as CMPO tries to retake Government House

FOUR people including a policeman were killed last Tuesday in skirmishes between anti-government protesters and anti-riot police at the Phan Fah Lilat Bridge in Bangkok.

The casualties, which included 64 injured, resulted from an operation mounted by the caretaker government's anti-protest operations agency, the Centre for Maintaining Peace and Order (CMPO), to reclaim areas occupied for a month by the protesters. The operation is code-named "Peace for Bangkok".

Tuesday's violence was the second clash by police against the protesters.

Listing Tuesday's fatalities, the Erawan Emergency Medical Service Centre said Suphot Bunrung, 52, succumbed to head wounds; Thanusak Rattanakhot, 29, could not be revived after losing consciousness; and Pol Senior Sgt-Major Phianchai Phawat, 45, sustained fatal chest wounds. The fourth fatality, announced by the Erawan Centre, was of an unidentified man who died from chest wounds. He was pronounced dead at Vajira Hospital where he had been admitted and treated.

Video footage showed a group of policemen falling after being hit by an explosion, while online photos show a policeman aiming a pistol at an unknown target.

CMPO member Tarit Pengdith accused People's Democratic Reform Committee supporters of firing both M-79 grenades and handguns at the police. He said the CMPO planned to continue carrying out daily operations to



Anti-government protesters carry a fellow protester injured in a grenade attack in Bangkok. Photo: Reuters

AROUND THE nation

reclaim the occupied areas – Government House, Government Complex on Chaeng Wattana Road, Democracy Monument, Energy Ministry and Interior Ministry buildings but only during

daylight hours.

Deputy Bangkok police chief Pol Maj-General Adul Narongsak said M-79 rounds were fired by assailants with no known political affiliation from rooftops of nearby buildings.

He added that police would need to secure vantage points around the Phan Fah Lilat Bridge to support future efforts to reclaim the area.

The clashes began at around 11:40am when police encountered

protesters behind a sandbag barricade at the bridge, during an attempt to gain access to Government House, which is barricaded by a large group of PDRC supporters.

The violence ended at about 3pm when police retreated into the Metropolitan Police Bureau compound and the protesters retired behind their barricades. An earlier CMPO-led operation reclaimed areas outside the Energy Ministry on Vibhavadi Road.

GSB president resigns after rice loan protest

WORAVIT Chailimpamontri, the president of state-run Government Savings Bank (GSB) has tendered his resignation after facing pressure on his decision to lend Bt20 billion to the government's troubled rice-pledging scheme, which led to a rash of withdrawals by customers starting last Monday.

GSB's board of directors last Tuesday cancelled a loan of Bt20 billion to the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) and agreed to pull back a previous loan of Bt5 billion.

Meanwhile, a group of businesspeople declared their support for the GSB, and some urged against using farmers as political pawns as they suffer from late payments under the rice-subsidy programme.

Worawit said that he had handed his resignation to the board to show his responsibility.

He said there was a level of distrust on whether he was a political tool of the government, running the bank to serve the government's policy. Still, he insisted that lending to the BAAC did not violate any law.

Hundreds of GSB employees wearing black gathered Tuesday morning at the bank's headquarters to demand Worawit's resignation. GSB employees also urged the bank to suspend its lending to the rice project, which has been struggling to pay farmers since the government took on a caretaker role.

Caretaker Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra blamed the delay in making payments on anti-government demonstrations, saying "The farmers are now in the middle of a political game being played by the protest leaders, who are refusing to follow the democratic and legal path."

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Java rattled by eruption

By Chris Nusatya

MORE than 76,000 people fled their homes, and flights were grounded across most of Indonesia's densely populated island of Java on February 14 after a volcanic eruption the night before sent a huge plume of ash and sand 17km into the air.

The ash cloud from the eruption of Mount Kelud in the province of East Java moved west over the island, forcing the closure of seven airports and stranding thousands of passengers. The only major airports still operating on Java were two in the capital, Jakarta.

"Based on verified data, over 76,000 people have been evacuated from five cities around the volcano ... and about 200,000 people were affected," National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Nugroho said in a text message.

Mount Kelud is 90km south of Indonesia's second biggest city Surabaya, a major industrial center. Its airport was closed, along with those of Bandung, Yogyakarta, Solo, Malang, Semarang and the major oil refinery town of Cilacap.

"Four airports (of seven closed) are in operation now," Handy Heryudhitiawan, spokesman at airport operator Angkasa Pura 1, said last Saturday.

Mount Kelud is one of 130 active volcanoes in the world's fourth most populous country, which sits along the "Ring of Fire" volcanic belt around the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

Mr Nugroho said the eruptions had ceased, but the ash had spread as far as 500km to the west and northwest.

Television broadcast images of planes, streets and houses blanketed in a thick layer of grey ash.

At Borobudur, the world's larg-



Deep ash and sand cover the roads in Java, but minimal damage was done to buildings. Photo: Reuters

AROUND THE region

est Buddhist temple outside Yogyakarta, nearly 135km away, workers rushed to cover statues with plastic sheets to protect them from the falling ash.

Operations were unaffected at a major oil refinery in Cilacap run by state-owned energy company

Pertamina, officials said. The refinery, with a capacity of 348,000 barrels per day, accounts for a little more than a third of Indonesia's total output of refined products.

"Thankfully, Cilacap operations are normal, although ash has indeed reached the Cilacap area," said Pertamina spokesman Ali Mundakir. "As a preventive measure, we have immediately prepared air filters for equipment there."

East Java is the main area in Indonesia for sugarcane plantations, but officials expected limited damage to crops.

Mr Nugroho said the disaster mitigation agency had confirmed two people were killed after roofs collapsed under the weight of the fallen ash.

The eruption otherwise caused minimal damage to buildings, Mr Nugroho said, but had left 3-5cm of ash and sand on roads.

At least 11 people were killed earlier this month in the north of the island of Sumatra when Mount Sinabung erupted. That volcano has been spewing lava and ash for months, forcing thousands to flee.

— Reuters

In brief...

ASEAN efforts to establish code of conduct with China backed by Kerry

INCREASED efforts by ASEAN to persuade a reluctant China to agree to a legally binding code of conduct in the congested South China Sea were bolstered by US Secretary of State John Kerry

Mr Kerry said the stability of the Asia-Pacific depended on achieving a binding code of conduct to help nations peacefully address competing claims in the area.

Journalists charged for disclosing state secrets in Myanmar

MYANMAR police have charged five journalists with "disclosing state secrets" after their newspaper carried a story about an alleged chemical weapons factory, state media reported Sunday.

The state-run New Light of Myanmar said charges under the Official Secrets Act also included "trespassing on the restricted area of the factory", but the newspaper did not disclose the nature of the facility.

Search continues for bodies after Haiyan

SUNDAY marked 100 days since Super Typhoon Haiyan struck, but the search for bodies continues.

The estimated death toll of more than 6,000 included only victims who had been identified. Uncounted were those who could not be identified and were temporarily buried in mass graves. Haiyan displaced more than 4.1 million people and destroyed or damaged 1.1 million houses, the United Nations reported.

UN urged to freeze anti-drug aid to Vietnam over death penalty

THREE groups campaigning against the death penalty called on the United Nations to freeze counter-narcotics aid to Vietnam after it sentenced 30 people to die for heroin trafficking.

Judges in northern Vietnam condemned 30 people to death and jailed dozens more on January 20 for trafficking over 12 tonnes of heroin in the Communist country's biggest-ever drugs trial.

Vietnam has long been used as a connecting point for moving heroin from Laos, Myanmar and China to other Asian countries and Australia.

Harm Reduction International, Reprieve and the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty said UN drug enforcement support in Vietnam was extensive, with a 2012-17 budget of more than US\$5 million for technical assistance, equipment, training and other assistance.

In a letter to the Vienna-based



Opium, created from poppies, is often smuggled through Vietnam to other Asian countries and Australia. Being caught with as much as 100 grams of the drug can result in the death penalty in Vietnam. Photo: Reuters

UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), they said they had raised concern for several years about UN support for countries that impose the death penalty for drug offenses.

Harm Reduction International,

Reprieve and the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty said the UNODC had internal human rights guidance which required it "to cease support for a country if it is feared the support may facilitate executions".

— Reuters

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In brief...

Syria appears to be on path to missing deadline to destroy chemical weapons

SYRIA has relinquished only 11 per cent of its chemical weapons and is on track to miss a politically-loaded deadline to destroy the toxic stockpile, sources told Reuters on February 14.

Missing the June 30 deadline would have serious political implications, says the US and Russia.

Ethiopian co-pilot hijacks flight to avoid persecution

A HIJACKED Ethiopian plane that landed at Geneva airport early on Monday was diverted by the co-pilot, who sought asylum due to fear of persecution in Ethiopia, said police spokesman Pierre Grangean.

The unnamed co-pilot, an Ethiopian, locked the cockpit door when the pilot went to the toilet. He then asked to refuel at Geneva, landed the plane, climbed down from the cockpit with a rope, and gave himself up to police.

EC demands Spain explain why police fired on immigrants

THE European Commission (EC) said on February 14 it would ask Spain to explain why police fired rubber bullets at immigrants who were trying to swim to Spain's north African enclave Ceuta from Morocco.

At least 12 people drowned in the February 6 incident that triggered protests in Spain over immigration policy.

Craigslist killer confesses

Newlyweds describe joint murder, wife admits more

AROUND THE world

By Victoria Cavaliere

THE FBI said on Sunday it was in contact with local police in the case of Miranda Barbour, who is charged with murdering a Pennsylvania man. She lured the man via the website Craigslist and reportedly admits to the killing and at least 22 other slayings.

Mrs Barbour, 19, could face the death penalty in connection with the murder of the 42-year-old man who answered her bogus ad offering sex for US\$100, authorities said.

In a jailhouse interview, Mrs Barbour said she was part of a satanic cult and had no remorse for her victims, according to an article published in Saturday's edition of *The Daily Item* newspaper in Sunbury, Pennsylvania.

She admitted that she and her husband stabbed and strangled Troy LaFerrara in Sunbury in November because "he said the wrong things."

Mrs Barbour also said she had killed at least 22 people in different parts of the country, including Alaska, California, Texas and North Carolina.

"When I hit 22, I stopped counting," she said in the article on the paper's website.

"I can pinpoint on a map where

"I would lure these people in," she said. "I studied them. I learned them and even became their friend. I did this to people who did bad things..."

— Miranda Barbour

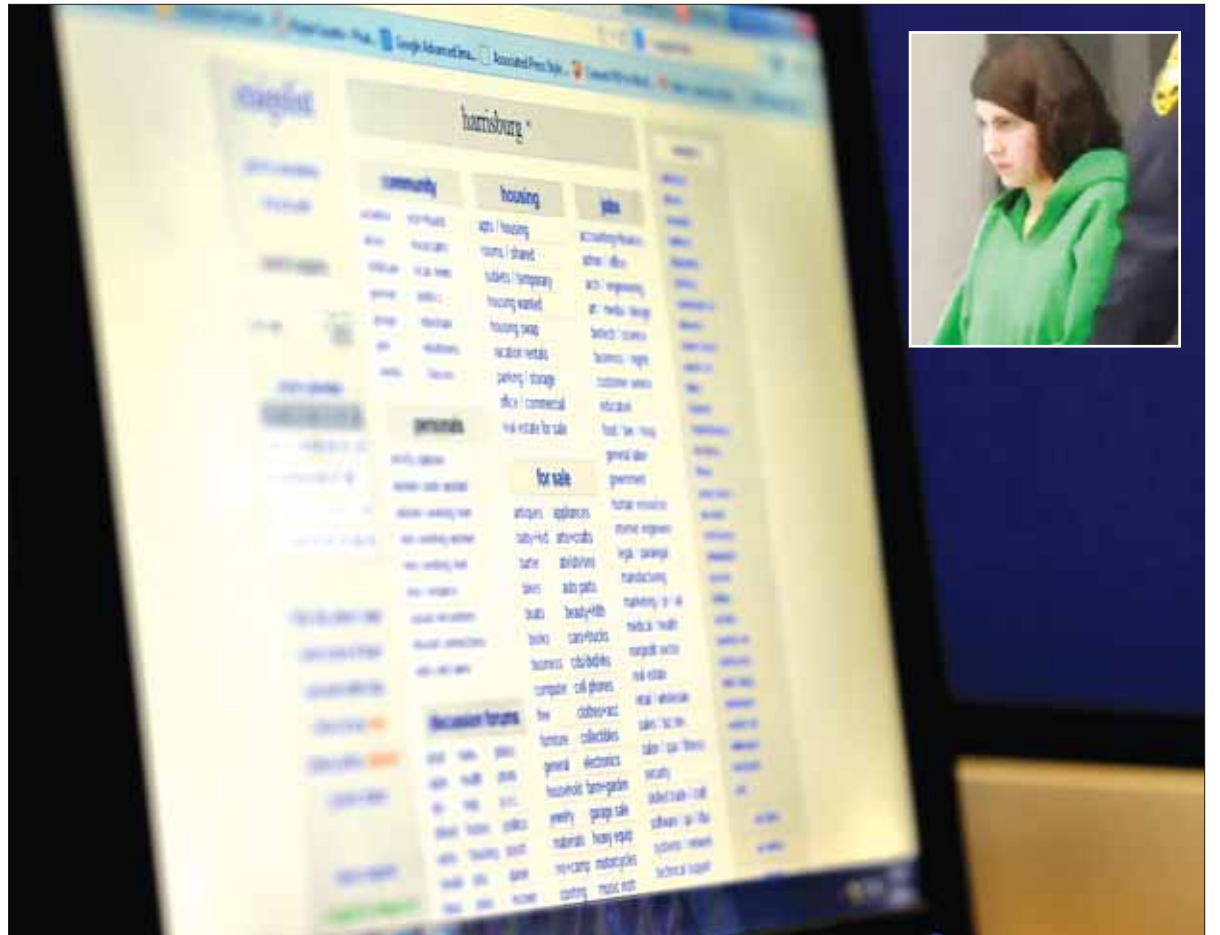
contact with the Sunbury Police Department regarding Miranda Barbour, and will offer any assistance requested in the case."

Mrs Barbour and her husband,

Elytte Barbour, 22, in state court in December pleaded not guilty to killing Mr LaFerrara, whose body was found dumped in an alley.

The Daily Item, which has a circulation of about 25,000, has been following the case closely.

Prosecutors say the husband hid under a blanket in the back of the car when his wife picked up Mr LaFerrara at a mall near Harrisburg, about 50 miles south of Sunbury.



Miranda Barbour said she had committed at least 23 murders. Photo: Jeremie Shatz. Inset: Reuters

Mrs Barbour said she would have let Mr LaFerrara go but after telling him she was just 16, he said he wanted to proceed with their pay-for-sex arrangement.

"If he would have said no, that he wasn't going to go through with the arrangement, I would have let him go," she told the newspaper.

On her signal, Elytte Barbour, her husband of just three weeks, strangled Mr LaFerrara with a cord while his wife stabbed him about 20 times, police say.

— Reuters

Belgium passes child 'right-to-die' law

BELGIUM became the first country to allow euthanasia for terminally ill children of any age on February 13 when its lower house of parliament passed new "right-to-die" legislation by a large majority.

The law goes beyond legislation that set a minimum age of 12 for children judged mature enough to decide to end their lives. It has popular support in Belgium, where adult euthanasia became legal in 2002.

Christian, Muslim and Jewish leaders denounced the law ahead of the vote in a rare joint declaration.

"This is not about lethal injections for children. This is about terminally ill children, whose death is imminent and who suffer greatly," said Carina Van Cauter, a

lawmaker for the Flemish Liberal Democrats who back the law.

"There are clear checks and balances in the law to prevent abuse," she said of the legislation, which now has to be signed by the country's monarch.

Thursday's vote has attracted more attention abroad than in Belgium, where none of the major newspapers carried news of it on



Protesters take to the streets of Brussels days before the legislation legalizing child euthanasia passed. Photo: Reuters

their front pages.

Belgium's rules on euthanasia have come under international scrutiny in the past year after it granted the right to die to deaf twin brothers who were about to turn blind and to a transgender person after an unsuccessful sex change operation.

The new law specifies that children must be terminally ill rather than just in a state of unbearable suffering, which is the

qualification for adults.

Requests for euthanasia often come from parents who are emotionally exhausted after seeing their children fight for their lives for so long, Belgian nurse Sonja Develter said.

In practice, supporters of child euthanasia say, there are likely to be few minors who are allowed to die.

— Reuters

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OHMM: Outdoor furniture to suit your lifestyle



OHMM's collection of stylish and hard-wearing outdoor furniture for your garden, patio, pool or balcony is now available at their new showroom in Surin. Photos: Supplied

By Mark Knowles

WITH our balmy tropical climate and countless stunning sea-views, living in Phuket has always been about getting outdoors and soaking up the sun. And while the locals might be able to tolerate the rigors of this outdoor lifestyle, until now, their outdoor furniture has not been equal to the task.

But with the newest entrant to the outdoor furniture market in Phuket, OHMM, that's all about to change. The British-Singaporean company recently opened its showroom to offer its world-class outdoor furniture to both retail and commercial customers on the island.

As many of OHMM's clients will attest, it's not just furniture, it's a lifestyle.

Former corporate highflier Kevin Boland is the driving force behind OHMM, and in 2006, after leaving a successful career, he founded the company with an uncompromising vision to create stylish, durable, high-quality furniture that met his exacting standards.

Initially, OHMM subcontracted the production of its furniture, but frustrated with lack of their vision of quality, it wasn't long before Kevin decided to start OHMM Manufacturing in Cebu,

the Philippines, known as the weaving capital of the world.

"Cebu in the Philippines has a huge amount of highly-skilled weavers, many big companies have been there for some time, so the critical mass of skills in terms of weaving and framing are there," says Kevin.

"I said, 'if we are going to do this, we have to make it world-class quality or we don't do it'."

Kevin doesn't just talk the talk, however, he has designed and built his own home in Phuket, "Villa del Mar" and uses it as an outdoor laboratory to put his furniture to the test, developing innovative new designs and tweaking existing ones.

Having control over the entire process, from design to delivery, enables OHMM to offer a complete service. Whether it's a single pool villa, or furnishing an entire resort, OHMM works with their customers to provide a complete and personalized solution to furnishing their outdoor or even indoor spaces.

With their many "off the shelf"

PROPERTY
Gazette



Mix and match to create your ultimate outdoor space.

collections, you can mix and match individual pieces to create your ultimate outdoor space, and as if this weren't enough, OHMM are more than happy to work with you to create customized pieces to suit your individual needs.

"We have had customers come to us looking for furniture to suit narrow balconies, or unusually shaped areas, and we are able to work directly with them to create personalized pieces that fit their exact requirements," says Kevin.

This personalized service continues all the way to the final step, where OHMM's dedicated delivery team comes to your home, to unpack and place the furniture correctly to ensure you are 100 per cent satisfied. They also offer health checks to ensure all the furniture is performing as it should, particularly in demanding commercial environments.

OHMM outdoor furniture uses the premium synthetic weaving material RAUCORD, manufactured by German polymer specialist REHAU. This high-tec material is: UV-resistant, weatherproof, temperature resistant, strong and durable, low maintenance and easy to clean, nontoxic, environmentally friendly, colorfast, and scratch and stain resistant.



OHMM uses premium synthetic weaving materials on high-quality extruded virgin aluminum frames.

Available in many colors, the RAUCORD fiber is hand woven onto powder-coated extruded virgin aluminum frames, resulting in sturdy, lightweight and extremely durable outdoor furniture. OHMM stands by its manufacturing quality with an unparalleled five-year warranty.

Visit OHMM's showroom in Surin next to Boccocino, opposite Surin Plaza to view their wide range of garden, patio, pool and balcony furniture. Their address is 8/73 Moo 3, Srisoonthorn Road, Cherngtalay, Talang, Phuket 83110. For more information visit: ohmm.sg, call 076-621 524 or email: info@ohmm.co.th

Accor's Sofitel brand merged back into group

GLOBAL French hotel chain ACCOR's experiment with growing the Sofitel luxury brand as a stand-alone unit has gone by the wayside.

The group is now merging Sofitel back into an upscale cluster of brands which include Pullman, Grand Mercure, Sebel and MGallery.

Singapore-based Senior Vice-President for Sofitel Markland Blaiklock will be leaving the company. This is not the first

time ACCOR has had a brand realignment with the most recent being the shelving of the All Seasons namesake and creation of a three-pronged ibis overlay with the core brand, together with ibis styles and Ibis budget offerings.

Over the past few years as ACCOR pursues an asset light approach for the group, the top level position has seen a series of new appointments and exits.

— Phuket Insider

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M venpick appoints two new key vice presidents



Jan Bundgaard. Photos: Supplied

M VENPICK Hotels & Resorts recently announced two key new appointments – Jan Bundgaard has been internally promoted to the position of vice president of development, Europe and Africa, and Paul Mulcahy joins the company as vice president of distribution and revenue management.

The two new members of the company's corporate center team based in Zurich will be focusing on building the global success of the international upscale hospitality company of Swiss heritage.

Irish-born Mulcahy joins M venpick Hotels & Resorts from the Pierre & Vacances Centreparcs Group in Paris, where he was the company's group distribution director and responsible for the direct web business, CRM and call centers.

Married with two children and fluent in French and English, Mulcahy's key specialties are e-commerce, revenue management and distribution. His experience is honed by 25 years in the travel industry with career highlights that include area revenue management and e-commerce positions with the Intercontinental Hotels Group and commercial director and general manager roles with global online travel company, Orbitz Worldwide.

"M venpick Hotels & Resorts has always been focused on extending its brand reach, providing greater convenience to customers and strengthening relationships with its partners and our ambitious digital plans will continue to build on these successes," said Mulcahy.

Jan Bundgaard, meanwhile, was formerly the



Paul Mulcahy.

general manager of the M venpick Hotel & Resort Beirut following a career of hotel and financial management that has seen him running/opening properties in five different countries as well as being director of finance for Starwood Hotels & Resorts, divisional office in Singapore.

"M venpick Hotels & Resorts has built its reputation on considered, organic growth and our future focus will be on exploring exciting new opportunities in European markets where we are not present and the great potential offered by destinations in the sub-Saharan continent," he said.

Originally from Denmark, Bundgaard speaks all Scandinavian languages as well as English and French. He is married and has two children.

M venpick Hotels & Resorts, an international upscale hotel management company with over 16,000 staff members, is represented in 25 countries with 80 hotels, resorts and Nile cruisers currently in operation. Around 30 properties are planned or under construction, including Chiang Mai and Koh Samui (Thailand), Istanbul (Turkey), Shanghai (China), and Marrakech (Morocco).

Focusing on expansion in its core markets of Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, M venpick Hotels & Resorts specializes in business and conference hotels, as well as holiday resorts, all reflecting a sense of place and respect for their local communities.

– *Phuket Gazette*

For more information please visit: moevenpick-hotels.com/en/.



A screenshot from Thailand-Property.com

Thailand-Property.com launches Thai web portal

ONE of Thailand's leading English language real estate portals, Thailand-Property.com, just launched a new Thai website, putting it in a position to establish itself as a market leader with not only the English-speaking population of Thailand but with the Thai-speaking demographic as well.

With over 80% of the site's current user base located in Thailand and over 25% of these users being native Thai-speakers, the website is expected to draw in a huge number of new Thai users, considerably increasing site traffic in all areas. Having only launched in June 2013, Thailand-Property.com is already outranking major competitors on Google and has since established itself as a key player in Thailand's real estate market. Since its launch, the site has experienced a monthly growth average of 67% in enquiries and visitors, and now boasts over 110,000 property listings with over 1.3 million properties viewed by active property searchers.

The rapid success that Thailand-Property.com has enjoyed can be largely attributed to the

founding management team's expertise in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and digital marketing, as founder of Thailand-Property.com, Ben Neve is also the founder of Smart Traffic, one of the world's leading search marketing companies.

"This is an exciting time for both our users and our subscribers. As we've grown in popularity, our agents and developers have begun regularly reporting more property sales from enquiries from the site, and now with the Thai language site, we are able to expand our service to the local population," Neve said. "This will increase our market share in terms of both properties listed and property sellers and searchers using the site, which will in turn help us take the next step in our ambitious growth plan to become the number one property website in Thailand."

The company plans to add Russian and Chinese in the near future.

For more information, contact Marketing Manager, Martin Schmidt at martin@thailand-property.com

Demand rises for smaller, cheaper Phuket villas, condos

DEMAND has grown for smaller and cheaper resort villas, condominiums and apartments in Phuket, according to CB Richard Ellis Research (Thailand).

The company's research shows that 80% of the villa sales on the resort-island were for properties priced lower than 15 million baht in the third quarter of last year. There were no villas sold with prices above 35mn baht in the period.

The main nationalities of Phuket villa buyers in the quarter were British, Italian, German and Russian, these purchasers mainly focusing on affordable properties costing less than 20mn baht.

The west coast of Phuket has long been the most sought-after area for villa developments, with 53% of the island's completed supply. The central area is the most popular location within the west coast zone.

Resales in the third quarter started to exceed new sales, unlike Bangkok, where most buyers prefer new property.

It continued to see steady demand for villas in the entry level (between 5mn and 15mn baht) and mid-range (between 15mn baht and 35mn baht) segments during the quarter. Meanwhile, the high-end (between 35 million and 90mn baht) and luxury (above 90mn baht) villa market continued to be slow, as there were more choices of units

for secondary resale.

Only one villa project, Coco Chalong with 80 units priced 5mn baht and 9mn baht, was launched from July to September last year, compared to four projects (55 units in total) in the second quarter.

In the third quarter, there were two new resort condominium projects launched in the east coast and west coast areas; the luxury Silver Beach Condominium and the high-end Diamond Hills. Two new projects were completed – the Icon Park and the Sea & Sky Condominium, which are high-end resort condominiums (90,000 to 109,999 baht per sqm) located at Kamala and Karon Beach, respectively.

The island's completed supply grew by 3.4% on the second quarter of 2012. There are more than 2,800 resort units in the pipeline which are expected to be completed by the end of 2015.

Buyers now prefer smaller condominium and apartment units and sales were best in mid-range projects (90,000 to 109,999 baht per sqm), said CBRE. The west coast continues to be the most preferred location, particularly the southern part, including Patong. Properties that offer sea views and easy access to the beach are the most popular. Distance from the airport is also a consideration, said the company.

– *The Nation*

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The art of travel warfare

FOR THOSE of you who are hopelessly optimistic and always looking for the bright side, even when caught in a monsoon, please move on to the next page of the newspaper. Better yet, find the nearest mirror and hone up on that hopeless one liner – “Have a nice day.”

In this instance, my day has gone from bad to worse and beyond. It's a bit like a travelocity tale as acted out by Bruce Willis in a *Die Hard* sequel. Or, better yet, a hentai graphic comic of Bambi let loose amid the burning ruins of Armageddon.

My day started out at Ngurah Rai airport in Bali, which has been expanded and upgraded, though the growing pains are on the main stage for the entire world to see. I do tend to travel light and my religious zeal in to sticking to a hand-carry-only policy typically works wonders for those last minute dashes to departure gates.

As I disembarked my taxi, bade farewell to my chatty driver Made (one of those mono mass-marketing Balinese names which could be likened to Noi here in Thailand or Smith in America), I was greeted by a line that snaked all the way outside the terminal. This was not a good sign and upon further inspection I found that my plan B – another entrance to the departure area – was even longer.

Accepting the inevitable, I dropped into line, my head hung low and silently cursing the tail-end of Chinese New Year. Ahead of me lay a number of Quiksilver-clad downunder types whose overloaded trolleys included surfboards. The crowd was loud yet friendly.

Edging step-by-step closer to the checkpoint and x-ray machine for luggage, suddenly a small woman carrying a flag dashed by in what was nearly Olympic fervor. Nearing the checkpoint, she shouted at the top of her lungs some shrill phrase

and next came a bum rush of North Asian tourists who jammed themselves into an all new line next to the entrance. It was not a small group, but was 40-50 people at the least.

Heads in front of me turned, tempers flared and the down under brigade burst into verbal shouts at the guards who started letting the line breakers through.

Suddenly two surfboard trolleys were hurtled into the encroached area and a temporary barricade put up to stop the interlopers. Shouting and pushing followed and mayhem ensued with everyone trying to get inside.

This was no Woodstock and the summer of love seemed to be long forgotten. Racial slurs came out, and things got ugly fast as the two groups managed to simultaneously wedge through the gate and eventually find sanctuary inside. What they didn't know was that another, even longer, line was forming at immigration.

A few days before this happened, I was standing in the check-in line for a flight to Singapore at a long line of waiting passengers when a couple who seemed blissfully ignorant of their surroundings walked past the end of the line and took a position in front of me.

Despite my inner demons saying to “jai



Last Call

By Bill Barnett

My fellow passengers congratulated my action with strong pats on the back and I was able to bask in the warm glow of victory for the next half hour or so.



Photo: John Taylor

When common courtesy and polite etiquette are lost, an airport can seem like a warzone.

yen yen”, my loud admonishment fell on deaf ears as did a gentle tap on the shoulder.

This was it, and war had to be declared, as I resorted to grappling a fistful of shirt and a harsh shove backwards. Clearly, violence does work at certain times, and the line breakers backed off to the rear. My fellow passengers congratulated my actions with strong pats on the back and I was able to bask in the warm glow of victory for the next half hour or so. That was until the plane boarded and I found myself next to the offending couple on a two-hour flight aboard an elbow-to-elbow low-cost airline carrier.

So what have I learned from my recent immersion into the art of travel warfare? Is

my Western-bred contempt of those who break the rules or lack any etiquette about to doom me to the land of the dinosaurs?

Pretty much the way I see it, is that the world has changed, the old ways have gone out the window. In this day and age, when everyone can fly, the truth is that journeys today, be they short or long, are no different then going up that river in *Apocalypse Now* looking for Kurtz. Savage warfare is the only way forward. I might have to dust off that aging copy of *The Art of War* next time I head to the nearest airport.

Bill Barnett is Managing Director of C9Hotelworks. He can be contacted through: c9hotelworks.com

Banks buckle down

THE high level of household debt has negatively affected many home-buyers that put down a deposit last year and hoped to have their property transferred to them this year, as commercial banks are examining loan applications more closely before approving a mortgage.

Meanwhile, small and medium-sized developers face liquidity problems due to the banks only approving condominium project financing up to 50% of a project's value, said Thamrong Panyasakulwong, president of the Thai Condominium Association.

The banks also insist that this size of condominium developer must book at least 60% of a project's value before receiving financing, he said.

Given these restrictions, most smaller operators have had to delay the launch of new condominium projects, and are also delaying their construction.

Some have even had to suspend their projects altogether and return down payments to customers, he added.

“Twenty-three per cent of our



Photo: Woodleywonderworks

High levels of household debt has affected home-buyers.

customers have been unable to get a mortgage from the banks since the beginning of the last quarter, as their financial statements show a high debt level and lower income, causing the banks to reject their applications,” said Prukka Real Estate president and CEO Thongma Vijiitpongpan.

The company has, however, tried to help customers in this situation find ways to present

their financial statements in a more favorable light, and it also encourages them to find a family member to jointly apply for a housing loan with them, he said.

The bank is also minimizing its risk by limiting the provision of mortgages to those customers who can prove they have sufficient earnings to keep up their repayments over the long term, he said.

– The Nation

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Investment mistakes retirees often make

RETIREMENT is not the time you want to be making too many big investment management mistakes that will be difficult or nearly impossible for you to recover from. With that in mind, here are a few big mistakes:

Mistake 1 : Not understanding or maximizing your retirement or entitlement benefits

Every country has its own set of retirement and health insurance programs for retirees which need to be factored into your investment management plans, as some countries have more complicated entitlement systems than others.

For Americans, it's a real alphabet soup that includes everything from social security, 401k plans, Roth IRAs, traditional IRAs and defined pension plans to fund retirement plus Medicare and various Medicare plans (like Plans A, B, C, and D and Medicare Advantage) for health care. To further complicate matters, taking social security early means reduced benefit income while withdrawing funds at the wrong time from tax-differed retirement plans can have large tax consequences.

In other words, you need to seek expert advice when you are young and continue to seek such advice after you are retired to ensure that you always maximize the return from your entitlement benefits.

Retirement Years

By Don Freeman

Mistake 2 : Buying unnecessary annuities or insurance policies with a guaranteed return

Given the volatility of the stock market and record low interest rates in most developed markets, you might be tempted to buy annuities and insurance schemes promising a steady income stream for life. Such products also allow you to outsource both the risk associated with outliving your money and the management of your investments to professional investment managers.

However, be aware that financial advisors love selling annuities or insurance policies to retirees because they tend to generate high and upfront commissions for themselves. Moreover, such schemes tend to be complex with very fine print that you will need to read very carefully to understand.

Mistake 3 : Being forced to sell investments at the wrong time

Having to sell investments when the market is slumping in order to meet basic spending needs or to meet an emergency is almost as great of a risk as outliving

your savings and investments. For that reason, you should not tie up all of your money in long-term investments. Ideally, consider keeping enough money in short-term investments like cash, money market funds, certificates of deposit and short-term bonds or bond funds to cover at least a year's worth of living expenses and at least one big emergency.

In addition, "ladder" the maturities of your CDs and bonds so that some come due in the short term (e.g. three to six months), the medium term (e.g. six months to a year) and the long term (e.g. one year or longer) in order to avoid the risk of having everything come due at once when interest rates are really low.

Mistake 4 : Assuming you can always manage your money by yourself

If you largely outsourced the management of your investments while you were working to a financial advisor because you did not have the time to manage them, it's not a good idea to suddenly decide to manage them on your own once you retire simply because you now have the time to do so and you want to save on advisory fees.

On the other hand and if you have always been a do-it-yourselfer when it comes to



You should consider all of the 'eggs' in your retirement. Photo: 401 (K) 2013

investing and you have had a good track record of profitable returns for the long-term, there is no reason to think you won't be any less successful managing your own money in retirement.

However, what happens if you become incapacitated and you can't manage your own investments anymore? Moreover, can your spouse or family manage your investments without you being able to guide them? If you aren't sure what will happen, then it would be a good idea to already have a strong relationship with a

qualified financial advisor whose track record you are already familiar with.

Don Freeman is president of Freeman Capital Management, a Registered Investment Advisor with the US Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), based in Phuket, Thailand. He has over 15 years experience and provides personal financial planning and wealth management to expatriates. Specializing in UK and US pension transfers. Call 089-970-5795 or email: freemancapital@gmail.com.

Beckoning wealth wisdom from ancient Babylonia

Finance

By David Mayes

THERE is a great book that I like to recommend people give to their children to read when they become teenagers; Not long and very easy to read, the book is called *The Richest Man in Babylon*, and while it was written early in the last century, the author uses a series of parables set in ancient Babylon to illustrate some timeless

financial principals that are believed to be the secret to this ancient city's success.

Most people only know about Babylon from the Bible or from Bob Marley songs, where it is portrayed as something of an evil city. The historical Babylon in fact was a testament to human ingenuity and became the most prosperous city of its time despite not being on any major trade route, not having sufficient rainfall to produce crops, and not having much in the way of natural resources at all. In case

you are curious, Babylon was located in what is now Iraq.

The Babylonians erected one of the highest protective wall systems around their city in history despite not even having locally sourced stones to build with, and they built extensive irrigation systems to allow for cultivation of the arid land on a scale not before seen in ancient times.

The reason behind their ability to become so wealthy lied in the fact that at the core of their culture, they passed down principals to everyone in their society to teach them how to build and maintain wealth. Despite the sophistication of the modern financial world, the principals remain true today.

The most important point stressed many times throughout the book is that it doesn't matter how much you are presently earning, if you consistently save no less than 10% of your earnings and continuously compound by re-investing any interest or earnings, you will eventually achieve financial freedom. It doesn't take a very large return at all for the magic of compounding

to eventually grow your meager savings into something significant.

There is another extremely important lesson told in a few different ways on avoiding losses incurred by trying to get your money working too hard, as this defeats the magic of compounding. This is probably the most difficult in

man who is not afraid to work is more likely going to be able to not only keep any fortune he makes, but will also be able to wisely grow it. A playboy on the other hand can easily squander the largest of estates. There is nothing in the book that is rocket science, but a mix of habitually saving, making cautious investments, and working hard are an ancient recipe for success that helped the Babylonians build one of the most impressive civilizations of the ancient world.

They will still work for anyone who puts them into practice consistently. I highly recommend giving it to you teenagers and spend some time talking with them about the principals to make sure they sink in. Sadly this is one area the modern education system usually neglects.

David Mayes MBA lives in Phuket and provides wealth management services to expatriates around the globe, focusing on UK pension transfers. Faramond UK is regulated by the FCA and provides advice on taxation and pensions. He can be reached at david.m@faramond.com or 085-335-8573.



An ancient Babylonian site at Behistun. Photo: Dynamosquito



Siam International
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Music on the move

Digital music accessories see surging sales in Southeast Asian markets

ENTERTAINMENT on the move is becoming increasingly widespread these days thanks to the proliferation of smartphones and tablets. With the escalating ownership of such mobile technology, many are also buying headphones and headsets to receive better quality audio. According to the latest findings by GfK, a German-based consumer research firm, the headphone and headset market generated a total of US\$77.3 million across four key Southeast Asian markets in 2013.

Last year, consumers in Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia snapped up nearly 3.8 million units of headphones and headsets – a notable growth of 5% over the same period a year ago, expanding the overall market also by 5% in total worth.

“Headsets and headphones are largely used as complementary accessories to smart mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets these days,” observed Gerard Tan,

Account Director for Digital World at GfK Asia. “The continued popularity of such gadgets, especially in the region’s developing countries, has been a key factor in driving sales of this product group as many are turning to their smartphone or tablet as a source of entertainment while on the move.”

Wired in-ear headphones continue to dominate in both value and volume, averaging at 55% and 77% of total market sales. Generally, all segments rose in volume demand in the range of 2% to 30%, with infrared/Bluetooth devices achieving the highest growth. The infrared/Bluetooth segment reported significant incremental sales in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, by 54%, 78% and 106%, respectively. In value terms, the infrared/Bluetooth and Wired headband secured the greatest growth of 13% and 9%, respectively across the four countries.

“Another growing trend these days is the availability of more colorful and trendy headphone and headset designs which consumers are eagerly adopting,” observed

Tan. “These accessories have somehow become a fashion item that comes with stylish, loud colors that are used to showcase individuality and personalities.”

Although both headphones and headsets saw heightened demand in the past year, it was the latter that registered a larger surge across every one of the four markets.

For this particular segment, Indonesia was the biggest contributor in both value and volume terms. Its headset market expanded by 30% in value to attain sales of \$16.3 million – even more than Singapore’s \$16.1 million sales achieved.



“Growing affluence will lead to rising sophistication with consumers seeking better quality products to enhance their lifestyle, which in this case means an increase in demand for premium headphones and headsets to heighten their listening pleasure,” commented Tan. “The market moving forward is set to continue expanding in value as users are more willing to splurge on better quality models; as well as in terms of sales volume resulting from the intensifying competition arising from the broadening repertoire of brands and models in the market,” he concluded.

– *Phuket Gazette*

GfK is one of the world's largest research companies, employing some 13,000 experts working to discover new insights into the way people live, think and shop, in over 100 markets, every day. GfK is constantly innovating and using the latest technologies and the smartest methodologies to give its clients the clearest understanding of the most important people in the world: their customers. In 2012, GfK's sales amounted to €1.51 billion.

Eager for entrepreneurs

GLOBAL Entrepreneurship Thailand (GET), a working group established to promote entrepreneurship in the Kingdom, believes that government promotion and outward-looking plans are key to the expansion of small and medium enterprises.

GET's president Steve Cheah said the lack of access to finance, start-up knowledge and incentives were the main problems faced by the entrepreneur.

“An increase in cross-border trade and looking outward was necessary for both entrepreneurs and SMEs so they can benefit from the Asean Economic Community (AEC), once it is launched in 2015.

“Thailand is full of talented individuals with vast amounts of creative ideas. The problem is that they cannot develop these ideas into a sustainable business, and this is where our experience and expertise from Global Entrepreneurship Week [GEW] can help,” Cheah said.

“GEW is an international initiative and a large global campaign that has introduced entrepreneurship to more than 30 million people from 138 countries since it was founded by Enterprise UK and the Kauffman Foundation in 2008.

“To promote cross-border entrepreneurship, Cheah suggested that the Thai government provide knowledge to people who wish to expand or set up business outside the country.”

He added that people's minds would also have to change, and they must understand that entrepreneurship is a global phenomenon and that businesses in Thailand should understand that their market covers the entire Asean region.

“People's perception can change once the government promotes business awareness and provides information about business regulations in neighboring countries. Cheah added that the government should also show how hassle-free it can be to start a business locally and overseas since all you need nowadays is a computer with internet access.

“With added incentives from the AEC and cheaper flights, the time is right for Thai people to think of business potential outside Thailand and to realize the potential of Asean as a whole since there are 600 million people living here,” Cheah said.



GET president Steve Cheah. Photo: The Nation

“He added that the government should also provide easy access to finance and other incentives to encourage entrepreneurship, such as tax exemption during start up, direct financial help and low-interest loans in order to help them sustain their new business until they can stand on their own.

“Right now, Thailand is the third largest economy in the Asean region and the next step for the country's development would be to concentrate on creative economy and do what they can to tap into their human resources,” he said. “The ecosystem for start-ups and entrepreneurs needs to be improved and the government should lead the way.”

Cheah said that GET aimed to turn the country into a start-up hub in Asean since the cost of starting a business in Thailand was half of what is needed in Singapore and is a third cheaper than in Malaysia. He added that local firms, entrepreneurs and government-related agencies could partner up with GET in order to help showcase Thailand's talent in the next GEW in November.

GET has recently partnered up with Minor International to set up a “Thailand go-viral” video competition offering a cash prize of 500,000 baht for the best two-minute clip showing entrepreneurial skills. However, this competition has had to be put on “pause” for the time being due to current uncertain political situation. The competition would resume once the situation was more conducive, Cheah said.

– *The Nation*

TAT puts Bkk on back burner

THE Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) office in Hong Kong, Titiporn Manenet, revealed last week that her office has devised a plan to attract Hong Kong visitors to the Kingdom despite the intense political situation.

Ms Titiporn said that the TAT Hong Kong Office would direct potential travellers away from Bangkok to popular destinations unaffected by political turmoil, such as Phuket, Chiang Rai, and Chiang Mai.

The adjustment in tourism strategy comes amid the ongoing political protest that prompted Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra's administration to impose an Emergency Decree in the capital, effectively causing the Hong Kong government to raise its travel advisory to Bangkok to the highest warning level.

Director Titiporn said the announcement had scared off 24% or 50,000 prospective visitors from Hong Kong during the Chinese New Year celebration.

She said that airlines offering direct flights from Hong Kong to destinations in Thailand have now started a promotion campaign to provide discounted tickets. The director gave as an example Hong Kong Airlines, which is offering a one way ticket to Thailand for just 2,100 baht at the end of March. Return tickets from Hong Kong to Thailand usually cost around 12,000 baht.

In addition, Hong Kong Airlines and TAT have organized a “wedding on a plane” event, allowing a

flash wedding ceremony to be hosted on the airline's planes on the Hong Kong to Phuket route.

More than 70% of Hong Kong travellers have switched to Japan, said Ms Titiporn, who further noted that Thailand needed to step up its tourism promotion in order to take on neighboring countries such as Malaysia which has heavily invested in its tourism campaign this year.

– *NNT*



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Unhealthy Bangkok hub

THERE are many different indices used to assess how developed a country is. Fortunately for Thailand, the state of the domestic aviation industry is not among them, because if it were, the country would not fare well in the ratings.

In many countries, regional carriers operating small turboprop commuter planes on scheduled routes in lean markets are an important segment of the overall air transport infrastructure.

In neighboring Malaysia, as just one example, Firefly continues to expand in leaps and bounds, having recently received the first of 20 new 72-seat ATR turboprop aircraft.

The carrier, which now uses turboprop planes exclusively, operates 15 domestic and 10 international routes, including several to resort destinations in Thailand. Having carried some 1.7 million customers last year, it is establishing both Kota Baru and Johor Baru as new hubs and plans to expand into Vietnam and Cambodia.

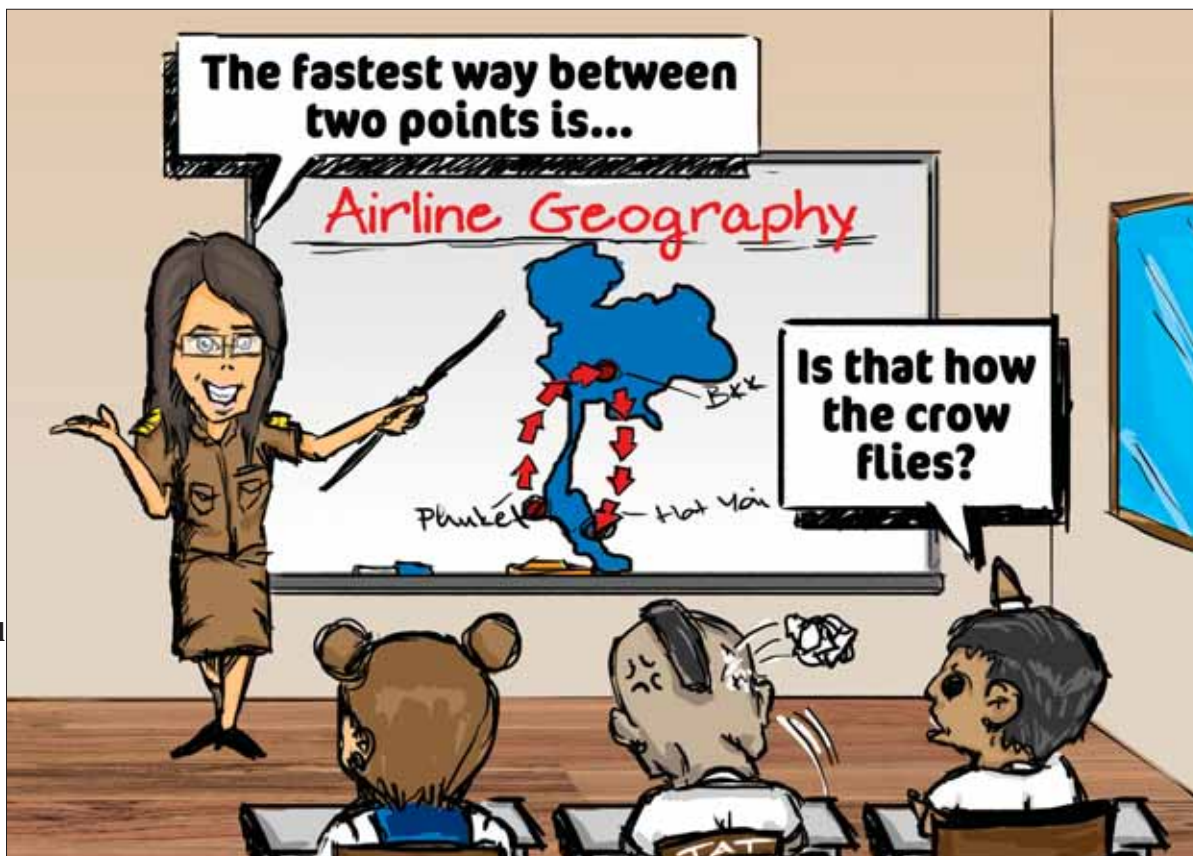
In sharp contrast, the dearth of regional commuter flights linking major population centers within Thailand is hard to explain, especially for a country that relies so heavily on tourism to generate revenue, has so many popular destinations with airports – and has such an abysmal road safety record.

The current lack of any direct flights linking the South's two largest international airports, Phuket and Hat Yai, is just one case in point. [see page 44] Both are international airports serving large metropolitan areas, yet of the numerous carriers that have tried to operate the route, none have done so successfully.

Some, like Nok Air, failed because it chose aircraft too large and ran into load factor problems that probably could have been overcome by a better sales and marketing campaign. Phuket Air failed principally because of its safety record. Happy Air also had marketing problems, as well as reliability issues. The list goes on, but the recurrent theme is mismanagement, not lack of demand.

There are interesting parallels between the interminable political mess we find ourselves in and the sparsity of regional commuter flights in Thailand. First and foremost, everything in Thailand, it seems, must go through Bangkok. Having useful connections with the ruling elite there is also seen as a must for any hopeful start-up.

Airports of Thailand (AoT) is currently undertaking major expansions at several airports, including Phuket International. Sadly, they are so firmly cemented in a thoroughly "Bangkok-centric" style of thinking that little or no planning, it seems, has been done to help spur the growth of aviation services outside the capital. Such planning, should it ever be forthcoming, could go a long way to help keep Phuket hotels filled with tourists year-round.



Deadly Srisoonthorn Road needs fixing

Re: Gazette online, One Phuket student killed, two injured in motorbike accident, February 11

Another tragic accident on what has become a very dangerous piece of road.

Those of us that live east of the monument have witnessed, with growing concern, the number of fatal accidents on this stretch of road. Speed is one factor but I wonder if the authorities have considered the following:

- A central median (as in Kathu)
- U-turns on a limited basis
- Lights on the median between the monument and SuperCheap

I drive this road every morning and evening and in the evening, traffic going east is often down to one lane, and there are numerous motorbikes and motorbikes with sidecars waiting to cross the road.

These vehicles are extremely difficult to see and the number of chalk marks on the road is a testament to the number of accidents. Something should be done urgently.

Grenville Wilson
Pa Khlok

Willing to volunteer to take dirty pics

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Marine Office offers B10,000 reward for pictures of oil-dumpers, February 11

In case gasoline counts too, I can offer to do a series of pictures every evening at Chalong Pier.

Directly in front of the lighthouse, there are people handling gas and oil, refilling speedboat tanks as though Chalong Bay had a contaminant separator.

How about pictures of liveaboards without septic tanks or fishing boats operating in marine national parks? How much would I get for them?

A Friend
Gazette forum

Letters

to the Editor

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

Drought responsible for killer rubber tree

Re: Gazette online, Phuket rubber tapper fatally felled by tree branch, February 11

The current drought is taking a toll on non-native varieties, which include rubber trees, and sap tapping quickly reduces this tree's drought survival.

Michael Arvin
Gazette forum

Metered taxis reason to go elsewhere

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Vice Governor champions Australian's metered taxi complaint, February 18

I have travelled to Phuket many times, and have always experienced the same rude behavior from the taxi drivers when I am going to Patong. They will never use the meter, so I take a minibus or now the Patong bus.

I normally go to Krabi now for this reason.

Charles Bassett
USA

Guilty by location

Re: Gazette online, Dozens of fish saved from entangled net at top Phuket dive destination, February 14

This may be a bit simplistic, but if a fishing boat is in a restrictive area, the fishermen should be arrested. They are not there to sightsee. They should be required to stay out of these areas.

Larry
Kamala

Looking forward to more cultural events

Re: Gazette online, Knocked out by Beatles in the Boat Lagoon, February 10

It's nice that more and more culture is coming to Phuket. Now I'm waiting for the big musicals and other world-class events.

Please have a look at Singapore. They have two new theaters, one at Marina Bay Sands.

During the last couple of months we were down there to see *Phantom of the Opera* and *Notre Dame de Paris*. Soon they will stage *My Fair Lady* and next time we go down, we'll see *Grease*.

Richard
Gazette forum

Facebook can help catch illicit boozers

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Police pounce on booze ban violator, February 15

Many of the larger venues have quite openly posted pictures from their Friday night drinking action on their Facebook page.

It is truly amazing how the Patong Police didn't notice packed discos on their patrols.

Butterfly
Gazette forum

Mystery in the deep

Re: Gazette online, Electrical short started fire on Phuket's MV Blue Star, says chief, February 11

A spark can only ignite anything if you have the correct mix of fumes and oxygen.

Most boats of this size are fitted with diesel engines, and fumes from diesel are a lot harder to ignite than gasoline fumes, so what really happened?

Sailor
Gazette forum

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Extending a helping hand at the hospital

FIRST PERSON

MISSION Hospital has a good reputation and both Thai and foreign patients come here.

We don't choose our patients; we serve everyone who comes, and it is our duty as customer service staff to take care of each patient as well as we can. We try to treat all patients as though they were family members.

A strong ability to communicate is the most important skill for us to have. We get patients from all walks of life, each with his own needs and illness. We need to be able to help anyone with any problem.

Language barriers can create problems, but we have taken steps toward bridging the communication gap, and have some suggestions for what patients can do too.

Some foreigners, like Chinese and Russians, often cannot speak English. We have prepared a little questionnaire in their languages to help us get basic information, such as what their symptoms are, whether they have insurance, names of relatives and so on. We recommend that patients who don't speak English try to come with a translator, to make it easier for the doctor to understand them clearly.

Most of our patients are Thai, but we see more than 20 foreigners per day. Over time, I've noticed differences between our Thai and foreign patients.

When they get sick, foreigners are more likely to try treating themselves. They might Google their symptoms, take their own temperature, or buy medicine at a pharmacy. They come to us when



Here, she talks about differences between Thai and foreign patients and the challenges she faces serving them.

Chananan Sutsadang, 51, is a native of Bangkok. She has a BA in Business Administration from Loma Linda University and lived in the US for 20 years before moving back to Thailand. She worked in health care and as a teacher before joining the customer service staff at Mission Hospital Phuket last year.

their first efforts haven't succeeded in making them well.

Thai patients, on the other hand, visit the doctor right away, whether they feel a little sick or very sick. They seem to panic when they are unwell, and want a doctor to diagnose their symptoms.

The downside is that sometimes people who aren't very sick cause people who are to wait longer to see a doctor. In some cases it might be better to try home treatment first.

Given this tendency to rely on doctors, you might think that in cases where they are hospitalized, Thai patients would want to stay in the hospital longer, but that's not true. The Thai patients are the ones always asking the doctor when they can go home – they are worried about their jobs and feel bored staying at the hospital.

Foreign patients tend to want to stay longer to make sure they are 100 per cent well, even if the doctor has already said they can be discharged.

Some issues we encounter are more common among foreigners, but others apply to all nationalities.

For example, not having a necessary document – like a passport or a health insurance card – is a problem more commonly seen with foreigners. If they don't have proof of insurance, they have to pay for their treatment out of pocket. It is pretty expensive, so naturally they want their insurance to pay.

We offer them two solutions. The first is to contact their insurance company or a friend to bring the documents here. The second is to pay the medical bill and take home the receipt we issue to get reimbursed.

Both Thai and foreign patients tend to get distracted when they're sick. It's understandable – they're worried or in pain. Sometimes they don't hear us when we call their names, or they wander off in the wrong direction. They often don't ask us for help or directions, so we have to keep an eye on them.

If you are a patient one day, please feel free to talk to our staff when you have any questions or doubts. We want to serve you in the best way possible.



In some cases, filth can be positively interpreted. Photo: Gazette file

Good road news

MY CAR has been filthy for weeks, covered in dust that's everywhere due to the lack of rain. When the light hits it just right in the morning, I have trouble seeing out the back window.

I don't want to wash it at home because I have no outside source of water, and I haven't taken it anywhere to be cleaned. Why not? Because the Thai car care places do their jobs too well. That's right, too well.

In the United States we drive our cars through a long hall where automated flappy things slap it moderately clean – in about 10 minutes. Here, the car wash staff clean every nook and cranny, even prying off the hubcaps to get at the dirt that lurks beneath – all by hand. It takes an hour. I often don't want to spend the time.

But I'm not really complaining. It's a positive aspect of road-related life here, which is more often dominated by tales of accidents and unusual driving behaviors.

And it's not the only positive. Another is full-service gas stations. Those have been gone for generations where I come from. Service is fast and friendly too, and once in a while the staff will see my filthy windows, take pity on me, and clean them.

Yet another traffic issue the Thais have figured out better than my people is how to handle accidents. Agents here actually come

Island View

By Leslie Porterfield

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

to the crash scene to get things sorted out, on the spot.

A friend who was broadsided not long ago said the woman who hit her refused to accept responsibility. When insurance agents for both parties arrived half an hour later, even the guilty woman's agent told her she was wrong, and urged her to accept his judgment.

This is a far cry from the US, where we're advised not to admit responsibility at the scene, and where receiving an insurance payout means filling out a copious amount of paperwork ourselves, and then waiting.

I even heard a positive police story recently – a friend got a ticket when she parked her car in a motorcycle zone. That's good news. It's the first time in all the years I've been here that someone I know has gotten a parking ticket.

She argued with the officer, saying motorcycles often parked in spots reserved for cars without getting tickets. He told her she couldn't argue with a cop, and for doing so, fined her 100 baht more.

Yes, life on the streets of Phuket definitely has a bright side.

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

Your day in court

Is the public allowed to attend sessions at Phuket court? If so, are there any restrictions or rules?

Andy Chalong

An officer of Phuket Provincial Court replies:

Yes, the public may attend, except when the judge feels an audience may effect the testimony or in cases that involve minors.

Phuket Provincial Court is in session from Monday to Friday. The morning session starts at 9am and the afternoon session at 1pm. It's best to go about half an hour early.

When you arrive, give the security guard at the door your driver's license or passport in exchange for a visitor's card.

The schedule of cases is printed daily and posted in the lobby.

The courtrooms are located on the second floor. When you enter one, the clerk or the judge will ask why you wish to attend and confirm whether you may stay.

Please dress respectfully, turn off your mobile and speak quietly. When the judge enters, stand and bow slightly. Bow again when you leave or when he does. While seated, do not cross your legs, it is considered rude. Finally, no photos or audio recordings may be made in the courthouse building.

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

Submit your issue at

www.PhuketGazette.net/
IssuesAnswers

Don't let the vans park on sidewalks

For many years now, police in Patong have completely ignored cargo and passenger vans that park on the sidewalk, a situation which forces pedestrians to walk on the street.

Cargo vans are parked every afternoon in front of a restaurant on the beach road, and I've seen the passenger van of a beachfront hotel blocking the sidewalk. Both locations are near the police box on Bangla Road.

A walker Patong

Kannika Chubua, a Patong Municipality officer, replies:

Although parking vehicles on the sidewalk is a violation of traffic laws, municipality officers don't have the authority to arrest

people who do so – we can only inform the driver that he is violating the law and ask him to park properly.

If the driver won't move his vehicle, we will contact the traffic police to enforce the law.

Chiraphat Pochanaphan, Superintendent of the Patong Police replies:

Vehicles are not allowed to park on sidewalks, it is illegal.

We recently ordered traffic police and patrol officers to strictly enforce parking laws in Patong. In some areas, however, manpower is low and we can't be as vigilant as we would like.

If you see a vehicle parked on the sidewalk in front of a restaurant or hotel, or anywhere else,

please inform us and we will go to inspect.

We may lock the vehicle's wheels if the driver is not present, or charge him, if he is, with parking in a prohibited area. The penalty for this is 1,000 baht.

We can be reached at 076-342719 or at our hotline, 191.



Vehicles on sidewalks put pedestrians at risk. Photo: Supplied

YOUR Phuket

PHUKET REAL ESTATE SHOW

The Phuket Real Estate Association recently hosted the annual Phuket Real Estate Show at Central Festival Phuket. Phuket Governor Maitree Inthasut attended the opening ceremony.



From left: Phattanan Pisutwimol, PREA committee member; Thanan Tanpaibul, PREA committee member; Phuket Governor Maitree Inthasut; Thanusak Phungdet, PREA president; and Monthavee Hongyok, PREA committee member.



VALENTINE'S DAY

Romance by the sea: This couple enjoyed a romantic dinner on the beach in front of Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket.



Rooftop romance for Valentine's Day at the KEE Resort & Spa Patong.



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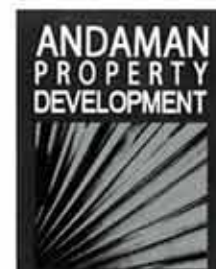
*The Gazette is the top-ranked Website for Phuket. (Google Analytics)

PROPERTY of the week



See page 23

JOB of the week



ANDAMAN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

See page 27

BOAT & MARINE of the week



See page 31

PROPERTY SERVICE of the week



See page 25

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In Soi Naya, Nai Harn. Long term: 37,500 baht per month. Short term negotiable. For more information, please call 081-270 5126. Email: mer vyn.crocker@yahoo.com

HOUSE IN LIPON FOR RENT

1 storey, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 aircons, 1 car park, 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-508 3516. Email: rujikarn2498@gmail.com

3-BED HOUSE NEAR AIRPORT

Fully furnished house, 3 bedrooms. Long-time rental. One year: 21000 baht per month. Tel: 084-847 4377 (English), 084-842 6147 (English & Thai). Email: info@thaidreams.se

LUXURY POOL VILLA

Boat Lagoon, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, Western kitchen, established garden, fenced pool. 75,000 baht per month. Tel: 093-580 6778. Email: crystaleva1@hotmail.com

NICE ROOMS FOR RENT

Pool, fitness center, sauna, aircon, security, garden. 56/75 Kasemsap Villa. Tel: 081-084 3415. www.phuket-villa.de

HOUSE FOR RENT

16,000 baht for long term. Tel: 080-890 4484 (English). Email: noegabriele@hotmail.com

APARTMENT & HOUSE AVAILABLE

Studio, 1-bed, 2-bed apartment and houses for short & long-term rent. Kata-Karon, Patong, Kathu area. Tel: 086-940 5187 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-333077. Email: nirvanaphuket@hotmail.it For further details, please see our website at www.phuketislandrealestate.com

FOR RENT RAWAI/NAI HARN

Vassana Residence and Palm Breeze Resort. Low season prices starting at 30,000 baht per month for long-term rent. Sea view rooftop deck and bar overlooking the Andaman Sea. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. LCD TV in every room, washing machine in every apartment, swimming pool. 160sqm in size, free WiFi. Tel: 087-882 9604. Email: artlpmj@yahoo.com

LOVELY TOWNHOUSE

Boat Lagoon, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, furnished, carport, long term: 30,000 baht per month. Car/house rental package available. Tel: 093-580 6778. Email: crystal eva1@hotmail.com

BRAND-NEW STUDIO FOR RENT

Close to Patong Beach, free WiFi and cable. 12,000 baht monthly. Please call 081-878 2199, 081-396 0880 or email sumonmarn@phuketrealife.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

CHEAP RENT HOUSE

1 bedroom, furnished, WiFi, near Panwa view point. Rent: 7,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-892 4311. For further details, please see our website at http://panwa green.weebly.com

PATONG

1 + 2 BEDROOM APTS. Modern units in quiet location. Free WiFi, pool, parking, maid. Short or long term. Tel: 080-052 8082. Email: phv condo@aol.com

THE ONE! KAMALA BEACH FRONT

Enjoy the fabulous sunsets from your 2-bedroom house. 2 ensuite bathrooms. Aircons. Fully furnished, includes home office, WiFi. European kitchen. Open plan living areas. Large decks on 2 floors. 45,000 baht per month. Electricity, UBC, internet are extra. Minimum 6 months lease. Available April 1, 2014. Tel: 081-894 3839 (English). Fax: 075-300299. Email: paddypower99@yahoo.com

PARADISE FOR RENT

2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, pool villa, very quiet, western standard, aircon, WiFi. Tel: 083-395 5330 (English), +41-07-9661 4061. Email: c.spleiss@robert-spleiss.ch Please visit our website at www.naiharn-villa.com

LUXURY POOL VILLA BY LAGUNA

Big discount, 8 months on lease, only 19,000 baht, extra for utilities. Has WiFi, lounge, cable, jacuzzi room and more. Live in a tropical garden. Tel: 089-594 4067

CONDO AT RATCHAPORN PLACE

In Kathu for rent or sale. Near Phuket Country Club Golf Course. 36 sqm, furnished, aircon. 1 bedroom. Rent: 13,000 baht per month with 1-year contract, common area included. Sale: 1.75 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118

2-BEDROOM BEACH APARTMENTS

At Phuket's finest beach (3 minutes walk), great for families. Available now! Email: resortgm@gmail.com

NEW MODERN TOWNHOUSE

New, fully furnished townhouses (completed in 2013) for rent. 3 bedrooms, water heater, 2 aircons, built-in kitchen, WiFi etc. 25,000 baht per month. From next month (March 2014). Tel: 085-055 9576. Email: intira.boon sith@gmail.com

RAWAI BEACH CONDO

One bedroom, good views, balcony, 8,500 baht per month. Tel: 086-057 7714

POOL VILLA IN NAI HARN

3 bedrooms, available February 20. 80,000 baht per month. Short-term rent possible. Please ask price. Tel: 082-420 7052

SHARE SEAVIEW VILLA PHUKET

Offer to share rent out self-contained, furnished living and sleeping sections, I am German, recently widowed and looking for female live-in companion over 50. Email: azzuro2000@gmail.com

Live in Rawai?
Place your **GAZETTE CLASSIFIEDS** at
The Network property office



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

GAZETTE CLASSADS - they work because they're **PAID!** Hundreds of new ads in print every week, all published simultaneously and **FREE** - in the **Gazette Online!**

The Gazette Online is always on top in Google!

Let us take your ad to the top of Google with a 20% discount!



Your key to fast-track placement and easy payment for ads at Thailand's LARGEST classifieds marketplace. Hundreds of new ads every week! Like to have one?

Mail: AdPower@PhuketGazette.Net

Household Help

All you need for a professional kitchen: stainless steel work, gas system, air conditioner, security camera, wood-fired pizza oven and used equipment. Tel: 081-416 7475, 084-845 4743 (Thai). Please see our website at www.mrkkitchen.com

Deadline for Property Gazette page: Friday 3 pm.
Deadline for all other ads: Saturday 12 noon.

**OFFICE MANAGER/
ACCOUNTANT**

Online company wants organized staff to manage office, accounting, inventory & orders. Tel: 082-276 1675. Email: jaisabai@gmail.com

**REAL ESTATE OFFICE
STAFF**

Siam Real Estate are opening new office in Laguna and require Thai staff with good English, computer and admin skills. Salary + commissions. Tel: 076-288908. Send CV to jobs@siamrealestate.com For further details, please see our website at www.siamrealestate.com

**THAI EMPLOYEE -
OFFICE JOB**

Want an interesting job? New internet firm needs an employee, 20-35 years old, very good English and PC. CV in English only. Tel: 076-322663, 090-0709633 (English & Thai). Email: massimo.reve@gmail.com

**SENIOR & JUNIOR
COOK**

To assist Head Cook in maintaining a successful and profitable F&B Department - Degree in F&B Management or related degree, trained in traditional Thai and Western foods. Thai national, fluent in English. Starting salary 14,000 to 17,000 baht per month plus service charge. Position available now. Tel: 086-6041 333 (English). Please send CV to gm@ccshideaway.com

**WEBMASTER/
GRAPHIC/IT WORKER**

Knowledge in photo and video and good English skills required. Thai national only. Tel: 086-690 0444. Please contact rico@princessyachts-thailand.com

**HOUSEKEEPER
NEEDED**

To manage and ensure the cleanliness of our operation. Must be a dynamic team worker with a pleasant personality. Contact us. Tel: 076-281227, 081-8935492 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-281227. Email: jtissi@aquamaster.net

NANNY

Must be experienced with child care. Needed after school and weekends for two young boys. Thai only. Tel: 081-978 7756. Email: scot@paresaresorts.com

YACHT STEWARDESS

Thai national, 2 females, good English, salary+tips. Tel: 087-384 2743. (Thai) Email: info@yacht-charter-thailand.com

**GERMAN CC
NEEDS STAFF**

We are seeking German-speaking people to work as Call Agents, part and full time in our home office. Please contact us for further information. Send mail to: job@callcenteragent.at

DETOX STAFF

Thai national: experienced detox consultant, OR we can train you in detox. Must speak and write English. Tel: 085-783 0141. Email: info@phuketfit.com

**Marketing Staff Wanted**

Staff required to join a marketing team to work at Central Festival. Thai female with good English communication skills.

Please call 089-594 6888. Email: info@arhouse.asia

**JUNIOR ACCOUNTANT
NEEDED**

To assist with the accounting tasks, including accounts receivable. Good spoken / written English and pleasant personality are a must. Tel: 076-227281, 081-893 5492 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-227073. For further information on the job, please see our website at www.aquamaster.net/job.html

**VILLA MANAGER
(LIVE IN)**

Manager of house team, House keeper, Food & Beverage, Repairs. Excellent spoken English, leadership, service-minded skills. Own car. Tel: 087-881 0003. Send CV to hr@luxuryvillasandhomes.com

**EUROPEAN
CHEF HIRE**

Best Western Premier Bangtao Beach Resort & Spa is looking for chef, sous chefs, bartenders, and service staff. We want both full time and part time. Good salary with work permit. Tel: 081-905 8353. Please call or send email to hrbangtao@oceanresortgroup.net

**RECEPTIONIST
WANTED**

For small guesthouse near the beach in Patong. Good salary and benefits. Some English spoken preferred, writing and computer skills. Contact John. Tel: 092-069 7408. Email: jmiles@inet.net.au

PHP PROGRAMMER

Seeking a PHP programmer with experience in Code Igniter for a long-term project. Tel: 094-316 6005 (English & Thai). Email: john@jpdigitaltech.com

**ENGLISH SPEAKING
GUIDES**

Phi Phi Island. We are looking for 2 English-speaking guides for our overnight boat tour which leaves from Phi Phi Don. The job is to entertain and keep our customers safe. If you look after our customers well, we will look after you. Contact Siripan. Tel: 087-382 9163.

**MARINA VIEW
RESTAURANT**

Phuket Boat Lagoon is looking for new restaurant operator. Contact Ple. Tel: 081-693 2791. Email: customercare@phuketboatlagoon.com

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

CLASSIFIEDS ADMINISTRATION 1 POSITION

Qualified candidates will be:

- ▶ Thai nationals, aged 22 years up
- ▶ Service-minded with an outgoing personality
- ▶ Able to work well with large numbers of advertisers, both foreign and Thai

and should have:

- ▶ A Bachelor's Degree from a recognizable university
- ▶ A good sense of organization and respect for details
- ▶ Knowledge of basic office software, InDesign and PageMaker would be a plus.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Khun Anna at Anna@PhuketGazette.Net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555, ext 102 Fax: 076-615240

**RESORT STAFF
WANTED**

Urgently: night reception, housekeeping, restaurant and kitchen staff. Tel: 076-613903, 089-723 1128 (Thai), 085-227 8864. Email: yusies@gmail.com

**THAI OFFICE WORKER
FOR GYM**

Muay Thai Gym. Wanting Thai office worker with good English. Tel: 080-613 3312 (English & Thai). Email: phuketopteam@gmail.com. Website: phuketopteam.com

**MOUNTAIN BIKE
GUIDE**

Full-time bike guide. Must speak good English and provide excellent customer service. Also help in sales office. Tel: 087-263 2031 (English). Email: info@amazingbike-toursthailand.asia. For further details, please see our website at www.Amazing Bike ToursThailand.asia

**RAW FOOD CHEF
WANTED**

Thai national: raw food chef, good salary + benefits! Tel: 081-270 9772. Email: liam@phuketfit.com

**STAFF FOR
RESTAURANT**

Chief cook, cook helper, bartender, waitress, good salary, Thai national. Tel: 081-116 1245 (English).

BRANCH MANAGER

ISS Facility Services require Branch Managers for 2 new locations in Had Yai and Koh Samui. Preferred applicants are English-speaking Thai nationals, degree educated with previous experience in property or hotel management. Excellent salary and benefits on offer. Tel: 076-610315, 081-958 6879. Email: scott.d@th.issworld.com

Authorized Agents for Classified Advertising:**CHALONG**

- ▶ Julapan Stationery (Chaofa East Rd)
- ▶ KL Mart (Patak Rd, Chalong 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

Live in Town?

Place your **GAZETTE CLASSIFIEDS** at iTree Complete Printing Service



Simply write out your ad, pay and leave it with **Khun Nan: (076-255425)**

GAZETTE CLASSADS - they work because they're **PAID!** Hundreds of new ads in print every week, all published simultaneously and **FREE** - in the **Gazette Online!**

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

SALES REPRESENTATIVE AND OPC

David Vacation Club looking for English & Chinese speaking sales representative and OPC. 5-star Resort at Patong beachfront. Tel: 076-342794, 092-390 3481 (English). Contact by email: ed@davidvacationclub.com

PR & MARKETING

The View Condominium.
- Female, 20-35 years.
- To promote the property with prospective customers at our booth
- Coordinate with recruiters
- Collaborate with team
- Language: English and Russian or English and Chinese
Tel: 086-439 9996. Email: sales@theviewphuket.com

MARKETING ASSISTANT

Proficient in word, excel, uni graduate preferred. Photoshop/any online experience valued highly. Tel: 081-205 3932.

YOGA TEACHER WANTED

Qualified yoga instructor to teach at PhuketFit Resort. Please apply with resume and qualifications. Tel: 081-270 9772. Email: liam@phuketfit.com

EARN 30,000-120,000 BAHT/MONTH

Cruise ship staff needed. Work 3-7 month shift. All expenses paid. Must speak English. Tel: 093-728 1003 (English). Send resume/photo to jobs@seastaffing.com

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 complemented by a yoga and wellbeing center

we are looking for superb leaders to join our dynamic team

HOST CHEF

(looking after the culinary aspects of the resort)

Covering all aspects of F&B operations, including kitchen and restaurant:

- 3-5 years experience in equivalent property/position
- Leader personality, motivator / outstanding guest relation skills
- Implementation of innovative food / restaurant concepts
- Previous assignment in Thailand / Asia an advantage
- Multi language skills, basic Thai an advantage
- Foreign or Thai national

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

joeraess@theparadisekohyao.com
www.theparadisekohyao.com **www.facebook.com/Paradise.KohYao.Boutique.Beach.Resort**

MARKETING ASSISTANT WANTED

English-speaking Marketing Assistant with good computer and internet knowledge wanted. Tel: 086-690 0444. Please send CV to rico@Princessyachtsthailand.com

ADMIN HOTEL WANTED

Experience needed in Microsoft Excel and Word. Daily record on cash income, stocks, timecards, and booking vouchers. Good comments in English writing and speaking working under GM. Tel: 081-968 5963 (English). Email: c@bayshoreprojects.com

RECEPTIONIST WANTED

For small guesthouse near the beach in Patong. Good salary and benefits. Some English spoken preferred, writing and computer skills. Contact John. Tel: 092-069 7408. Email: jmiles@iinet.net.au

CALL CENTER

Newly established call center (outbound) in Chiang Mai looking for Dutch, French, German speaking agents. WP+ visa provided after trial period for relocations. Room provided in first month. Interested applicants, please apply with CV at jobs@cmmd-intl.com

SALES ASSISTANT NEEDED

Sales assistant needed to work at Lemongrass House Rawai Store. Sales experience and some English preferable. Tel: 089-443 6922 (English & Thai), 093-673 4409 (Thai). Email: aphart@gmail.com

THAI BAR STAFF REQUIRED

Thai female bar staff needed. Salary starting from 8,000 baht. Earn more on top with tips + commissions. Includes free room and use of motorbike. Tel: 087-382 0764 (English & Thai), 089-650 7076 (English & Thai). Email: mail@phuketourguides.com



ANDAMAN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT CO., LTD.
Developer • Property Management • Architectural • Interior Design.
Located at The Plaza Surin, Phuket is looking for qualified, energetic people to fill these positions:

SENIOR INTERIOR DESIGNER / ARCHITECT

Qualifications:

- Bachelor in interior design
- Minimum 5 - 10 years working experience in architecture & interior design, particularly in residential & hotel design
- Able to organize & supervise projects independently
- Able to handle all facets of architectural work including general administration, client interfacing, general design, contract documentation & site supervision
- Good communication & interpersonal skills

Interested candidates, please send full resume, expected salary & a recent photo by fax or email to **Andaman Property Development Co., Ltd.:**

The Plaza Surin 5/50 Moo 3, Cherng Talay, Thalang, Phuket 83110
Tel: 076-271241. Fax: 076-271242. Email: hr@paradisephuket.com

DIVE AND SURF SHOP

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

OFFICE ASSISTANT

Thai national, female, 25-40 years old, self-motivated and attention to details, enthusiasm for learning new things, good communication skills in English and good computer literacy (Microsoft Office). Tel: 076-613680, 087-267 3747 (English). Fax: 076-613680. Send CV to helena@phuketabc.com

STAFF NEEDED

New resort on island looking positions: Multilingual: 1) Manager - salary: 25,000 - 30,000 baht. 2) Barman - salary: 10,000 - 15,000 baht. English and Thai. 3) massage therapist - salary: 10,000 - 12,000 baht. 4) Housemaid - salary: 10,000 baht. meal and accommodation provided. Tel: 086-948 8559 (English), 088-447 9900 (English). Email: farangmd@gmail.com

3 WAITRESSES FOR RESTAURANT

Three English-speaking waitresses wanted for restaurant. Thai nationals only. Tel: 081-270 9772. Email: liam@phuketfit.com

STAFF WANTED

Thai Basil Restaurant, new opened restaurant is looking for waitresses: 15,000 baht. Bar staff: 15,000 baht. Manager: 20,000 baht. Located on 58/7-8 Soi Bangla, 5-8pm. Email: office@thaibasilphuket.com

GUEST RELATIONS WANTED

Thai national: guest relations representative wanted, English speaking, afternoon shift, good pay + benefits! Tel: 081-270 9772. Email: liam@phuketfit.com

KARON CLIFF

Hostess, maid, engineer, waiter, and kitchen staff wanted. Tel: 087-265 6089.

SALES ASSISTANT (RETAIL)

To assist customers in finding items, provide excellent customer service at all times and build good guest relations. Good spoken English and pleasant personality is a must. Base salary 20,000 baht + commissions. Please send your resume to nina@tigermuaythai.com

FEMALE GUEST RELATIONS REP.

Female guest relations representatives to work in night entertainment venue, must be able to speak 2 languages: either English, Russian, Chinese or Philippine. Please send resume or call. Tel: 093-007 8992 (English & Thai), 081-476 4700 (English & Thai). Email: redtoothgecko@yahoo.com

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

REPORTER

- ▶ Thai national (able to read, write, speak fluent Thai)
- ▶ Ability to communicate clearly in English
- ▶ Clear thinking in order to identify what makes a good news story
- ▶ Initiative and enthusiasm to track down a story
- ▶ Photography skills
- ▶ Able to manage own time effectively
- ▶ Knowledge of Burmese an advantage
- ▶ Driver's license

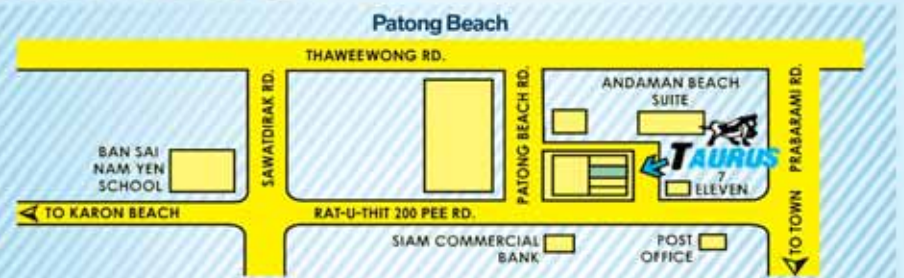
Good salary for the right candidate.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV by email to Um@PhuketGazette.net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd
79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555 Ext.402 Fax: 076-615240

Live in Patong?

Place your GAZETTE CLASSIFIEDS at Taurus Travel



Simply write out your ad, pay and leave it with **Khun Kai: (076-344321-2)**

GAZETTE CLASSADS - they work because they're **PAID!** Hundreds of new ads in print every week, all published simultaneously and **FREE** - in the **Gazette Online!**

The Gazette Online is always on top in Google!

Looking for a JOB?

Looking for a better candidate?

Find more Recruitment Classifieds at **WWW.PHUKETGAZETTE.NET**

Business Products & Services

WORLDWIDE AIR TICKETS

Our service is for domestic and international flight tickets. Open daily from 8.30am to 9pm. Delivery service. For more information, please call 081-537 2655, 085-571 4489

MASSAGE THERAPY AT YOUR PLACE

Thai traditional massage: 500 baht per hour. Aromatherapy massage: 1,000 baht per hour. Call for reservations. Open daily 9am-10pm. Tel: 092-464 8471

WHEATGRASS JUICE

Lumpoons Coffee House. At Chalong. Tel: 081-476 5808

COWBOY SHOW

The art of the western cowboy rope tricks. For more information, please call 084-447 5257 or send email to mikeroper2003@hotmail.com

TATTOO REMOVAL

We remove your tattoo. For more information, please call 083-362 4144

NEW CARDIO TENNIS

Ditch the gym, grab your racket. Non stop 60-minute fun workout with music. Only 300 baht per person. Lessons hitups also available. For more information, please call 090-706 6674, 090-071 7163. Your court or ours. Please visit our website at www.tennisjuniorpro.com

40FT SEA CONTAINER

For sale: secondhand sea container 40ft. I can send a photo. Please contact Rob for more information. Tel: 084-744 4648 (English). Email: vb331@hotmail.com

TRANSLATION CENTER PHUKET

We translate all documents from and into English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Arabic, Russian and Thai. Please call 076-296029, 089-203 9270 (English & Thai). Email: aood16@hotmail.com

STRESSED OVER PARTIES?

Plan your party for all your supplies at Party Always. We are located at Wana Park Cherng Talay. For more information, please call 076-620 166. Email: karen_leongsk@yahoo.com.sg

HOTEL BOOKING LIST SERVICE

Hotel registration and monitoring on Agoda, Sawadee and Booking.com Tel: 083-394 5863. Email: tperke@googlemail.com



DINO DAYCARE CENTER

Accepting children 3 months old - 4 years old. 7am-7pm.

- Experienced nannies.
- Nutritious meals.
- Reasonable rates.
- Outdoor activities.
- Skill development activities

CALL NOW:
082-539 8252 (Thai).
081-868 7676 (English).

FREE ITALIAN ESPRESSO MACHINE

Coffee capsules machine on loan, good organic Italian coffee, fair prices, 6 blends available, direct import into Phuket. Tel: 076-374760, 088-768 1260. Email: fepigada@yahoo.it

Club Memberships Available

LAGUNA GOLF CLUB

350,000 baht + transfer, expires 2024. Tel: 089-868 6842. Email: nagel.klaus@web.de

LAGUNA GOLF 22 YEARS

Laguna Golf Club membership for sale: 600,000 baht, with 22 years remaining. Contact Dany. Tel: 092-261 5113 (English & Thai). Email: nathcoll88@gmail.com

3 GOLF MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR SALE

1) Blue Canyon GCC. Family Life: 699,000 baht. 2) Loch Palm Family Life: 499,000 baht. 3) Laguna GCC. 16 years: 399,000 baht. Contact Laura Lee. Tel: 095-040 4727 (English). Email: lauralee1120@gmail.com

Computers

WWW.PHUKET.AG

Top level domain for sale. Tel: 089-291 7733 (English). Email: pbzik@web.de, www.phuket.ag

Education

**Oak Meadow International School**

From 1 - 16 Years Old
Providing quality, affordable primary education
076 521 550
www.oakmeadowphuket.com

**LEARN THAI**

From an experienced Thai teacher (male). Tel: 084-447 5257. Email: mikeroper2003@hotmail.com

LEARN THAI + 1 YEAR ED VISA

Learn Thai at Brainy House. 200 hours + 1 year ED visa for only 24,900 baht. Tel: 076-522822, 080-907 7466. Email: info@brainyhouse.com

Personal Services

PERSONAL COUNSELING

Phuket Mental Health Counseling. Experienced, licensed, US Counselor for children, teens & adults. Tel: 086-271 8153 (English). Email: parwgk@aol.com

Personals

BACKGAMMON

Players wanted. For more information, please call 081-577 8443. Email: phuketconnection@yahoo.com

Pets

ADOPT A DOG from Doggie Heaven

Visit **DOGGIE HEAVEN** & meet our gorgeous rescued dogs. All our dogs are **socialized in a home environment** & ready for loving families. Every dog is **healthy, sterilized, vaccinated**.

Contact Sherin
Ph 084-877 3566
www.doggieheaven.net
sherin.peace@gmail.com




Phuket today
Phuket Gazette

Hot deal!
Classified Ads on TV

Your Classified Ad will appear on the Phuket Today show, broadcast on 3 cable networks and running 24-hours a day via in-house TV in over 4,000 hotel rooms around the island.

Cable TV coverage – broadcast 68 times a week throughout Phuket.

Catch the show at these times

Phuket Cable Co (PC) - Covers all Phuket Channel 1, with 19 shows a week
Mon to Fri: 10.30am, 6.00pm, 9.00pm
Sat & Sun: 10.30am, 9.00pm.

Rawai Cable - Rawai and Chalong, Kata, Karon.
Channel 1, with 28 shows a week
Mon to Sun: 10.00am, 1.00pm, 7.00pm, and 10.00pm

KDTV (Kamala Cable TV) - Covers Patong, Kamala, Surin, Bangtao.
Channel 4, with 21 shows a week
Mon to Sun: 7.00am, 11.30am, 11.00pm

Now available in 4,222 premium hotel rooms around the island, all day every day.

- Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket: 254 rooms
- Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort: 470 rooms
- Kata Beach Resort & Spa: 275 rooms
- Outrigger Laguna Phuket Resort & Villas: 77 rooms
- Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket: 262 rooms
- Millennium Resort: 418 rooms
- Holiday Inn Resort & Spa: 405 rooms
- Movenpick Resort & Spa Karon Beach: 364 rooms
- Karon Beach Resort & Spa: 80 rooms
- Andara Beach Resort & Spa: 62 rooms
- Amari Coral Beach: 197 rooms
- Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa: 664 rooms
- Destination Patong: 390 rooms
- Serenity Terraces Resort: 68 rooms
- Dewa Naiyang Phuket: 96 rooms
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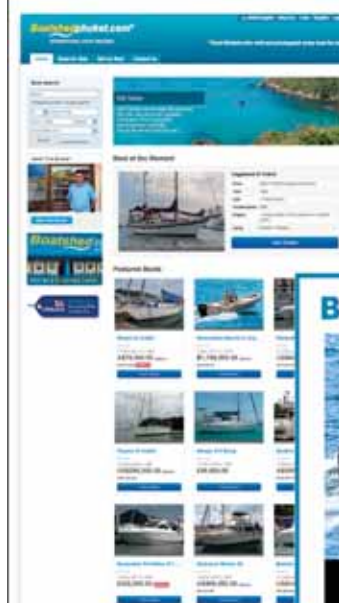
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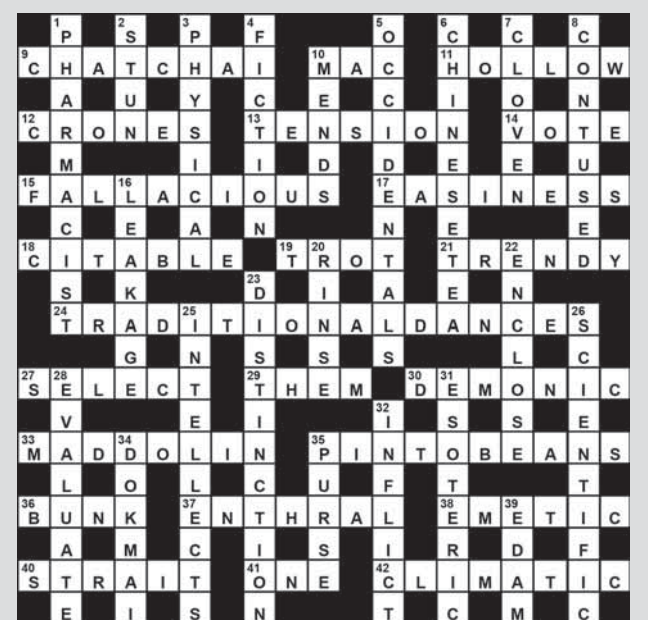
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THE BAY REGATTA 2014



Regatta organizers Kae Wattana, Simon James (center) and team.



The Sansiri Sailing Team competed in The Bay Regatta.

SKETCHWALK WORKSHOP

The Attitude Club recently held the “Sketchwalk Workshop”. Hosted by Thiawwat Pataragulwanit, a skilled watercolor painter who gave demonstrations and shared painting tips for beginners.



4TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-IMAGEPLUS



Phonsunt Phathrapeephan (right), managing director of D-Imageplus and Rattapong Pollakorn, director of cinematography.

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Students from Krabi recently spelled out the letter G as part of an international art project to raise money for charity. Photo: Supplied

Krabi students in global art project

ABC Charity, a global art project of kids helping kids has continued its journey around the world. They are creating the world's first ever "human alphabet" – each letter made up of 500 children, in 26 different countries – ABC charity does not only help create fantastic memories for children, it will also raise money for a good cause.

Krabi Town Mayor Kiratisak Phukaoluan also supported the project and welcomed ABC Charity to both Krabi and Thailand.

The letter "G" took place in Krabi Thursday, February 13 with 500 children from Klong Ji Lad School taking part. The children had an amazing time and the day was filled with smiles and laughter. The event included music and food, as well as an inspirational speech by ABC Charity founders Ashley Cooper and Filip Cederholm, who reinforced their motto, "Together we can make a difference."

ABC Charity is currently working its way around the globe creating one letter per country from A to Z. When the alphabet is complete, the letters will be sold as limited edition photo art. The idea is that companies and individuals will buy their name and 100 per cent of the profit will go back to local charities in the participating countries. Behind the project is Canadian Ashley Cooper and Swede Filip Cederholm,

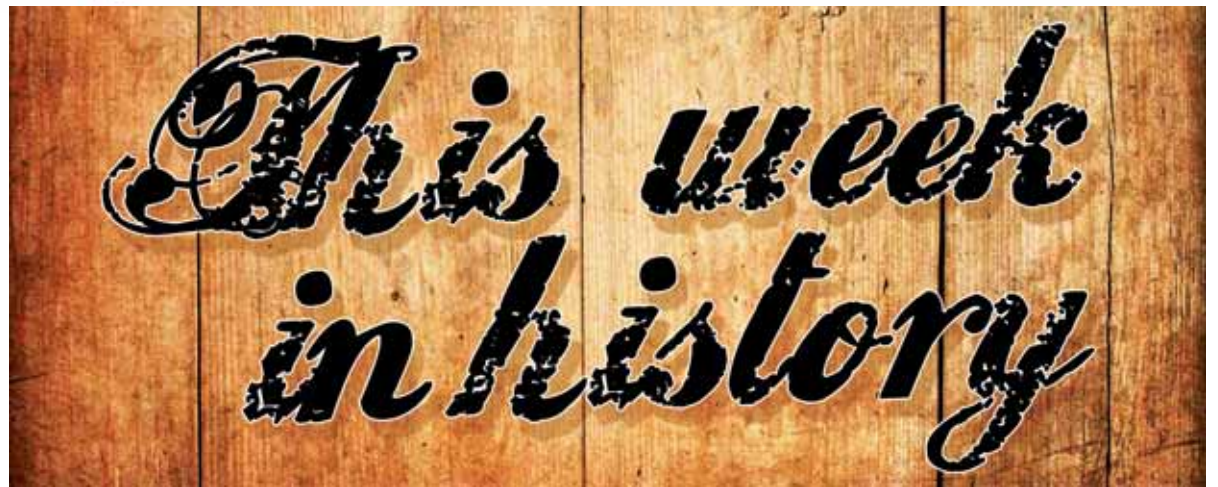
who gave up their previous lives to fulfill their dream; doing what they love, while inspiring kids and raising money for charity.

Ashley Cooper and Filip Cederholm were excited about being in Thailand, as Ashley puts it, "I had visited Thailand eight-years ago and knew it was somewhere we had to include in our journey. Not only is it a spectacular location for the letter "G", the people of Thailand and Krabi in particular have been so kind and welcoming.

"We have had great support from the Mayor of Krabi Mr Keratisuk and his staff, as well as the Krabi Tourism Authority and Klong Ji Lad School. Mr Saratt Kyokong, the owner of the land, has not only given us permission to use the property, he even helped us arrange a crane to take the picture. We have also received great support from the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok. It is because of people like this that we have been able to continue our journey around the world."

"Once the alphabet is complete we will tour around the world with the exhibition and look forward to coming back to display the letters, both in Krabi and around Thailand" added Ashley

You can join the thousands of people following the journey at: abccharity.org and view the series at: peaceandphotography.tv



FEBRUARY 22

1651 A storm surge flooded Germany coast, drowning 15,000 people.
1924 US President Calvin Coolidge became the first President to deliver a radio broadcast from the White House.
1959 Lee Petty won the first Daytona 500.
1974 Samuel Byck tried and failed to assassinate US President Nixon.
1997 Scientists announced that an adult sheep named Dolly had been successfully cloned.



COPY 1997 Photo: Toni Barros

FEBRUARY 23

1455 Traditional date for the publication of the Gutenberg Bible, the first Western book printed with movable type.
1903 Cuba leased Guantanamo Bay to the United States.
1917 First demonstrations in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The beginning of the February Revolution.
1997 A small fire occurred in the Russian space station, Mir.



RACE 1959 Photo: The Freewheeling Daredevil

FEBRUARY 24

1582 Pope Gregory XIII announced the Gregorian calendar.
1920 The Nazi Party was founded in Germany.
1989 Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini offered a US\$3 million bounty for the death of Salman Rushdie.
2008 Fidel Castro retired as Cuban President after nearly fifty years.
2011 Final Launch of Space Shuttle Discovery (OV-103).



GUN 1836 Photo: Hmaag

FEBRUARY 25

1836 Samuel Colt was granted a patent for the Colt revolver.
1932 Adolf Hitler obtained German citizenship by naturalization.
1947 The State of Prussia ceased to exist.
1971 The first commercial nuclear power station in Canada, went online.



PRINT 1455 Photo: NYC Wanderer

FEBRUARY 26

1815 Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from Elba.
1909 Kinemacolor, the first successful color motion picture process, was first shown to the general public at the Palace Theater in London.
1919 Most of the Grand Canyon was established as a United States National Park - the Grand Canyon National Park.
1971 The vernal equinox is established as Earth Day.



CANYON 1919 Photo: Wolfgang Moroder.

FEBRUARY 27

380 Emperor Theodosius I declared his wish that all Roman citizens convert to trinitarian Christianity.
1594 Henry IV was crowned King of France.
1870 The current flag of Japan was first adopted as the national flag for Japanese merchant ships.
1900 The British Labour Party was founded.
1964 The government of Italy asked for help to keep the Leaning Tower of Pisa from toppling over.



HUNTED 1989 Photo: David Shankbone

FEBRUARY 28

1849 Regular steamboat service from the west to the east coast of the United States begun.
1947 In Taiwan, civil disorder was put down with the loss of an estimated 30,000 civilians.
1991 The first Gulf War ended.
2013 Pope Benedict XVI resigned as the pope of the Catholic Church.

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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

Feb 23, 2014, 4-9 am. Run for Health, Run for Charity

Phuket International Hospital is presenting this "Mini Marathon" to raise funds for charity and to win HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Royal Trophies. This event is proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and *PGTV*. For more info call 076-249400 or email chutinan@siriroj.com

Feb 28, 7-11 pm. Indian Curry Buffet at Navrang Mahal in Karon Sea Sands Resort

All you can eat, authentic Indian curry buffet at 499 baht net per person. Come enjoy our cold mango and strawberry lassi with our delicious mutton vindaloo, dal makhani, bombay aloo, mutter paneer, butter chicken and mouth-watering chicken tikka, samosas, freshly baked naans and more. Contact Jaspal Singh on 076-286464 or visit the website at: navrangmahal.com

March 1, 2014, from 9 am. BIS Phuket Challenge Cup basketball tournament.

Six of the best local highschool basketball teams to vie for the trophy. First match starts at 9am at BISP in Koh Kaew.

Mar 20, 2014 10 am-2 pm, Phuket International Women's Club AGM and lunch

The AGM of the Phuket International Women's Club will start at 10am, where coffee will be served, followed by our monthly lunch. Come to one or both. Members 500 baht, guests 650. Location: Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort. Contact Carole Dux on 076-316 711 email info@phuketiwc.com or go to phuketiwc.com



Apr 6, 2014. Chakri Memorial Day

Chakri Day commemorates the origins of the Chakri dynasty, founded by Rama I, who established Bangkok as the nation's capital. HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the ninth monarch of the Chakri dynasty.

Apr 7, 2014. Substitute Holiday for Chakri Day

A public holiday in Thailand commemorating the Chakri dynasty

Apr 13-15, 2014. Songkran Festival

Songkran is the Thai New Year Festival, also known as the Water Festival. Held during the hottest month in Thailand, Songkran is celebrated by Thais throughout the country, who pour water – traditionally only a little, but these days a lot – on other people to wish them good luck for the new year.

May 1, 2014. Labor Day

Public holiday for all commercial workers, but government offices will remain open.

May 5, 2014. Coronation Day

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

May 24, 2014. Visakha Bucha Day

Visakha Bucha Day is observed on the day of the full moon during the 6th lunar month, which usually falls in either May or early June. It is a day to commemorate three important incidents: the birth, the enlightenment and the passing away of the Buddha. These events are believed to have fallen on the same lunar day and month (but on different years).

Jun 12 to Jul 13, 2014. FIFA World Cup in Brazil

Football (soccer) fans around the

world look forward to the 20th edition of the World Cup, this year to be played in arguably the top footballing nation on the planet. Here in Phuket, most of the games will be aired live in the morning hours, though many restaurants and bars will certainly screen reruns of all the matches.

Jun 28-July 27 (depends on moon sighting). Ramadan

Muslims worldwide, or roughly a quarter of the planet's population, observe Ramadan as the ninth month of their calendar, a time for fasting during the day hours and feasting at night.

Jul 11, 2014. Arsarnha Bucha Day

This full-moon day of the eighth lunar month (traditional Thai calendar) commemorates the Buddha's first sermon to his first five disciples after attaining enlightenment more than 2,500 years ago. Evening candlelit processions are staged at all Thai

Buddhist temples.

July 12, 2014 - Buddhist Lent

This day of a full moon marks the start of the Buddhist Lent, or rains retreat, the traditional time for Thai males to ordain as a monk, informally observed as the start of the rainy season, when the South-westerly Monsoons are in full force.

Aug 12, 2014, Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday

Her Majesty the Queen Srikrit Kitiyakara's 82nd Birthday. Also marked as Mother's Day in Thailand.

Oct 23, 2014. Chulalongkorn Memorial Day

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

Nov 6, 2014 Loy Krathong

One of the most beautiful festivals in Thailand. It is traditionally performed on the full moon night of the twelfth lunar month, which usually falls in November. A Krathong is a banana-leaf cup containing flowers, a candle and incense sticks which will be floated away in a canal or river. The idea is to worship the river's Goddess and at the same time to float away any bad luck. Loy Krathong is not a public holiday.

Dec 5, 2014, HM Majesty the King's Birthday

His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 87th Birthday. Also marked as Father's Day in Thailand.

Dec 10, 2014 Constitution Day

This day commemorates the signing of Thailand's permanent constitution by King Prajadhibok (Rama VII) in 1932, which marked the beginning of Thailand's transition from an Absolute Monarchy into a Constitutional Democracy.

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.

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Tuesday: 11:10pm	Tuesday: 11:10pm	
Wednesday: 10:10am	Wednesday: 10:10am	Channel 43 - 8 shows a week
Thursday: 01:10pm	Thursday: 01:10pm	
Friday: 04:10am & 07:10pm	Friday: 04:10am & 07:10pm	Monday: 05:10am
Saturday: 01:10pm	Saturday: 01:10pm	Tuesday: 11:10pm
Sunday: 06:10pm	Sunday: 06:10pm	Wednesday: 10:10am
		Thursday: 01:10pm
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New flavors at Old Time Square



By Jeremie Schatz

BENEATH a fading pastel sunset with the Phuket Town skyline silhouetted, the Phuket Old Time Square drew in the festive crowds for their grand opening celebration on Friday, February 14.

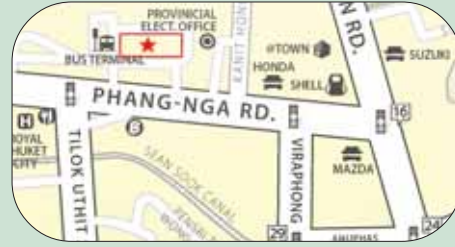
It was the confluence of hungry families out to enjoy the dance acts, musical groups and local food stalls, and valentine's day sweethearts for a night out on the town. Families and couples alike were keen to try some of the tasty vittles being sautéed, fried and grilled at the 20 or so food stalls lining the open-air courtyard.

Above the drinks counter is perched a second story dining area where patrons can sit under the warm glow of the Chinese lanterns and catch a birds-eye view of the courtyard. It was the perfect spot to watch the entertainment play out on stage and catch whiffs of the grilled pork,

barbequing satay and frying noodles of every shape, size and style.

The prices start at around 20 baht and go up from there. Pay for meal tickets in the booth by the drinks counter and don't forget to cash in your unused ones on your way out. There is enough variety to appease most and plenty of juices, teas and adult beverages to slake your thirst.

The Phuket Old Time Square can be found where the old bus terminal was once located off of Phang Nga Road. The food stalls are open from 5-11pm daily.



Asian cinema cleans up at Berlin film fest

By Deborah Cole

THE 64th Berlin film festival wrapped up last Sunday after a resounding triumph for Asian cinema at its gala awards ceremony, including the Golden Bear top prize for a Chinese noir mystery.

Bai Ri Yan Huo (Black Coal, Thin Ice) by Diao Yinan about a washed-up ex-cop investigating a series of grisly murders took the highest honor late Saturday, as well as the Silver Bear best actor award for its star Liao Fan.

"It's really hard to believe that this dream has come true," Diao said as he accepted the trophy, fighting back tears.

It was the first Chinese film to win in Berlin since the unconventional love story *Tuya De Hunshi (Tuya's Marriage)* by Wang Quan'an brought home the gold in 2007.

In a remarkably strong showing for Asian contenders, the Berlinale, Europe's first major film festival of the year, gave its best actress prize to Japan's Haru Kuroki for her role as a discreet housemaid in wartime Tokyo in Yoji Yamada's *The Little House (Chiisai Ouchi)*. Yamada, 82, called the film a necessary reminder of war's horrors for contemporary Japan.

Wes Anderson's historical caper *The Grand Budapest Hotel* – offering a nostalgic look back at pre-World War II Europe – claimed the runner-up Silver Bear grand jury prize.

The picture starring Ralph Fiennes opened the Berlinale on February 6.

German media reported widespread disappointment that the hot favourite to win the Golden Bear, US filmmaker Richard Linklater for his ambitious coming-of-age tale *Boyhood*, made over 12 years with the same actors, only claimed best director.

But most called the prize for *Black Coal, Thin Ice* justified in a competition with few real standouts.

"*Bai Ri Yan Huo* is a brilliant genre variation which knows how to self-confidently update its Western prototypes and put them in new contexts," Spiegel Online said.

Berlin's daily *Der Tagesspiegel* called the choice "respectable".

The film "is a bloody genre piece, a social



The Berlinale is one of the world's top film festivals, held since 1951. Photo: Maharepa

portrait of the Chinese backwoods and a passionate drama all in one", it said.

"And it represents Chinese cinema, growing in aesthetic strength, that is successfully charting a new path between small films made below the censors' radar and the bombastic hero epics in a booming domestic market."

The second of three Chinese films in competition in Berlin, *Blind Massage (Tui Na)* featuring a cast made up in part of amateur blind actors, captured a Silver Bear prize for outstanding artistic contribution for cinematographer Zeng Jian.

Best screenplay went to the German siblings Dietrich and Anna Brueggemann for their wrenching drama *Stations of the Cross (Kreuzweg)* about a teenager who makes the ultimate sacrifice for her fundamentalist Catholic family.

Veteran French director Alain Resnais drew the Alfred Bauer Prize for work of particular innovation for his play-within-a-film *Life of Riley (Aimer, boire et chanter)*.

A nine-member jury led by US producer James Schamus (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) handed out the prizes at a theatre in the German capital.

Black Coal, Thin Ice is set in the late 1990s in the frosty reaches of Northern China and its murder mystery plot is told through enigmatic flashbacks.

Liao said he put on 20 kilograms to play the alcoholic suspended police officer who falls hard for a beautiful

murder suspect (Gwei Lun Mei).

Diao said his film, his third feature, bridged the gap between pure arthouse cinema and multiplex fare.

"I finally did find the right way to combine a film which has a commercial aspect to it but which is nonetheless art, so that it's possible to launch it in these terms," he told reporters after the awards ceremony.

Diao said Chinese films were gaining ground in Western cinemas thanks in part to their exposure at major festivals.

"Every time we take our films abroad it seems that there is an ever greater enthusiasm for Chinese cinema," he said.

The film has yet to be released in China but a state media report said it had received a government permit for screening with release possible in April or May.

However, some Chinese cinemagoers questioned whether political sensitivity might block its release at home, or at least result in deep cuts. China censors films it deems obscene or politically touchy.

"The sensitivity of the theme and content of the film is high, so I don't know whether it can be shown in China," said a microblog posting under the name Jiade Changle.

US movie news website Indiewire noted that buzz about the picture had been strong before its screening "on the possibility of the film becoming that whitest of whales: a crossover Chinese-language international hit". – *The Nation*

Prizewinners

Golden Bear for best film: *Bai Ri Yan Huo (Black Coal, Thin Ice)*, Diao Yinan, China

Jury Grand Prix Silver Bear: *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, Wes Anderson, Britain/Germany

Silver Bear for best director: Richard Linklater for *Boyhood*, US

Silver Bear for best actress: Haru Kuroki in *Chiisai Ouchi (The Little House)*, Japan

Silver Bear for best actor: Liao Fan in *Bai Ri Yan Huo (Black Coal, Thin Ice)*, China

Silver Bear for outstanding artistic contribution (camera): Zeng Jian for *Tui Na (Blind Massage)*, China/France

Silver Bear for best script: Dietrich Brueggemann, Anna Brueggemann for *Kreuzweg (Stations of the Cross)*, Germany

Alfred Bauer Prize for work of particular innovation: *Aimer, boire et chanter (Life of Riley)* by Alain Resnais, France

Best first feature film: *Guerros* by Alonso Ruizpalacios, Mexico

Golden Bear for best short film: *Tant qu'il nous reste des fusils a pompe (As Long As Shotguns Remain)* by Caroline Poggi and Jonathan Vinel, France

Teddy for best feature with gay or lesbian context: *Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho (The Way He Looks)* by Daniel Ribeiro, Brazil

Teddy for best documentary film with gay or lesbian context: *Der Kreis (The Circle)* by Stefan Haupt, Switzerland



Chinese director Yinan Diao (right).





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Gardening for layabouts



Allamandas produce eye-catching blooms, but need propping up to be at their best. Photo: Vaikoovery

I'M SURE you have heard the expression, beloved by florists the world over, "Say it with flowers". Here's an interesting slant on the expression. An elderly couple employed a "nice" German prisoner of war to tend their garden during the Second World War. I remember the practice – my English parents did likewise. But this POW was different. When the bright yellow crocuses came up in their spring lawn, they spelled out "Heil Hitler!" An arresting example of man controlling nature.

Talk of constraining natural forces recalls a recent discussion in this column on low maintenance gardening, a necessity for most of us on this emerald isle because of such factors as high levels of heat and humidity, and diminishing levels of personal energy set against the unbridled vigor of plant growth. I advised small trees and plenty of shrubs and especially evergreens or plants with a neat appearance that could mostly be left to their own devices.

In this regard, climbers are a sound choice, for they are among

the most tractable of plants. In contrast to the rigid and inflexible branches of trees and large woody shrubs, their stems are flexible and limber, and can be guided or trained to take any direction you want – upward or outward on a wall or fence, around a tree or unattractive post, or up and over a trellis, arbor or pergola. Some can even serve as ground cover. And because they all have relatively slender branches, they are easy to trim or prune.

But be aware that though all vines have long, pliable stems, they climb in a variety of ways. Some are self-supporting and equipped with tendrils; some twine around their own stems; others cling by means of suckers to existing structures. And still more are scrambling or scandent plants that ascend skywards with no visible means of attachment; they climb effectively only if their stems are securely tied to some



Gardening
By Patrick Campbell

form of support.

I propose leaving this last category for another day. While it means leaving out vines I would personally want in a garden and do indeed possess, I am conscious that my allamandas,

Low maintenance gardening is a necessity for most of us on this emerald isle because of such factors as high levels of heat and humidity, and diminishing levels of personal energy set against the unbridled vigor of plant growth.

chalice vines, bougainvilleas, thunbergias and Rangoon creepers are all heavyweight vines that need propping up. Still, I have lauded their virtues before and will do so again. In terms of producing near continuous displays of exotic and eye-catching blooms, they are indispensable.

Even without them, the choices are extensive. One of the best is the *bignonia*. It fits our criteria because it will thrive unattended, in most conditions, and climbs by tendrils and holdfast discs, attaching itself to almost any surface. The flowers are trumpet-shaped, about two inches across and are conspicuous in plant nurseries with their attractive deep red or purplish blooms with a yellow or

white throat. Often they appear in hanging baskets.

Bignonias have been subject to much botanical reclassification: the genus once included many vines with trumpet-shaped blooms. Confusingly, some are still sold as *bignonias*, but the purple flowering variety usually found here is often now called *saritaea magnifica* or *Baan burii muang* in Thai. Whatever you care to call it – *saritaea* or *bignonia capreolata* – it is spectacular, a vigorous grower which

has shiny dark green leaflets, each pair with a branching tendril. Perfectly equipped for upward growth, my own specimen, left to its own devices, has colonized an alstonia and produces a seemingly continuous floral display. In America it is sometimes called crossvine; when its stem are cut, it resembles a cross.

The much smaller *bignonia* (or *teca*) *capensis* has only a partly climbing habit. But as a relative, it deserves a mention here. Smaller and slower growing, *T. capensis*, has glossy green, pinnate leaves and orange or yellow tubular flowers that are borne in clumpy racemes at the end of branches.

You may know it as the cape honeysuckle, a climber tolerant of a wide range of conditions including salt spray, wind and drought. A year-round bloomer and another good choice for the laid-back Phuket gardener.

If you have a question or a garden that you would like featured you can email me at: drpaccampbell@gmail.com



Photo: Jon Sullivan

Climbers' stems are flexible and can be guided to take any direction.

Tip of the week

Soil issues

MOST healthy soils in temperate climates have between 150 and 300 centimeters of top soil. You will be lucky to find such a substantial layer in Phuket. As any gardener will tell you, the top soil is thin and sits above a dense clay-like subsoil which holds water in the wet season and has the consistency of concrete in prolonged dry weather. Sometimes the construction process has removed the top soil altogether. This top layer, usually darker in color, is important for plant growth since it contains varying amounts of organic matter, air, minerals, trace elements and nutrients. But what is not generally known is that if the topsoil is too deep or too compacted, it can create stale and anaerobic conditions. So mixing subsoil with the upper layer or adding compost or sand actually improves drainage, an important consideration, especially for plants that resent having their roots permanently moist.



Photo: NRCS Soil Health

Healthy soil is not easy to come by in Phuket.

The dystopia trilogy

Books

By James Eckardt

ALICE Munro and Margaret Atwood are the Ali and Frazier of Canada – the top two literary heavyweights. Munro is now champ, having recently scored the knock-out punch of winning the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The two writers could not be more different. The 82-year-old Munro writes only short stories, collected in 14 books. Eight years younger, Atwood is the more prolific: 21 novels, 15 books of poetry and 11 of literary criticism and assorted essays. Munro is studiously nonpolitical; Atwood is in the forefront of feminist and environmental causes.

Atwood's politics bleed over into her fiction, leavened with toughness and wild humor. She has recently completed a science fiction trilogy with *MaddAddam* (Doubleday, New York, 2013, 394pp). You really do have to read the first two novels – *Oryx* and *Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* – but Atwood has thoughtfully provided a synopsis of the pair for forgetful readers like me.

The time is the future, the place, the Pacific Northwest. Democratic politics and a free press are long in the past. All power is wielded by rapacious corporations whose minions are sheltered in corporate compounds, guarded by an all-powerful security apparatus known as CorpSeCorps. Outside these walls are the lawless purlieus of "pleeblands" whose wretched inhabitants survive on synthetic slop.

The environment is degraded, global warming amok, cities underwater. Genetic manipulation is so rampant that a scientist code-named Crake develops an alternative nonviolent human species known as Crakers, with huge green eyes, genitalia that turns blue when aroused, a diet of grass, no clothes and no knowledge of good and evil. His girlfriend Onyx instructs them in a new ersatz religion. Crake then launches upon the global market a pill called BlyssPluss which enraptures the entire human race and then kills them.

Thinking himself the sole survivor,



In Atwood's trilogy, the future is bleak, but there may be hope, or at least humor. Photo: SUXSIEQ

Crake's friend Jimmy, code-named The Snowman, who has killed Crake after Crake killed Onyx, leads the Crakers to the seashore. The first two novels end at the same moment: when human intruders appear on the beach. The final novel takes off from there: the battle between the good survivors who formed the underground resistance to the old order, and the evil Painballers, former gladiators who have been stripped of all humanity.

Thus summarized, the trilogy might seem banal and fey, but is anything but. A tough, violent, cynical, larcenous survivor named Zeb, who leads an ecological resistance group known as God's Gardeners, dominates the third novel and, like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, has all the best lines.

At sixteen, he flees his father, a phony preacher at the Church of PetrOleum, who delights in pornography and child-beating. Zeb uses his computer smarts both to seize his offshore riches and expose him as a fraud and murderer.

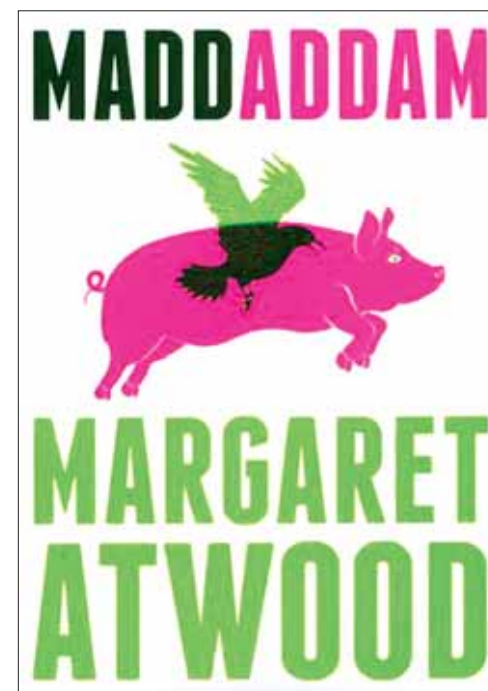
He then launches himself upon a checkered career of multiple jobs and aliases, constantly assuming new identities and covering his tracks. He roams through the northern Canadian woods, both American coasts and down to an off-shore brothel in Rio. He alternates between computer work in the Corps compounds and menial jobs like a strip club bouncer in the pleeblands. Of one woman named Wynette, a "SecretBurgers meatslinger".

He recalls, "Already she was beginning to emerge from the initial sex-induced coma created by him through the magic of his first contact-with-aliens, puppy-on-speed gonadal enthusiasm. . . Not to brag, but during their nightly tangles her eyes had rolled up so far into her head that she looked like the undead half the time. . . But now she was mistaking Zeb's animal energies for something more profound. She wanted post-hump chat."

Zeb is telling his tale, in segments, to



Margaret Atwood is a 'literary heavyweight'. Photo: Mark Hill Photography



Toby, the heroine of the second book of the trilogy, whom he marries in the third. She provides her own caustic commentary, to which he objects: "You laughing at me? Victim of a confused youth due to parental abuse? Plus, I grew too fast?" "Would I laugh?"

"Matter of fact, you would. Heart like shale. What you need is a good fracking."

In her trilogy, Atwood may be scoring political points against rampant capitalism but it goes down with a hefty dose of rollicking good humor. Read all three.



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Making gym cool again

Chalong's Unit-27 has worked out how to bring excitement back into your work-out

By Maciek Klimowicz

THERE'S sure some exiting sports out there – diving, rock climbing, free running, gym fitness training... wait, the gym? It might be challenging and fulfilling but few would call it exciting. At least this is how things were up until now. A new place here in Phuket is on a mission to change that image.

"Unit-27 has been open since November 2013," says Liam Griffin, business development and client liaison manager at Unit-27 gym. "An average of 50 clients per day train here, modestly speaking. We have a limit on the amount of people in our classes, this is to ensure that our instructor to client ratio is kept at one to five and we emphasize quality above all else," he explains.

And it's the quality that seems to draw people to Unit-27, a custom designed, specialized gym facility created to fill the need for a scientifically-proven full-fitness facility in Chalong.

"The combination of our fully-qualified instructors and state-of-the-art facility provide for a structured and safe development of physical, mental and social health," says Liam.

You won't find the ever-present basic work-out machines here; Unit-27 is more than a few pressing benches and treadmills dumped in a room with mirrors. Brand new equipment such as 30-foot rope climbs, scrambling nets, tyre flips, a prowler and more, combined with the knowledge and experience of its team of highly qualified, English speaking instructors and a friendly atmosphere, ensure a fun and effective workout.

There are three training sessions a day. A one hour "Morning Glory" class at 8am (30 people limit) is a blend of sprints, runs and explosive power training designed to ensure the rest of your day goes hard and strong. Next comes the "Rapid Fire" (11am-12:30pm, 25 people limit) that concentrates on completing the set at the amount of reps in each exercise and gives a greater emphasis on strength-based training, as the weights can be adjusted to suite

the individuals' fitness levels. Another element of the "Rapid Fire" program is that it is an intrinsic workout, where partners motivate each other to complete the course in the best time suited. The third daily session comes under the name "Reloaded" (2:30-4pm, 30 people capacity) and is a hardcore and rounded strength and conditioning session designed to improve explosive power, strength, mobility and injury prevention. It is predominantly time based (20 seconds on, 10 secs off), with up to 30 stations on any given day. Due to the time bases of the circuits, this metabolic conditioning offers a wide range of activities.

And that's not all. Yoga classes three times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays

and Fridays from 7-8am), free weights and private sessions in between classes and the weekly "Sunday Showtime" – a cinema and/or an informative session ranging from nutrition to health or general fitness, will keep your mind and muscles fit and busy for a long time, especially since there is more to come.

"We are currently expanding our gym, adding new classes and new facilities such as spinning, ice baths and other amenities that gives the customers a multitude of activities," says Liam.

If you are already excited about the prospect of going to the gym, maybe for the first time in your life, Liam is not surprised. "Our program is suitable for

everyone, everyone that wishes to get fit and anyone who would like to try something new and exciting with trained professional athletes. [We offer] total conditioning of the body, for those who want to lose weight and for those who want to enhance their MMA or Muay Thai training, this is the place to do so. There is a lot of people who want to get into shape, live healthy and try something fun, new and exciting. Unit-27 offers pure fitness."

Unit-27 is located at 9/49 Moo 5, Tambon Chalong, Amphur Muang, Phuket. For more info call 076 367 380, e-mail info@unit-27.com or go to: unit-27.com



English speaking, experienced staff are there to instruct, motivate and keep the training interesting. Photos: Supplied

Mega fauna storm Phuket

Diving

By Isaac Stone Simonelli

WHALE sharks and manta rays are the climax for divers' wet dreams – though admittedly most divers' dreams are wet. Unfortunately, the probability of sharing ocean space with both of these majestic marine creatures on a single trip is absurdly low, yet just north of Phuket at the Similan Islands, that's exactly what's happening.

While many of us are cooped up in the office on island, and many more shackled away in some godforsaken snow-covered country, there are divers departing Phuket daily on live-aboards for a trip of a lifetime.

Though whale sharks and manta rays are no strangers to the Similans, especially Koh Bon and Koh Ta Chai between January and April, Michael Wallentin of Kon-Tiki Diving explains that there seems to have been a noticeable increase in the number of sightings of both of these awe-inspiring animals.

Even more thrillingly, people taking quick day-trip in the region are being rewarded with just such hefty sightings – and whale sharks, averaging over 20 tons, are heavy-weight champions when it comes to fish.

Only last week, Martin Edwards, who was bound for Racha Yai island, had the opportunity to splash in with a whale shark.

"For over three years, diving between the Similans and Krabi, I've wanted to see a whale shark," Martin said.

"Dave, my dive buddy and I were enjoying a great lunch aboard Andaman Ocean Safaris' dive boat when we heard a com-



‘Even more thrillingly, people taking quick day-trips in the region are being rewarded with just such sightings: whale sharks and manta rays’

Martin Edwards recently had the opportunity to swim with this five-meter-long juvenile whale shark in Banglow Bay. Photo: Martin Edwards

motion, thinking someone had seen a turtle, we went out to the dive deck to be confronted by a five-meter juvenile whale shark swimming right next to the boat! "

"In a somewhat orderly fashion many scrambled for masks, fins and cameras to witness this amazing event, some followed it, though I decided to wait and see if it returned. Fortunately, it did."

Sightings of manta rays at

Racha Noi, also on the weekly-rounds for many dive boats, are picking up.

Lastly, people taking southern live-aboard trips to the stunning dive sites of Hin Daeng and Hin Muang are also sending back healthy reports of whale shark sightings.

It feels like the only area off-island that isn't producing these mega fauna wonders are the beautiful coral reefs of Koh Phi Phi.

There have of course still been plenty of sightings of black tip reef sharks and turtles, but that is quite normal, assured Michael.

As they say in the diving indus-

try, there are no guarantees. However, it seems like now isn't a bad time to play hooky from work and get your money in while the odds are in your favor.



Photo: Andrea Filippozzi

Manta rays, another heavyweight of the seas, are being spotted in higher numbers in our region's waters.

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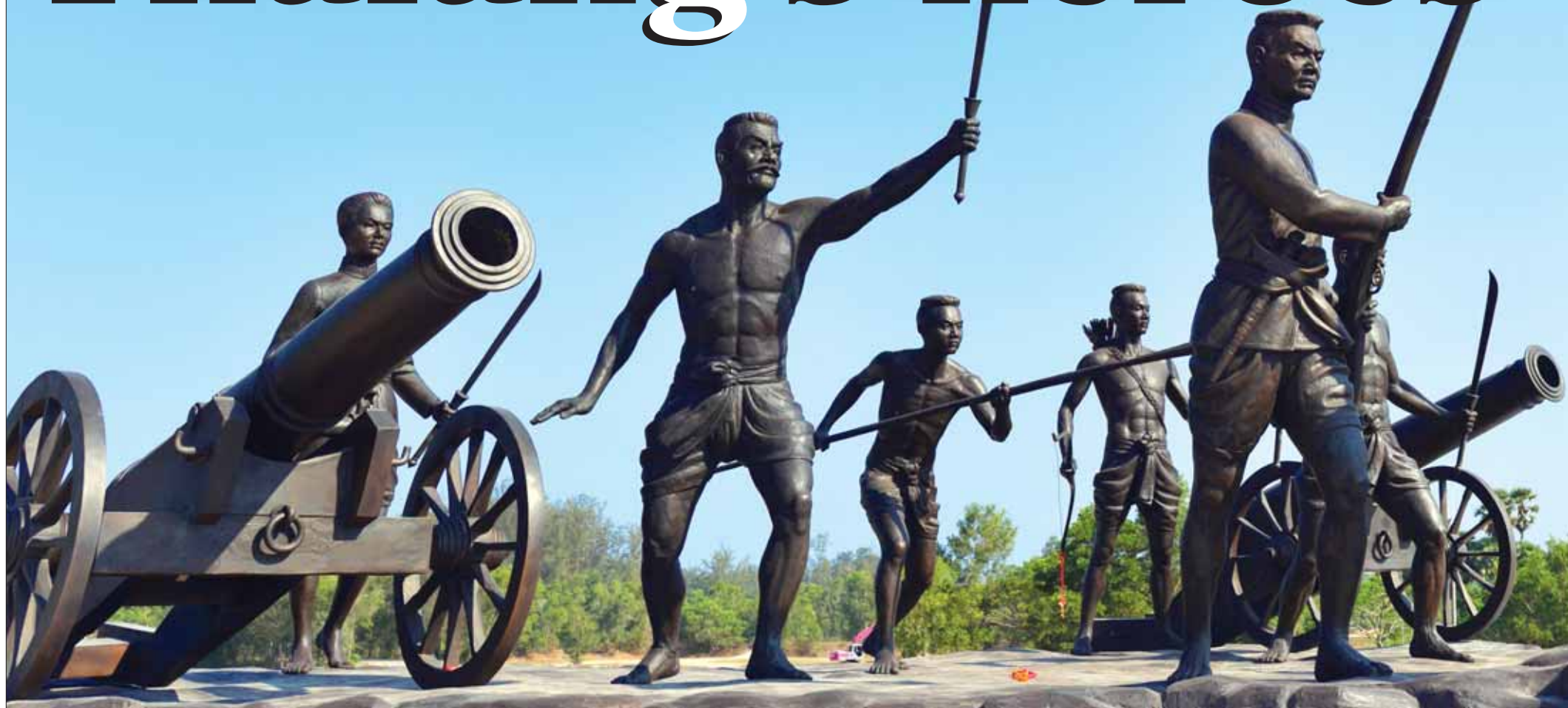
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Paying homage to Thalang's heroes



The bronze statues of the nine heroes of Thalang were erected at Thalang Victory Memorial Field on January 30, 2014. Photos: Jeremie Schatz

THALANG Town, the oldest settlement on the island of Phuket, has seen its fair share of war, invasion and acts of heroism. Recently, nine bronze statues were erected at the Thalang Victory Memorial Field in order to commemorate nine of the most prominent rulers of the old town of Thalang.

Among the nine statues that have been recently erected, some are easily recognizable. For example, Thao Thepkasattri (Lady Chan) and Thao Srisoonthorn (Khun Mook) are highly revered by Phuket locals and their statues can be found elsewhere on the island as well.

However, less is known about some of the prominent governors of Thalang whose statues will stand to commemorate them alongside the brave sisters.

Phraya Thalang Thien was one of the brave men who fought to repel the Burmese invasion in 1785 during the Nine Armies War. He was the second son of Lady Chan and Lord Sripakdi, who was the governor of a town called Taban, now in the boundaries of Surat Thani province.

Lady Chan married Lord Sripakdi when she was only sixteen years of age. After their marriage, Lord Sripakdi moved to Thalang Town and was bestowed an official post by the Governor of Thalang, who at that time was Lady Chan's father.

In the year 1752, they had a daughter together, named Khun Prang. In 1754, Lady Chan gave birth to their first son named Thien. It was during the reign of King Ekkathat, the last King of Ayutthaya. The following year, 1755, Lord Sripakdi died. Lady Chan was only 20 years of age. Several years later, in 1767, Lady Chan got married again, this time to Luang Phimon, the governor of Kraburi. They had five children together, named Thong, Jui (who would later be known as Phraya Yokkrabat Jui), Niam, Kim and Muang.

Since Thien was the oldest of the governor's sons, he was expected to inherit the governorship of Thalang when the time came. He was educated well, taught how to read and write Thai, Malay, Chinese and even English. He was taught mathematics, taxation and even the means to identify the quality of tin, since that was Phuket's main source of revenue

Looking Back

By Anand Singh



The two famous heroines lead the pack at Victory Field.

during that period. Thien also received extensive military training. He was taught about military tactics and the use of weapons like swords, daggers, spears and firearms.

In the year 1767, the Burmese attacked Ayutthaya and sacked the city. King Ekkathat tried desperately to rally his forces in order to counter the invasion but to no avail.

Ayutthaya fell on April 7, 1767. It is widely believed that the King died shortly after, while fleeing the Bur-

mese. It was one of the darkest eras in Siamese history.

Almost a year later, General Taksin turned the situation around and counterattacked the remaining Burmese armies in Siam. His tactical genius won him victory after victory and he managed to drive the Burmese completely out of Siam. On December 28, 1767, less than a year after the fall of Ayutthaya, Taksin was crowned Siam's new King in his newly established capital, Thon Buri.

After peace was restored through- out the country, King Taksin appointed a Chinese statesman named Khangseng to become the new governor of Thalang in the year 1770. Khangseng remained the Governor of Thalang until the year 1773, when Lady Chan's brother, Ard, killed him. After a brief power struggle, Ard seized the governorship of Thalang for himself. Phraya Ard remained in

power for the next two years when he himself was killed by gunshot.

After Phraya Ard's death, Lady Chan's husband, Phraya Phimon was appointed the next governor of Thalang. He may have already been serving as the vice-governor for sometime during this turbulent period.

During the time when Phraya Phimon was the governor of Thalang, Lady Chan's eldest son, Thien had come of age and was ready to assume a state office. Lady Chan therefore asked the ruler of Nakhon Si Thammarat to bestow her son with the governorship of Baan Tha Rua.

Not long after, Phraya Phimon was accused of assassinating Phraya Ard. He was arrested and summoned to the capital in the year 1780. However, before the orders could be carried out, Siam was thrown back into turmoil once again. A group of nobles initiated a coup against King Taksin, which resulted in his deposition. Later, King Taksin was executed. Chao Phraya Chakri was invited to take the throne as the next King of Siam. He was crowned King Rama I in the year 1782.

Following the deposition of King Taksin, the new rulers wanted to root out the old regime as quickly as possible. Nobles that were favored or put



Other notable governors of Thalang stand beside the better known brave sisters.

into power during Taksin's reign were arrested or summoned for questioning. During that time, Phraya Thongpoon had temporarily replaced Phraya Phimon as the governor of Thalang.

In 1784 King Rama I sent Phraya Thammatrailok to come to Pak Phra, the channel between Phuket Island and mainland Phang-Nga to investigate Chao Phraya Inthawongsa, one of King Taksin's highest military com-

manders, on charges of treason. Chao Phraya Inthawongsa had been maintaining a garrison at Pak Phra for sometime. When faced with Phraya Thammatrailok's charges, Chao Phraya Inthawongsa fought back with a handful of loyal troops beside him but he could not withstand Phraya Thammatrailok's army. Chao Phraya Inthawongsa fled to Baan Tha Rua and later committed suicide to avoid being taken alive.

Following the death of Chao Phraya Inthawongsa, Phraya Thammatrailok charged Lady Chan with assisting a traitor to the crown. Lady Chan was later arrested and imprisoned at Pak Phra.

This story continues in the next Looking Back column.

Anand Singh is an avid Phuket historian and can be contacted through email: as.pkt@hotmail.com

Venturing to Victory Field



INSPIRED by Anand Singh's column about old Thalang's nine revered rulers, the *Gazette Features'* team decided to seek out Thalang Victory Field during a lunch break and have a peek at the new 50-million-baht attraction that was inaugurated only weeks ago.

The map we had suggested that the site should have been right off the Don Jom Tao road (route 4030), just west of Thepkrasattri Road in Thalang. However, that map was off, and there were no statues in sight, let alone visible, obvious direction signs.

Some locals told us to keep following the road we'd turned onto (Baan Rieng Rd), heading north/northwest and that "we couldn't miss it... it's just around the bend".

Alas, we found the site: a large field with a mound in the middle of it serving as a pedestal for the nine statues. A peaceful setting indeed – we were surrounded by mountains (okay, hills), lakes, trees and not yet any concrete box subdivisions to spoil the view, granted there was one small migrant worker construction camp for the workers still diligently preparing the site.

To save you the trouble of asking for directions, here's some of our own: If coming from Two Heroines monument, head north until you reach the first traffic lights in Thalang, where you should make a left turning onto route 4030 (Don Jom Tao Rd).

Head west for about 500 meters, and just before the road starts bending in a southwest direction, take the turn off on the right hand side of the road. This road is called Baan Rieng Rd. The road goes north for about 450 meters or so before sharply bending to the left (west).

Continue west for another 500 meters and the road will fork two ways. Keep left (heading south) and follow the bending road another 150 meters past the lake and you really can't miss it. Happy exploring!

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Service for the South

Limited options for domestic aviation in need of expansion



By Somchai Huasaikul

HERE in Thailand, and especially the Southern region, the small-scale “commuter” airline industry continues to lag far behind what is available in many other countries in the region.

Apart from a few Bangkok Airways flights connecting Koh Samui with Phuket and Krabi each week, getting from Point A to Point B “as the crow flies” in the South is seldom an option. It is not even possible to fly from Phuket to Haad Yai, the South’s two largest commercial centers, or between any of the other “international” airports in the region, on a scheduled flight.

It was not always this way. Back in the 80s and 90s, THAI offered numerous flights connecting major population centers in the region aboard comfortable, single aisle jets. During Chuan Leekpai’s premiership, there were two flights daily connecting Phuket to Haad Yai, with stop-over service to Trang, which also happens to be Chuan’s home town. You could also fly direct from Nakhon Sri Thammarat to Phuket on state carrier THAI, which at that time played a much more aggressive role in developing the country’s tourism industry.

Back then, it seemed inevitable that 20 years down the road it would be possible to fly from just about every province to every other on a scheduled flight, in much the same way that, as kids, many of us fully expected the new millennium transport reality to resemble images from *The Jetsons*.

Such are the dangers of juvenile speculation. Deregulation internationally, “red tape” and other, unwritten restrictions inside the Kingdom have left would-be regional air commuters in a sorry state.

Currently, businessmen, tourists and others who want to get from Phuket to Haad Yai have to fly an hour north to Don Muang, then catch an even longer flight back south. The same applies to all major population centers in the South, which actually has ten commercial airports all fully capable of hosting commuter aircraft.

In almost every case, however, the only way to get from one to the other is the same: through Bangkok, or by road.

LOAD FACTOR

No route in Thailand’s South is more important than Phuket to Haad Yai, yet the route has remained without a carrier since Happy Air abandoned its service some time in 2010. The route is, quite obviously, one with potential. There are so many Songkhla residents living and working in Phuket that they even have their own association, as do many of the provinces in the region. More interprovincial buses ply the 9-hour route than any other after Phuket – Bangkok, another strong indicator of demand.

Numerous airlines have tried the Phuket – Haad Yai route, but none successfully over the long term. The most recent to abandon the route was Happy Air, which in late 2009 launched a “tri-

angle route” connecting Phuket with Haad Yai and Langkawi Island in Malaysia. By 2011, all of its services out of HKT, its original hub, had been abandoned. It now uses its sole Saab 340 turboprop out of Suvarnabhumi in Bangkok for scheduled flights to Chumphon and Ranong.

Before that, Nok Air launched a service between the two cities in mid-2007 using a 150-seat Boeing 737-400 jet. Citing insufficient load factor, it scrapped the service just six months later,

near the start of the high season for tourism that year. Then VP For marketing Sehan Chumsai told the *Gazette* at the time that a 70-seat plane would be appropriate given the demand they had seen, which overwhelmingly comprised local Thai commuters.

Going further back in time to the early 2000s, Phuket Air used to offer popular daily flights from HKT to HDY aboard a 60-seat Japanese-built NAMC YS-11. These were routinely close to full when this correspondent was commuting between Songkhla and Phuket back then. However, economic factors relating to that airlines’ being blacklisted in the EU for safety reasons, as well as the lack of demand after the 2004 tsunami disaster, and the April 2005 bombing of Haad Yai Airport



Photo: Radoslaw Idaszak

Nok Mini services destinations in the north and northeast with a small fleet of Saab 340s turboprops.

by antigovernment insurgents, were probably all among the factors that led our namesake carrier to scrap the route, along with all other domestic services, by September that year. Prior to that, now-defunct Andaman Air tried the route, again without success.

Not all regions of Thailand are without commuter airlines. For example, Kan Air, launched in 2010, currently operates scheduled flights aboard prop planes from its Chiang Mai hub to destinations as remote as Pai, Mae Hong Son and Nan, as well as larger population centers like Khon Kaen.

It is unclear why the “fine end” of the market here in the South remains practically nonexistent, especially when the overall trend at major airports throughout the region is one of considerable growth.

At the end of January 2014,

Airports of Thailand (AoT) reported increases in both aircraft movements and passenger traffic at all six airports under its management, which include both Phuket International and Haad Yai International.

In 2013, the six AoT facilities handled 88.29 million passengers, with a record number (11.3 million) at Phuket, the nation’s third busiest airport after Suvarnabhumi (51.4mn) and Don Muang (16.5mn). Haad Yai Airport handled 2.5mn passengers, just under half the number at Chiang Mai (5.5mn).

The *Gazette* tried to contact several airlines to see what sort of interest there might be in taking over the Phuket to Haad Yai route.

Mr Tasara Taksinapan, media relations

manager at Bangkok Airways Corporate Communications Department, told the *Gazette* by email in late December that, “We have as yet no plan to expand our routes in the South of Thailand at the moment. However, we will update you if anything comes available in the future.”

“We have as yet no plan to expand our routes in the south of Thailand at the moment. However, we will update you if anything comes available in the future.”

– Tasara Taksinapan, media relations manager at Bangkok Airways

More recently, we contacted Nok Mini, which operates most of its flights out of Don Muang to destinations in the north and northeast with its small fleet of Saab 340s turboprops, which typically have a 30 to 36 seat configuration which is perfect for this route. However, it also operates twice daily flights from Chiang Mai

to Udon Thani, three daily flights to Mae Hong Son and even a daily flight to remote Mae Sod.

Mr Sant Sang-wornrachasup, Nok Mini’s vice president for commercial operations for the last two years, told the *Gazette* that his airline has considered taking on the Phuket to Haad Yai route.

“But we need to study this route in detail before we commit or make further planning,” he wrote in an email.

He added that the carrier was also studying a couple of other unspecified routes in the South region.

Nok Mini’s current expansion plan is to develop and expand into regional markets, with a special emphasis on “high-yield” and “quality” niche markets, he explained. Hopefully the airline will consider expanding into the South, which appears to be a virgin and potentially profitable market for any well-run airline with good service and marketing.



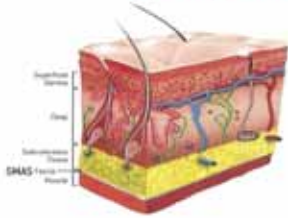
Happy Air abandoned service to Haad Yai in 2010. Photo: Gazette File

See related editorial, Page 18

LASER PREMIUM

Paramount skin clinic

What's happening in the aging face?



The visible signs of facial aging include not only surface irregularities, such as dyspigmentation, numerous fine

lines, but also coarser textural changes, such as sagging, drooping and wrinkling of the skin. Most people concern only how to rejuvenate skin. However, six layers of the face: other skin layer or epidermis, inner skin layer or dermis, fat, SMAS, muscles and bone have been totally affected. As a result, the keys to approach and reverse facial aging must be universally addressed layer by layer and choose the right targeted devices and procedural dermatology to correct the defect layers.

Outer skin layer or epidermis

Epidermis is the most outer part of the skin composing cell layers that are responsible for skin texture, moisture and skin color. Thinning of the skin, dyspigmentation such as sun spots, age spots and melasma, skin dullness as well as roughness are the aesthetic complaints from epidermal aging.

Our modalities – CO2laser, MedliteC6 laser, IPL, soft peeling, deep facial cleansing, whitening treatment, mesotherapy



Medlite C6 laser is the US FDA graded laser targeting melanin pigment chromophore for spot removal, improving skin tone, and brightening skin color. Patients will not have any

Inner skin layer or dermis

Dermis lies between the epidermis and subcutaneous with collagen, elastin, nerves, vessels and glands. It plays an important role for skin thickness and cosmetic appearance of the skin. As a result of collagen and elastin reduction, sagging jowl, larger pore, increasing fine lines, static lines, deep folds and more prominent acne scars occur. Various measures such as dermal filler, laser, and other light sources



Our options – ST reframe, e-Matrix, Ulthera, Thermage, Med lite C6 laser, botox, dermal filler, IPL, thread lifting. e-Matrix is the latest resurfacing device producing unique pyramidal column of fractional



RF energy Smoothen skin, soften lines, pore reduction, acne scar removal, skin tightening,

Fat

Fat is the layer below dermis. The aging face generally shows fat reduction. Losing volume of fat pockets resulting eye hollow deep nasolabial folds, and loss of jaw line including neck definition is also the consequent of fat atrophy. Autologous fat augmentation and filler injection are methods to replace the volume loss. However, submental fat pocket enlarged creating double chin is the reverse scenario which needs the different approach.

Our recommendation – filler injection for fat loss/fat dissolve for fat excess, bio-cone lifting

SMAS (superficial musculoaponeurotic system)

Superficial musculoaponeurotic system or SMAS is a particular layer consisting of collagen and elastic fiber meshwork above the muscles. From the morphology of cadavers, not every muscle has this layer. However, when we are ages, this unique layer is composed of variable decreasing in strength and elasticity causing drooping skin and eyes. Therefore, SMAS layer plays a major role for surgeons to manipulate during surgical face and neck lifting. Nowadays non-surgical devices try to target SMAS in order to recover skin aging more effectively rather than focusing on treating and rejuvenating skin alone.

Our recommendation- Ulthera (focused Ulthera and e-Matrix)



Non-invasive focused ultrasound (ulthera) is currently the only device that US FDA approved for facial lifting. Combining

ulthera with subablative skin resurfacing (e-Matrix) can produce significant collagen synthesis and can delay the use of more invasive surgical techniques which may associate with longer downtime, side effects and complications.

Muscle

Dynamic wrinkles or wrinkles in motion such as smile lines, frown lines, bunny lines, and forehead line are the consequence of facial aging related to the muscles. Prominent masseter muscle from both aging and inherited structure can create the square face appearance.



Our recommendation- botox injection

ADVERTISEMENT

This document is provided by Dr. Panadda Aswanetmanee, skin and laser surgery specialist at Laser Premium Clinic (only for our staffs.)

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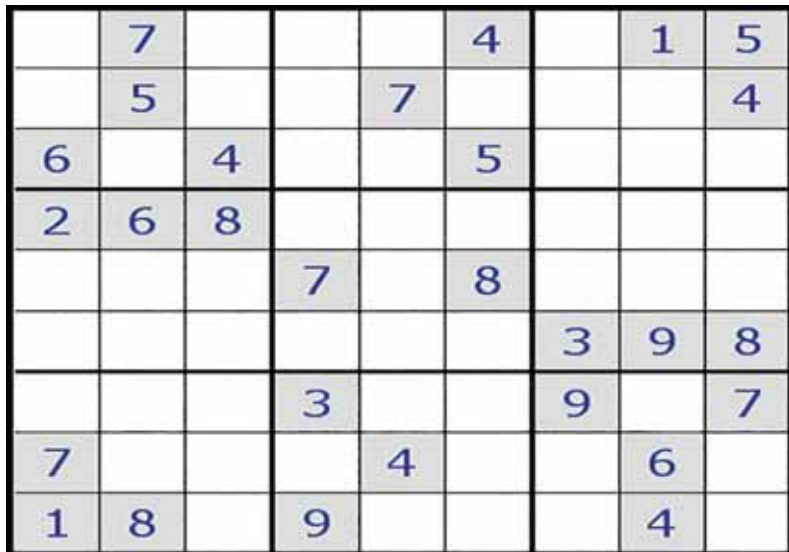
Words to the wise

"I read recipes the same way I read science fiction. I get to the end and I think, 'Well, that's not going to happen.'"

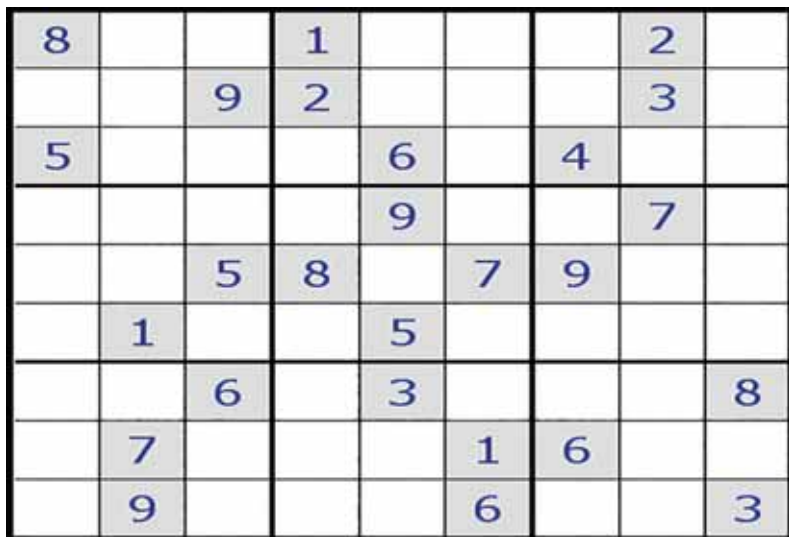
— Anonymous

"It was the Law of the Sea, they said. Civilization ends at the waterline. Beyond that, we all enter the food chain, and not always right at the top."

— Hunter S. Thompson



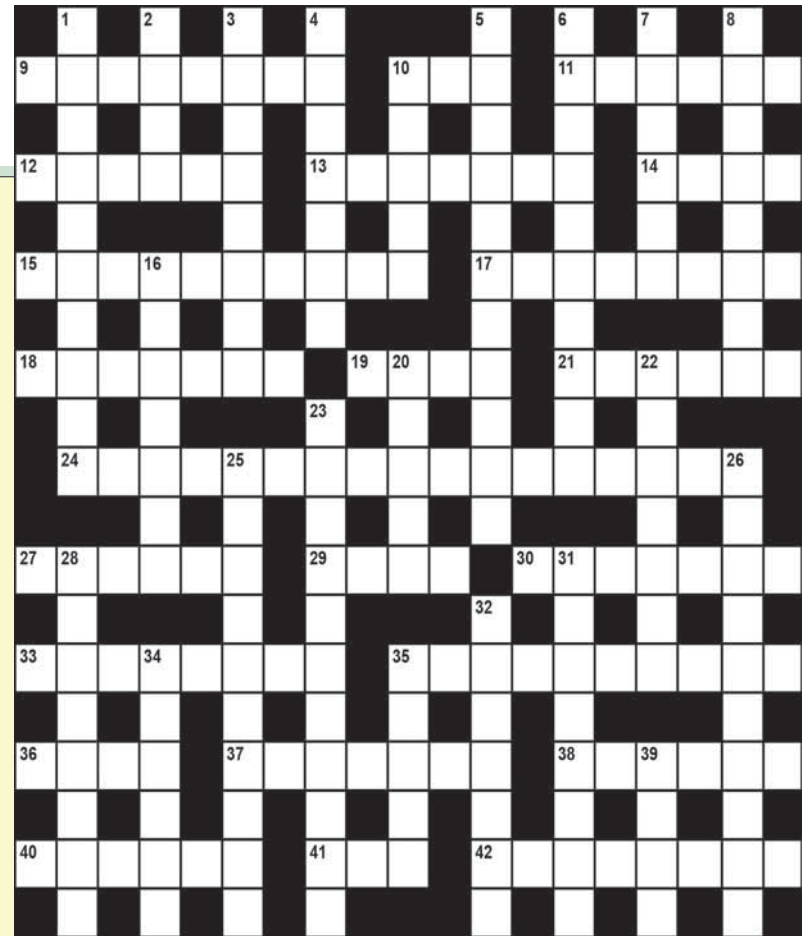
SUDOKU: Each row, column and 3x3 sub-grid must contain the number 1-9 once only. Kevin Stone (brainbashers.com)



COFFEE break

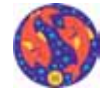
Across

9. Ah! I catch out the Phuket checkpoint (4,4)
10. Scottish overcoat? (3)
11. How about fifty-fifty, zero void? (6)
12. Credit one's old women (6)
13. Intones about strain (7)
14. Propose in verse round time, note (4)
15. False 'Ciao' as full drunk (10)
17. Simplicity seen as is, perhaps (8)
18. Almost one table worthy of quoting (7)
19. Or back in teetotal jog (4)
21. Try around the finish to be up to date (6)
24. Hornpipes, reels, etc. cause scandal; rid it at one move. (17)
27. Settle on choice (6)
29. Not these, the married (4)
30. Once dim, became fiendish (7)
33. Moan lid destroyed in instrument (8)
35. Stab one pin wildly into chili ingredient (10)
36. Nonsense, it's a sort of bed (4)
37. Entrance in seventh rally (7)
38. Cite me back, something that makes me sick (6)
40. Narrow waterway sounds undeviating (6)
41. Solitary round North-east (3)
42. Possibly claim spasm related to weather (8)



Down

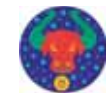
1. Treated, I march past the dispenser (10)
2. Mad, turns up in daze (4)
3. Material of ship lacy, perhaps! (8)
4. Con, if it produces falsehood (7)
5. Westerners can't close, I'd arranged (11)
6. Since heat possibly out East produces Oriental beverage (7,3)
7. Split spice new (6)
8. Bruised, continued, took advantage of (8)
10. Puts right many conclusions (5)
16. What comes out slowly from gala. Eek! (7)
20. Risen badly, a wash-out! (5)
22. Col. seen about to surround (7)
23. Note the difference (11)
25. I tell scent destroyed faculties of reasoning (10)
26. Nice if tics could be knowledge based (10)
28. Assess value, maybe eat out (8)
31. Possibly tie score, mysterious (8)
32. Licit, maybe, around Newfoundland, so impose (7)
34. OK, maid arranged flowers in Thailand (3,3)
35. The prize is in the bag (5)
39. Made up name for cheese (4)

PISCES (Feb 20 -Mar 20) :

Your impatience needs to be contained this week. Pisceans who are frustrated with their current employment prospects are advised that a different career direction can come out of the blue next month. If you are tiring of certain friends' behavior in your social circle, the cosmic climate encourages introductions to new people this weekend. Those celebrating a birthday in the days ahead will be more creative during the coming year.

ARIES (Mar 21 -Apr 20) :

This is an auspicious week to clear out mental cobwebs. The stars suggest that Arians may have become obsessed with a certain fact that is untrue. Jealousy is highlighted to be the cause if this concerns your romantic life. In the world of work, your dissatisfaction with an earth sign colleague's ethics needs to be brought out into the open; Tuesday is a good day to lay foundations for a better relationship.

TAURUS (Apr 21 -May 21) :

Your luck with finances improves and Taureans' prudent approach to investments and savings is forecast to help them find solutions that will increase their assets. Staying

on top of things in the world of work is recommended as there can be last minute challenges at the end of February. A mellow mood this weekend has a positive effect on personal relationships. Sparkling days for romance are Thursday and Friday.

GEMINI (May 22 -June 21) :

There are positive vibrations in the air for Geminis during the last week of February. The stars indicate that your zest for life is contagious and friends will be happy to follow your lead. It will be easier to respect other people's points of view and you could have a change of heart about an important issue. Giving more support to a water sign partner makes all the difference to this relationship.

CANCER (June 22 -July 23) :

In the world of work, change should be viewed as a gateway to opportunities. Once you can accept this, the stars indicate that there will be a feeling of liberation. Finances are highlighted to benefit from an unexpected bonus at the end of February. In the realm of romance, precious moments lie ahead this weekend. Those Cancerians who are reunited with a partner who has been absent realize it was well worth the wait.

YOUR horoscope

By Isla Star

LEO (July 24 -Aug 22) :

You can be lured out of your comfort zone this weekend. The stars indicate that Leos who had planned nothing more challenging than lying around in their lairs will have to follow friends on their quest for fun. If you have been struggling with a personal problem, an earth sign's input can reveal an easy way out. Lucky days for love are Monday and Tuesday. Money matters are well starred on Wednesday.

VIRGO (Aug 23 -Sept 23) :

You can be tempted towards overspending during the coming days. There are hints that a visit from a family member or close friend could cost more than Virgoans can afford. The realm of romance is affected by mystery during the last week of February. Those who were hoping for answers from a water sign will have to wait until this person is ready to reveal their true feelings.

LIBRA (Sept 24 -Oct 23) :

Librans can learn a lot from others this week as the astral atmosphere promotes the sharing of skills and information. A water sign can help you resolve a work related problem and another air sign has interesting tips for those hoping to relocate. Where finances are concerned, money is slow to move until March commences – you may not be able to count on a payment that was promised at the end of this month.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 -Nov 22) :

Awkward issues that you believed to be over can be raised again in the world of work. The situation should blow over soon, but you may need to have a heart to heart with an air sign colleague. Where romantic affairs are concerned, the stars advise that Scorpions can be disappointed this week. However, something is set to happen at the start of March that will more than compensate for this.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 -Dec 21) :

Efforts to stem the flow of money away from you should finally pay off for Sagittarians. The stars show that February will end on a more positive financial note. A more confident mood

enables you to face up to problems that have been swept under the mat – Tuesday is the most auspicious day to approach people who have power. In the realm of romance, another fire sign shows their need for more commitment.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 -Jan 20) :

The stars continue to support Capricorns' efforts to set their lives straight. Your productivity peaks as the end of February approaches, which is a good thing as March is forecast to be a slower month for progress. Make the most of the astral support this week by aiming higher than you are usually inclined. On a personal level, communication is more relaxed and you discover that a fire sign has hidden qualities.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 -Feb 19) :

This is not the right time for modesty. The stars show that Aquarians who want to get ahead in the world of work must prepare to sell their skills. Wednesday is the most auspicious day to prove what you are made of, with a fire sign forecast to make the right offer. In your personal zone, information picked from the gossip grapevine can lead you to the wrong conclusion concerning a fire sign.

International Sport

Olympic boss pleads to end violence

By Mike Collett-White

THE world's ice hockey superpowers slugged it out for a place in the men's semi-finals at the Winter Olympics on Wednesday, when the more graceful yet no less competitive women's figure skating also got underway.

Far from the sporting arena, Ukraine's Olympics boss Sergey Bubka called for an end to violence in his country, where at least 25 people have been killed in bloody street protests.

Russian fans will be roared on the home team when they came up against the formidable barrier of Finland at the futuristic Bolshoy Ice Dome, while Canada and the United States also both played on Wednesday evening.

At the nearby Iceberg Skating Palace, there was similarly partisan support for 15-year-old Julia Lipnitskaya, one of the favorites in the women's singles competition having mesmerized the Games with her performance in the team event.

That contest concluded on Thursday, while on Wednesday eight medals were up for grabs in the Caucasus mountains and on the Black Sea coast in the Sochi Olympic Park.

They included the men's giant slalom, in which Ted Ligety is sought to win a first US Alpine skiing gold at the Sochi Games. Thick fog, rain and snow that made skiing so difficult earlier in the week and had lifted by Wednesday, so conditions were clear.

Former pole vault champion Bubka called for peace in Ukraine, while for the country's Olympic team minds were as much on tumultuous events at home as they were on the sport.

"I want to bring Olympic Truce to my country," Bubka said on Twitter. "Dialogue is power, violence is weakness."

"Our athletes are competing hard in Sochi, but peacefully and with honor. Violence has no place in the world."

The upheaval has been hard for Ukraine's athletes to block out.

"Yes it's a distraction, everyone's talking about it – even just now at the start, at the finish, people are saying 'what's happened in your country, what's happened?'" said Dmytro Mytsak, 18, a Ukrainian giant slalom skier from Kiev.



Sweden's Loui Eriksson (left) scores on Slovenia's goalie
Photo: Reuters/Martin Rose/Pool



Photo: Reuters/Brian Snyder

Sweden's Daniel Sedin (obscured) is surrounded by his linemates celebrating his goal as Slovenia's goalie Robert Kristan looks on.

"We're getting support from the Russian spectators and I'm grateful for that."

"STOP THE BLOODSHED"

Demonstrations erupted in November after President Viktor Yanukovich bowed to pressure from neighboring Russia and pulled out of a planned trade pact with the European Union, deciding instead to accept a Kremlin bailout for the indebted economy.

On Wednesday, Russia demanded that Ukrainian opposition leaders "stop the bloodshed" in Kiev, and said Moscow would use all its influence to bring peace to its "friendly brother state".

Russian President Vladimir Putin was

no doubt hoping events in Ukraine would not overshadow Russia's first Winter Games, where state-of-the-art venues and thrilling action have pushed criticism during the build-up to the Olympics firmly into the background.

The president attributed much of that criticism – of a law banning the promotion of homosexuality among minors and of the high costs of staging the event – to a Cold War mentality in the West.

Threatened demonstrations have been few and far between during the February 7-23 Games, although protest group Pussy Riot did crash the Olympic party briefly on Tuesday when they were detained for several hours at a Sochi police station.

Members of the group, who once again grabbed international media attention, were in Sochi to record a musical film called "Putin will teach you to love the motherland".

DUTCH DOMINANCE

At the Adler Arena in the Olympic Park, Czech Marina Sablikova tried to hold back the orange Dutch tide and retain her 5,000 meters speedskating title.

Ireen Wust had already beaten her over 3,000 meters in Sochi and sought yet another Dutch gold in a sport they have dominated at these Games.

As this goes to print, France's double Olympic champion Martin Fourcade was doubtful because he was suffering from sinusitis, Norway and Russia are among the favorites for the mixed relay in biathlon.

Two other sports had double medal events – the men's and women's team sprints in cross-country skiing and the snowboarding parallel giant slalom.

The last event to be decided is the woman's bobsleigh while there are also semi-finals in both curling competitions.

Pakistan gets new coach

FORMER test captain Moin Khan has been appointed Pakistan's head coach for the Asia Cup and Twenty20 World Cup tournaments in Bangladesh, Pakistani cricket's new management committee said on Tuesday.

The 11-man committee was constituted on Monday by the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif who sacked Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Zaka Ashraf on charges of mismanagement and misuse of powers.

Headed by new chairman Najam Sethi, the committee reversed all decisions taken by Ashraf declaring null and void the appointment of former test captain Aamir Sohail last week as chief selector and director of game development.

"There is no record of any appointment letter being issued to

Sohail so he holds no post on the board," chief operating officer Subhan Ahmad told a news conference in Lahore.

The committee appointed former test captain Zaheer Abbas as the Pakistan team's chief cricket consultant, accompanying them on all tours. Abbas was also named on the committee by the government.

The head coach position fell vacant after Australian Dav Whatmore did not extend his two-year contract with the PCB this month.

Moin had served as manager of the national team since last October but was sacked when Ashraf was reinstated as PCB by the Islamabad high court last month. – Reuters

The Asia Cup is held from February 25 to March 8 and the Twenty20 World Cup between March 16 and April 6.

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Thai team ousts Hong Kong

THE Thai Davis Cup team triumphed against Hong Kong 4-1 in the regional (Asia/Oceania) matchup at Thanyapura Phuket on Sunday, February 16.

After an uncertain start which saw Thailand's Warit Sornbutnark defeated in the opening match against Hong Kong's Phillip King, the home team rallied to win the following four matches over the weekend to triumph with an impressive margin.

On the final day, Thailand's Pruchya Isarow and Nuttanon Kadchapanan defeated Hong Kong's Phillip King and Ognian Kolev in front of a packed house of cheering supporters.

The three-day Davis Cup event was opened by the President of the Lawn Tennis Association of Thailand Suwat Liptapanlop and Phuket Governor Maitree Intusut who were welcomed by Thanyapura Founder Klaus Hebben and Thanyapura Executive Chairman Chris McCormack.

The BNP Paribas-sponsored event was moved from Bangkok to Phuket after Davis Cup organizers expressed concerns about the current political uncertainty. Thanyapura Phuket, offering the same surface used for the Australian Open Grand Slam tournament, proved to be the perfect solution.

"We were delighted with the opportunity to host this international event and I would like to congratulate Thailand on their success, and our team at Thanyapura for the seamless execution of a very important sporting occasion," said Mr McCormack.

"Our tennis, swimming and triathlon academies offer world-class facilities, and we look forward to bringing more events of this stature to Phuket to put the Thanyapura Phuket destination firmly on the international map for sporting events and training camps."

Thanyapura Phuket's Olympic-standard pool recently played host to the British, Dutch, Italian, Hong Kong and Singapore national teams, with the center's facilities extending further to international-quality football, rugby and athletics amenities.

Next up for Thailand in the Davis Cup is a showdown with Kuwait from April 4-6.

Kuwait advanced by beating Indonesia three matches to two.

In the other round two (region semi-finals), also to take place April 4-6, the Philippines will take on Pakistan.

In round 1, the Philippines beat Sri Lanka (3-1), while Pakistan edged Vietnam (3-2).

- *Phuket Gazette*



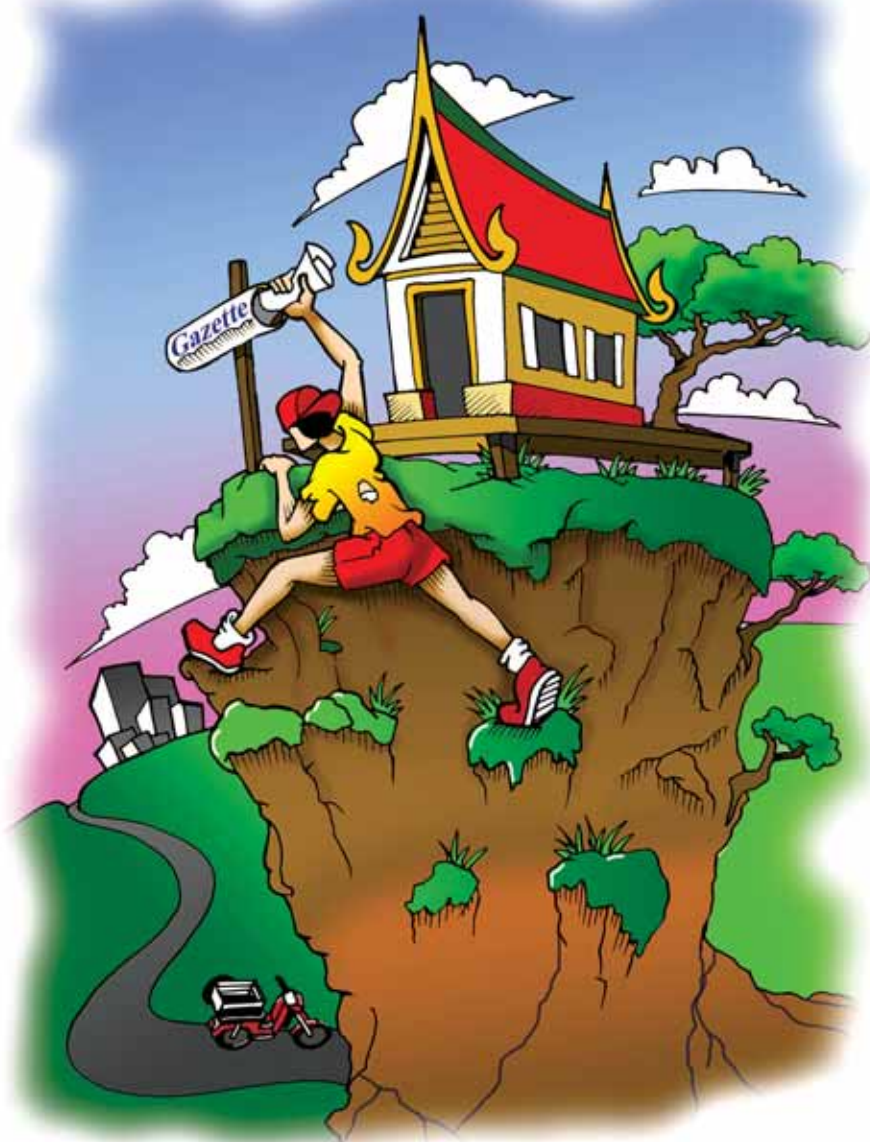
Thailand's Pruchya Isarow battles it out against Hong Kong's Philip King. Photos: Supplied



Nuttanon Kadchapanan defeated Ognian Kolev.



Pruchya Isarow took down Philip King.



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Sport

Bike fitting: art or science?



BISP 'Big 3' basketball team students Harry O'Brien, Carl Ydmark and Phachara Boucher will be hoping to play above the rim. Photo: Supplied

Inaugural BIS Challenge Cup

NEXT Saturday, March 1, six of the best secondary school basketball teams from around Phuket will compete in the first-ever Challenge Cup at the British International School Phuket (BISP) basketball stadium. The BISP team is looking to continue its momentum from a recent tournament in Pattaya where they claimed first prize, defeating other leading international schools from around the Bangkok and Pattaya areas.

BISP basketball coach and PE teacher Jamie Blake says, "It won't be easy competing against some traditionally strong local Thai basketball teams such as

Satree Phuket and Thai Hua."

The six participating schools in this inaugural Cup are Kajonkiet International School, Phuket Wittayalai, Satree Phuket, HeadStart International School, Thai Hua and the hosts, BIS Phuket.

Spectators are welcome at the BISP campus in Koh Kaew, so get yourself there on the day to support your local team (enter at BISP Gate 3). First game begins at 9am.

For enquiries, please email jblake@bisphuket.ac.th. The BIS Phuket Challenge Cup is proudly sponsored by the Phuket Gazette.



Six top student basketball teams will showdown at the first ever BISP Challenge Cup next month. Photo: Supplied

BIKE fitting – two little words that always ignite much debate, discussion and interest from everyone on two wheels. It's a topic that is rapidly gaining awareness as the first necessity of any new bike purchase.

For most of us, our bike fitting experience will begin with the purchase of a new bike from your local bike shop. This process usually takes the following course: a quick inseam measurement and multiplication to get an approximate saddle height, jump on the bike, and in some cases a stem change depending on how it looks. Now I want to begin by saying that quite simply, this does not count as a fitting. With that out of the way, I want to start by exploring the world of bike fitting and the different interpretations that exist.

Two styles of fitting have emerged from the evolution and growth of the bike fitting industry. The first is often referred to by science-type words such as "protocols" or "systems". The "science" behind bike fitting is often a marketing term used by those who create these "protocols" in order to share that particular person's idea of what a bike fitting should look like and sometimes this can be at the expense of a good end result.

In science, we know that if we put "chemical A" + "chemical B" + "chemical C" into a test tube, then we will get "result D". This interpretation is one that may work for the textbook human being with the riding goals of those who penned the particular set of protocols. But for the masses this is unreliable, inflexible and excludes a rider's history and goals, let alone even beginning to address the differences between a "cycling fit" and a "triathlon fit".

This "science" based approach



Ben Hammond recently joined Thanyapura as a junior triathlon coach. Photo: Supplied

does have its benefits though. It helps to remove human error of measurement (albeit not entirely), speed up what can sometimes be a slow, labor intensive process and provide a very professional looking service. The major flaw of this style of fitting is that it can lead the fitter into adjustments purely based on the numbers, rather than relying on intuition.

I prefer to define bike fitting as an "art", a product that requires finesse, experience and a certain eye. It takes years of practice and hours upon hours of reflection and thought about which particular adjustments are going to create the desired outcome and how each and every aspect of both body and bike will integrate.

Bike fitting, like art, evolves. It must adapt and will always change depending on the inspirations, motivations and history of the bike owner. The bike fitter needs to

have countless hours of both fitting and riding experience in order to understand the mindset of the rider and to be able to paint a mental sketch of how this rider is going to look, prior to even the first measurement. This vision is what separates the better fitters in the world, from those who rely on a pre-determined set of numbers.

As a final point, if you are a triathlete that is going to get a fitting, I cannot stress how important it is to get your fitting from someone who has actually done a triathlon. In my own studio, despite numerous requests, I will not fit a mountain bike. Why? Because I have never ridden a mountain bike, I don't know what it feels like to ride off-road and I don't know what different positions in the studio are going to convert to on the trails.

Sure, I know what some of the "protocols" suggest and I could work towards those targets but ultimately I could not send someone out with absolute certainty that the position I have provided them is going to maximize their bike's potential to achieve their individual goals. And with that philosophy, I believe the same rule should apply to those seeking a "triathlon fit".

Ben Hammond is a professional triathlete from Sydney, Australia, where he also operated a private bike fitting studio. Ben has come to Thanyapura Phuket as a triathlon coach, and to establish a leading bike fit studio for the Asian market. Ben holds a degree in Exercise and Sport Science, has over 11 years of triathlon racing experience along with eight years working in the cycling industry during which time he's conducted bike fits for some of the world's best triathletes. Contact him at triathlon@thanyapura.com

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WAVE

Ronins undefeated in preseason run

By Jeremie Schatz

CONCLUDING their 2014 pre-season campaign in nearly perfect form, Phuket FC edged out Thai Division 2 squad, Trang FC 1-0 on Sunday (February 16) in Phuket Town.

Played under the blazing late afternoon sun at Surakul Stadium in Phuket Town, the Ronins' eighth and final friendly match ahead of the Yamaha League One season – which kicks off this weekend – drew about 1,000 fans.

Off to a slow start in the first half, both teams seemed to struggle in the heat, seeing evenly-contested possession and no goals netted.

During the cooler second half, players from both sides got their second wind as the shade engulfed the pitch. The match's sole goal came from Brazilian centerback Tales Dos Santos who was subsequently named man of the match.

The goal was setup with thoughtful passing by Anusak Laosangthai who laid the ball into the area for Dos Santos to fire home as his first goal for the club.

Shortly after, Phuket FC looked to double their lead when in a flurry of chaos in front of Trang's net, Anusak triumphed with a goal, only to be denied by an off-sides call from the lineman.

Despite their efforts in the remainder of the second half,



Phuket FC's Wasan Samansil hustling for the ball. Photo: Jeremie Schatz

Trang's hopes of scoring an equalizer went unanswered as they were unable to overpower Phuket's solid defenses.

This match followed the Phuket FC's trouncing of the second-string squad of Thailand South Division Two's Surat Thani FC, winning 6-nil in their penultimate preseason friendly match on Saturday night, also played at Surakul Stadium in Phuket Town.

Once again, in that match it was Ney Fabiano scoring the opening goal early in the match. Fabiano would also score his side's fifth goal later in the game.

Also scoring a double in this match was skillful Brazilian import, Henrique "Eber" De Bessa. The

team's third Brazilian starter, midfielder Cristian Alex also scored a header, and Phuket's other goal came from speedy right winger Rattapon Autawong.

Phuket FC Captain and left winger, Eakartit Somjit had two assists.

After eight preseason warm-up matches, Phuket FC will enter the open-season with zero losses to their name. The first game pairs Phuket FC against Pattaya United February 23, at Surakul Stadium. Kickoff at 6:30pm.

In eight preseason matches – all played at home – the Ronins won seven and drew one, scoring 22 goals and conceding only two.

2014 YL1 Phuket Matches (1 st half)		
H	Feb 23	VS Pattaya United
A	Mar 08	VS Angthong FC
H	Mar 16	VS TTM Customs
A	Mar 22	VS Krabi FC
H	Mar 26	VS Sri Racha FC
A	Mar 29	VS BBCU
H	Apr 05	VS Bangkok FC
A	Apr 20	VS Chiangmai FC
H	Apr 26	VS Nakhon Pathom Utd
A	May 04	VS Nakhon Ratchasima FC
H	May 11	VS Phitsanulok FC
A	May 18	VS Trat FC
H	May 25	VS Khon Kaen FC
A	Jun 01	VS Royal Navy
H	Jun 07	VS Roi Et Utd
A	Jun 13	VS Ayuthaya FC
H	Jun 22	VS Saraburi FC

*dates subject to change

The Ronins top scorers in the preseason were Ney Fabiano (five goals); Eber and Anusak Laosangthai (three goals apiece); Wasan Natsan and Cristian Alex, who each scored two goals.

With such an injection of confidence, Phuket look to maintain

their form into official league play, which kicks off on Sunday, February 23 with a home match against Pattaya United. Kick off will be at 6:30pm. See you at Surakul Stadium

Additional reporting by Steven Layne

Phuket Superstars Soccer 2014 match



Famous Thai singer and actor Senda "Hoy" (left) and Governor Maitri Inthasut.

A CHARITY, publicity football match, the "Phuket Superstars Soccer Championship 2014," was held last Saturday night at Surakul Stadium. Organized by the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization, the event attracted a lot of football and non-football fans alike who turned out to get a glimpse, selfie and/or autograph of one of

their beloved celebrities.

The "VIP Phuket All-Stars" team was captained by Phuket Governor Maitri Inthasut, and also led by PPAO Chief – Paiboon Upattising, PPAO Council Member and President of Phuket Sports Association, Saroj Angkanapilas, PPAO Council members, local government execu-



Manport Lorkloen won the publicity/charity match by a 2-0 scoreline. Photos: Steven Layne

tives, officers and even some of its own movie stars such as Thanawat "Pop" and Thakrit "Pet". The all-celebrity "Manport Lorkloen" team comprised of stars including Saksit Tangtong, Num Kongkrapan, Wina Kraibut, Sena Hoy, and a number of other Thai celebrities

While the VIP Phuket team ended up los-

ing to "Manport Lorkloen" 2-0, there were other winners to result, with a portion of the the undisclosed proceeds from the match to be used for local sports development and youth scholarships. – *Phuket Gazette*

The Phuket Gazette was a proud media partner of the event.

Pearl skin CAT in opener

Phuket United start 2014 futsal season in fine form with 3-1 victory

By Steven Layne

THE island's pro five-a-side footy outfit kicked off the Futsal Thailand Premier League (FTPL) 2014 season in good form, downing CAT Telecom 3-1 in a thrilling match-up last Sunday (February 16) night in Phuket Town.

Played at Saphan Hin's 4,000-seat indoor gymnasium, the match drew an energized crowd of nearly 1,500 supporters.

In the first half of play, both sides enjoyed an even number of scoring chances, but neither could break the ice before the half-time whistle.

During the break, the crowd was further enticed with a treat show by local, national champion dancers of the Aha and Hero youth troops.

Anxious to break the deadlock, both sides appeared refreshed out of the locker rooms, but it would be the home team to appease the crowd and draw first blood through a fantastic goal from the left flank by Brazilian pivot Jackson Santos.

Moments later, the visitors were right back into contention, when CAT's Vitoon Thapana launched an unstoppable missile under the cross bar.

Play continued intensely, back and forth, with both sides only able to rattle the cross bar to keep anxious fans, coaches and reserve players constantly on their toes.

Brilliant footwork and clever passing enabled the Andaman Pearl to charge ahead when Anuwat Pannopa, driving deep on the left flank, sent the ball into the area.

The perfectly timed delivery evaded CAT's advancing keeper and a final defender, who was too outstretched to stop Thanakorn Piyaprichayut, unmarked at the far post to finish the job and reignite the crowd with the evening's third goal.

Phuket were high on confidence as CAT now brought out their keeper to employ a power play, leaving their goal undefended. Attempt after attempt, the visitors came close to breaking Phuket's composure, but to no avail.

Phuket's new Brazilian signing, Edson "Gugu" Silva would be the one to drive the nail in CAT's coffin, scoring from long range on the far post. The Pearl held on to the final 3-1 scoreline and "Action Jackson" was named man of the match. Other FTPL results over the weekend are as follows:

- Ayuthaya City 5-1 Suphan Buri
- Samut Sakorn 3-2 Khon Kaen
- Highways Dept 6-2 Chiang Mai
- Royal Navy 3-1 Nonthaburi
- Chonburi 5-2 Thai Port
- Si Saket 2-4 Bangkok
- Uthai Thani 3-5 Pattaya Arena

With a goal difference of +2, Phuket now



Edson "Gugu" Silva (number 4) sealed the result with a brilliant strike from long range.

sits in 6th place of the 16-team league.

At the time this paper goes to press, Phuket will be playing their second league match of the season, at home against Si Saket – the former club of Gugu, and the new club of Phuket's Brazilian defender from last season, Marcos.

For results of that match, check out the Phuket Gazette sports section online.

Next up, Phuket United take on Thailand and AFC (Asia) Futsal Champions, Chonburi Blue Wave, on Sunday. To be played at Chonburi's 3,000-seat Blue Wave Stadium, the match will kick off at 6pm.

Yellow, Red triumph at BISP Sports Day



BISP Headmaster Neil Richards congratulates student athletes. Photo: Supplied

ON MONDAY February 10, Year 1 and 2 students from British International School Phuket (BISP), supported by their teachers and many parents, ventured out to the top sports field for their 2014 KS1 Sports Day. The morning was action packed, with all students participating in six events.

Students did their best to jump further, throw further and run faster across the events, with many improving their individual performances. Most importantly, students remembered to have fun and enjoyed pushing themselves to achieve their best. Students in the Yellow Cornflower Team were the winners for this category.

On the next day, Tuesday, February 11, Year 3-6 students from

BISP were presented with hot and challenging conditions for the 2014 KS2 Sports Day. After a general warm up led by Khun Sak, all students competed in a middle distance event to kick off the competition. Year 3 and 4 students completed 600m, while the year 5 and 6 students completed 800m.

All students in years 3 to 6 then participated in one throwing event, one jumping event and one sprint event. As well as the individual events, students enjoyed the exciting and at times nerve-racking team event, Wing Priaw. This event attracted large crowds at times and provided good entertainment for spectators. Students in the Red Color Team were this category's winners.



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EYES ON THE PRIZE

Phuket FC charged up for open season following perfect preseason

HAVING rebranded this season – complete with a new logo, kit, song, ambassador (*Mizsy Phuket*, below right) and dozens of new players – the Phuket FC “Ronins” have emerged from their 2014 pre-season campaign unbeaten,

and with the inaugural “Saksee Cup” in their trophy showcase.

In the last seven weeks, the Ronins have proved to be an unstoppable force, and certainly hope to remain so the rest of the year. Here’s to the start of a great new season!

...Match report and preseason wrap-up continued on page 50

Tales Dos Santos celebrates his goal in Phuket FC's final preseason match. Photos: Jeremie Schatz



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