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Dive for cover



Tourist Police confirmed that they were asked by Chalong Police to help round up the dive instructors at Chalong Pier over work permit issues. Photo: Supplied

Gov demands cops clarify extortion claims levied by island divers

By **Kritsada Mueanhawong**

GOVERNOR Maitri Inthasut has ordered the Chalong Police to explain in writing what transpired on March 10, when more than 20 foreign dive instructors were taken into custody at

Chalong Pier.

The foreigners were transported to Chalong Police Station in a police pick-up truck – and allegedly told to pay cash fines to officers or face legal action.

The allegations were levelled at the Chalong Police at a public meeting of the recently formed Association of Thailand for Underwater Sports (ATUS) last Saturday.

"No charges were pressed. Instead, we were told that police asked for money from the instructors," said ATUS Secretary Pongsawan Sathatham.

Mr Pongsawan, a lawyer and member of the Lo Yung Tambon Administration Organization

(OrBorTor) in Takua Thung District, Phang Nga, said that restrictive employment definitions listed in dive instructors' work permits presented officials with an opportunity to extort payments from them for breaking the law.

"What appears to be the problem is what is written in the dive instructors' work permits. The work is listed as 'diving instructor' and under this definition dive instructors are not allowed to do anything else, not even carry their own dive equipment," he said.

The allegations of corruption prompted Chalong Police Superintendent Krittapas...

Continued on Page 4

B600k reward for kidnapped Russian man

THE sister of missing Russian Alexey Slabinskiy has posted 600,000 worth of rewards leading to the arrests of two suspects named in the case, as well as the return of her brother.

Oleksandr Boychuk, 44, and Aleksandr Novichkov, 58, are both being hunted by Phuket police. Mr Boychuk is also wanted by Russian Police.

Full story on Page 3

Beach exercise group takes on chair tout

'CLEAN the Beach Boot Camp' will return to Nai Harn Beach after a violent confrontation with a chair tout about two weeks ago over where on the beach the group could do their workout before they started their fortnightly cleanup.

Full story on Page 5

Myanmar in ring to fight for workers

THE Labour attache for the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok visited Phuket last week to follow up on a complaint alleging that a group of laborers were not being paid and were being overcharged for their work permits.

Full story on Page 4

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This Week



Property

Go to your happy place with new airport condo project. **Page 13**



Business

Thailand back on top as world's number one rice exporter. **Page 17**



Events

Charity car rally hits Phuket's streets for a good cause. **Page 36**



Explore

Racha is perfect, not just for diving, but for cycling too. **Page 40**



In Focus

Two friends on the sailing journey of a lifetime. **Page 44**



Sport

Legendary Australian player Harry Kewell calls it a day. **Page 49**

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Sunday



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Monday



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Thursday



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Two foreigners nabbed without work permits

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

PHUKET Immigration on Monday arrested the manager of The Blue Garden Resort & Spa in Cherng Talay, where Russian woman Iana Strizheus was found bruised and battered after her alleged kidnapping ordeal.

Officers moved in and arrested French national Eric Raymond Seigneurin, 55, at about 9pm after plainclothes police posing as tourists observed him serving guests at the resort.

Mr Seigneurin presented his passport and the company registration documents for the resort to officers, but could not produce a work permit, explained Phuket Immigration Inspector Tianchai Chompoo.

"In addition to being charged with working without a work permit, Mr Seigneurin was charged with not filing a list of guests currently staying at the resort with Phuket Immigration, which in this case would have included Ms Strizheus," Lt Col Tianchai said.

Mr Seigneurin was taken to Cherng Talay Police Station to process the charges.

Earlier that night, at about 7pm, immigration officers arrested Ukrainian national Ivan Vivdenko, 26, in Phuket Town on an outstand-



Mr Vivdenko (top) and Mr Seigneurin (bottom) were arrested on Monday.



ing warrant for working without a work permit and working illegally as a tour guide.

"We received a tip-off from plainclothes police that Mr Vivdenko was seen walking on Phuket Road," Col Tianchai said.

"He was wanted on a warrant issued by the Phuket Provincial Court on March 5, so we took him to Chalong Police Station to be processed, as it was the Chalong Police who requested the warrant."

Pian dukes it out for Patong mayor



Mr Pian and Ms Chalermluck display their election ballot numbers.

FORMER Patong Mayor Pian Keesin, recently found guilty of vote fraud, is back on the battlefield for the chance to reclaim his position as leader of Phuket's premier party town.

Registration opened on March 19 for Patong Mayor potentials and municipality council members amid a crowd of supporters.

Mr Pian met his first opponent that day, former Phuket MP Chalermluck Keesab.

Mr Pian was suspended from his post in September last year. He was found guilty of vote fraud earlier this month, but the court issued him a "yellow card", allowing him to run for re-election.

Ms Chalermluck, joined by her Patong Fa Mai (New Sky Patong)

party supporters, drew the coveted number "1" slot on the ballot, while Mr Pian, backed by his Rak Patong (Love Patong) team, drew number "2".

Mr Pian vowed to resume his hard work as mayor if re-elected.

"Our problems cannot be solved in one day. I will continue to push hard to make Patong a better place," he said.

Ms Chalermluck voiced the issues she would attempt to conquer as mayor, and urged Patong to give her a chance.

"It now depends on the people of Patong to move the town toward a better future. I cannot do it alone, I need a hand from the people," she said.

- Kritsada Mueanhawong

Police begin nationwide track down

PATONG Police are preparing to send an alert to every police station in the country in the hopes of apprehending three prime suspects for the murder of Myanmar worker Wai Phyo Kyaw, 22, whose decapitated body was found dumped on Patong Hill on March 9.

"We have learned the names of three of the five men we are looking for," Patong Police Deputy Superintendent Khunnadet Nanongkhai told the *Gazette* on March 20.

"We will ask the court to issue the arrest warrants against the three men as soon as possible.

"We believe they are no longer in Phuket. Once we have the arrest warrants, we will notify every police station in the country to be on the lookout for them," Col Khunnadet said.

Meanwhile, the investigation into the identities of the two others seen with Mr Kyaw continues.

"We have descriptions of the men and will continue checking CCTV and questioning witnesses. Other police stations will check CCTV images in their areas in case they are hiding somewhere on the island," Col Khunnadet said.

- Irfan Jamdukor

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Reward for missing Russian

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

THE sister of missing Russian Alexey Slabinskiy is offering a half-million-baht reward for information leading to the arrest of the two men believed to be involved in his disappearance.

Tatiana Novoselova on Monday offered an additional 100,000 baht to whoever finds her brother.

Mr Slabinskiy disappeared with his girlfriend, Iana Strizheus, on March 7. The couple had called relatives in Russia that day to tell them that they had been kidnapped and needed money.

Ms Strizheus was later discovered injured in a room at the Blue Garden Resort & Spa (see page 2). Four days later, Mr Slabinskiy's phone was used in Chalong, but he was nowhere to be found.

Police have since obtained arrest warrants for Ukrainian Oleksandr Boychuk, 44, and Russian Aleksandr Novichkov, 58, on charges of gang detention, gang robbery and attempted sexual assault.

"Ms Novoselova said she will give 250,000 baht for the arrest of each suspect," said Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Peerayuth Karajedee.

"Our investigation team is searching for Mr Slabinskiy and the two suspects. I have asked Ms



Alexey Slabinskiy's sister, Tatiana Novoselova, and her husband Sergei Luklanov hold up the wanted fliers.

Novoselova to have confidence in us. We will get them," he assured.

Ms Novoselova is deeply concerned about her brother.

"He is a kind person with many friends who love him," she said, adding that part of the reward money was provided by friends.

"I am so sad that this has happened to him. It's awful to have no idea where he is, whether he is alive or dead," she said.

"I beg the police to please find my brother. I haven't given up

hope that he is still alive."

Ms Novoselova also asked the media to check facts thoroughly before publishing them.

"Some media reported that my brother was found. In fact, he was not," she said.

HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

"Mr Boychuk is wanted by the Russian Police," said Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Arun Kaewvatee.

"However, all we know is that he was wanted for a crime that involved inflicting personal injury."

Russian newspaper *Izvestia* this week reported that relatives of Mr Slabinskiy and Ms Strizheus claim that Mr Boychuk introduced himself to the couple as Andrei Smirnov when the three met in Phuket in 2012.

The relatives also said that Mr Boychuk once went by the name of Andrei Zabelin, as well as Andrew Zabelin.

Mr Zabelin is a former officer of the Russian Pacific Fleet, wanted in Russia since 2007 for jumping bail while on trial for shooting a man with a "non-lethal" firearm in Vladivostok in 2005.

The shooting was over a dispute with a neighbor smoking in the stairwell of the apartment building Mr Zabelin lived in.

While on trial for the shooting incident, Mr Zabelin was accused of selling 49 million rubles (44.7mn baht) of Navy property.

He absconded while on bail and was last reported as entering the Ukraine in March 2013.

Col Arun confirmed that Mr Boychuk's wife and two children also live in Phuket.

"However, they have nothing to do with the case. We will not drag them into it," he said.

Police believe both prime suspects Mr Boychuk and Mr Novichkov are still on the island.

"We are working on this case 24 hours a day. We expect to arrest them and to safely recover Mr Slabinskiy soon," Col Arun said.

— Additional reporting by Chutharat Plerin

Anyone with information about the suspects or Mr Slabinskiy are urged to call Police Inspectors Prawit Engchuan at 081-4158668 or Lt Col Padet Ngamlamom at 081-5588232.

Stepdad accused of impregnating 14-year-old

Man attacked with axe after alleged rape of stepdaughter

A WOMAN attacked her husband with a knife Thursday last week after being told that he had repeatedly raped her daughter, who was his stepdaughter.

The mother heard that her 14-year-old daughter was raped after the girl became pregnant and sought advice from relatives, said Maj Kitthipum Thinthalang of the Thalang Police.

"The mother slashed his head outside of a 7-Eleven in Baan Manik, Thalang," Maj Kitthipum said.

"The man was badly bleeding from a gash four inches long, and rushed to Thalang Hospital."

Police are continuing their



The woman sliced open her husband's head after hearing he had raped her daughter.

investigation into the alleged rape, as well as the attack, confirmed Maj Kittipum.

— Thawit Bilabdullar

Hydrogen sulfide kills four in sewer

FOUR workers died from hydrogen sulfide fumes in a Phuket Town sewer on Wednesday, and four others were hospitalized after attempting to rescue them with inadequate equipment.

The four who died had been tasked with maintenance of a sewer access point about 100 meters from Tesco Express on Srisena Road, and they succumbed to the fumes one by one while trying to rescue each other.

The first rescue worker on the scene, Jessada

Janpen, 25, held an oxygen mask to his face as he descended into the sewer to help the men.

The mask failed to protect him and he started to climb back out, but was overwhelmed and fell in, hitting his head on the side of the manhole. Other workers used fans to dispel the gas and pulled Mr Jessada out, but were unable to retrieve the other four.

Rescue officers used breathing apparatus to secure rope to the workers and a crane to pull them out of the drain.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

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The number of turtles nesting in Phuket has dropped dramatically. Photo: Isaac Stone Simonelli

Turtles turn out for safe release

SEA turtles made their way across the sands of Phuket in an event sponsored for the first time by the Nai Yang Beach Resort.

Thirty green sea turtles were released during the "Keep Calm & Love Turtle" festivities.

Money raised at the event went to the Turtle Hatchery Program of the Royal Thai Navy's Third Area Command.

"There were a lot of turtles on Nai Yang Beach 40 years ago," said Panyata Rasamee, director of Human Resources at Nai Yang Beach Resort. "But after the beach became popular with tourists, the numbers of turtles has dwindled."

— Woranut Pechdee

Fighting for laborers' rights

By Chutharat Plerin

THE Labour Attache to the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok landed in Phuket on March 21 to dig into allegations by Burmese construction workers of labor law violations.

"I came down to Phuket to follow up on a complaint on March 5 against Nantawan Co, Ltd, which employs about 200 workers from Myanmar," said Kyaw Kyaw Lwin.

Mr Lwin had just spoken with Yutthakarn Owasi, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Labor Protection and Welfare Office, to gain information about Myanmar nationals working in Phuket.

"At the time the complaint was filed, the employees alleged that the company had not paid them any wages for a month. They also said that they were only getting half of what they were owed for overtime, which should amount to 1.5 of their hourly rate," Mr Lwin

said in an exclusive interview with the *Gazette*.

"Additionally, they alleged that the company charged them 19,500 baht for work permits instead of the standard 10,000 baht fee."

Nantawan hires workers for its own construction jobs and contracts them out to partner companies in Phuket, as well as in other provinces, explained Mr Lwin.

The embassy contacted the company after the complaint was filed, said Mr Lwin, and

was told that the company would pay every worker in full by the end of April.

"After we received the complaint, we contacted representatives of Nantawan who told us that they had already paid 75 per cent of what they owed and the rest would be paid by the end of April," Mr Lwin said.

"On Friday, 28 of the workers left to go home to Myanmar. These employees went home with their wages fully paid."

'The employees alleged that the company had not paid them any wages for a month'


— Labour Attache to the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok Kyaw Kyaw Lwin



Mr Lwin came to Phuket from his office in Bangkok to follow up on a complaint filed with the Embassy by Myanmar workers.

Mr Lwin vowed to make sure that employers are following labor laws and that workers are treated fairly. However, he noted that any worker who violates Thai law should be penalized accordingly.


After his interview with the *Gazette*, Mr Lwin visited the Nantawan office to meet with company representatives and discuss the allegations regarding overcharging for work permits.



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Gov Maitri demands an explanation from the police. Photo: Saran Mitratat



Col Krittapas says his men have done nothing wrong. Photo: Supplied

Officers deny targeting, extorting dive industry

From Page 1

...Dazintharasorn on Monday to publicly deny that his officers were guilty of any wrongdoing.

"I assure you that Chalong Police have no part in such actions. We did not pick on the instructors and we did not ask them for money," he said.

Regardless, Governor Maitri on Tuesday ordered Col Krittapas to submit a formal written explanation of the events of March 10. Col Krittapas was given until Friday (March 28) to file his report.

Governor Maitri also ordered that a government task force be formed to resolve the work permit issue.

"I assigned Vice Governor Sommai Prijasilpa to call together all relevant officers, including representatives from the Phuket Employment Office, the Phuket office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the Phuket Provincial Police and the ATUS," Governor Maitri said.

"Sometimes, foreign dive in-

structors do work that is not within the remit of their work permit. We will clarify the parameters of what job activities foreign dive instructors may or may not do in order to solve the problem," Gov Maitri explained.

One dive instructor, on condition of anonymity, explained that another critical issue was that job descriptions in the work permit were written in Thai.

"This makes it hard for foreigners to understand. Also, there can be misunderstandings when the description is translated into Thai," he said.

Regardless, the dive instructor praised the move by Governor Maitri to resolve the work permit dilemma.

"We need the Employment Office, police and dive instructors to all have a common understanding of what work foreigners can and cannot do. Ideally, this would be a uniform definition in English so foreigners can clearly abide by the law," he said.

Beach boot camp goes to battle

By Mauri Grant

AN EXERCISE and beach-cleanup group saw an abrupt end to their activities on March 15 when lounge chair touts battled them for space on Nai Harn Beach.

"Clean the Beach Boot Camp" is a free event held every two weeks aimed at bringing together local expats and giving back to the community, explains Krix Luther, the health and fitness specialist who has been running the events since May 2013.

"As we were setting up near the lagoon end of the beach, a chair operator asked us to move our stuff away from his chairs [the fourth row of chairs], insisting that we were blocking the view," said Mr Luther.

A maximum of two rows of chairs and umbrellas is allowed on the beach, except during the high season, when three rows are allowed to accommodate the increase in tourists, according to Rawai Umbrella and Beach Chair Club Regulations.

"This was the only dry patch of sand we could find, as chairs were taking up the majority of the



Boot campers were only able to have a short warm-up before the workout came to a halt. Photo: Malte Henning

beach and it was high tide, so we refused to move." Mr Luther has received a multitude of complaints from beach touts in the past, ranging from the group placing equipment too near to their chairs and the group training in their "chair territory".

"Usually, after a few minutes,

they give up," Mr Luther said.

However, that was not the case on March 15.

When high tide subsided, the group was able to move away from the contested area and begin training, Mr Luther explained.

"We were able to secure a 10 by five meter area of space for

training, but before I could get through the warm-ups, the chairmen began slamming down their umbrellas in the middle of our spot; so close that I thought they were going to hurt one of the tourists in the group.

"We continued on for a few minutes, then they started to put

out the chairs and tables. We had no choice but to stop and ask them what they were doing," he said.

Some of the expats confronted the vendor, leading to a brief, violent argument that teetered on the edge of physical violence, Mr Luther explained. However, the situation did not boil over.

"We assembled, got our stuff and discussed what to do... the damage was done, morale was low and the atmosphere was lifeless. We had a very short, uncomfortable workout and cleaned up the beach for about 20 minutes before we left," Mr Luther said.

"I hold these events every two weeks as a way of giving back. Not only do they bring expats together as a type of meet and greet, but they also help our community. Everyone goes home feeling good, like they started the weekend off on a productive high."

The group will meet at Nai Harn again on Saturday.

"Pollution in the ocean is a massive, worldwide problem, and if the 'Clean the Beach Boot Camp' is helping on even a microscopic level, I will continue to do it," Mr Luther said.

New bypass road to combat congestion



Phuket Governor Maitri was joined by other island officials at the opening.

THE new road that will allow drivers travelling between Patong and Chalong to bypass the Darasamuth Intersection in front of Central Festival Phuket opened to the public on Tuesday.

The new route, which Governor Maitri Inthusut called Muang-Naka Road, is just one part of an overall project to improve traffic flow throughout the island.

The 1.25-kilometer-long road will run from Wichit Songkram Road near the Soi Bang Yai turn-off to Big C to about 300 meters south of the Darasamuth Intersection off Chao Fa West Road near Soi Na Sua, said Governor Maitri.

"It is important to provide alternative routes for drivers and improve traffic flow on the island," Governor Maitri said.

— Woranut Pechdee



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Lifeguards save woman from waves at Nai Harn

HOURS after finishing a first aid course as part of a "Safer Phuket" initiative, lifeguards rescued a Russian woman from the shallow surf of Phuket's popular Nai Harn Beach.

"The woman was standing in waist-high water when a large wave crashed into her. She seemed to be in distress, so we immediately ran out to rescue her," explained Nai Harn chief lifeguard Julia Nontree.

"It looked like she had broken her leg, so we set it in a splint and got her on a backboard."

Two of the woman's friends told lifeguards that they would take her to Phuket International Hospital for treatment, Mr Julia told the *Gazette*.

The rescue came on the final day of first aid training for Nai Harn lifeguards led by Bangkok Hospital Phuket staff. The training is a "Safer Phuket" initiative designed to allow Phuket lifeguards to legally operate Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) in Thailand.

"Safer Phuket" focuses on several key areas – enhanced lifeguard capabilities; standardizing international training methods; consistent beach management regulations; and the establishment of a world class search and rescue service.

– *Chutharat Plerin*

The Gazette and PGTV serve as media partners and sponsors of "Safer Phuket" and will continue to report on all activities, events and progress in the island's drive toward increased water safety throughout the months ahead.



Lifeguards rescued a woman who was struggling in the water. Photo: Phuket Lifeguards Association

Landslide concerns raised

Officials brainstorm solutions to Big Buddha construction issues

By Saran Mittrarat

LANDSLIDE risks and water management concerns caused by the construction of Phuket's Big Buddha were on the table March 19 as officials met for the first time since work at the site slammed to a halt last month.

Construction at the popular tourist attraction was put on hold after villagers filed a complaint and prompted an inspection of the site that revealed several violations and potential landslide hazards.

"The top priority is to prevent landslides before the rainy season begins," said Vice Governor Somkiet Sangkaosuttirak. "All relevant officers should brainstorm preventive strategies and present them at a meeting next month."

V/Gov Somkiet also asked that the early-detection system already installed in Karon, to warn residents in the event of a landslide down Nakkered Hill, be checked to ensure it is in working order

before the rainy season starts.

The stability of the mammoth statue itself was also an issue, said Karon Subdistrict Chief (Kamnan) Winai Chidchiew.

"A road has been built around Big Buddha and created a slope that could precipitate landslides and cause the Big Buddha to slide down the hill," he said.

The site has also caused concerns about water management,

including dirty water runoff from construction and water shortages, he added.

"About 300 meters away from Big Buddha, a wedge has been dug out of a hillside that slopes down to a natural reservoir supplying villages in Karon. The dug-out area will interrupt the flow of

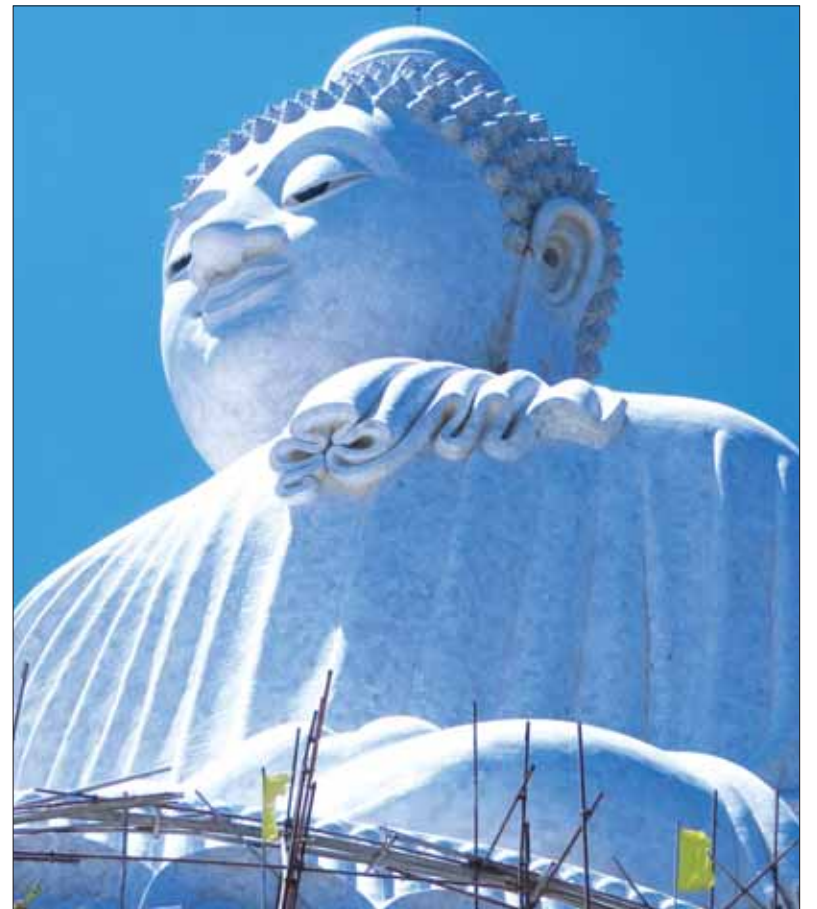
water down to the reservoir, which could cause water shortages," the vice governor said.

"Moreover, the construction is never-ending. More and more projects are started without permission from the local municipality. When will it be



'I would like to apologize for the inconveniences caused...'

– **Suporn Vanitchakul, head of Big Buddha construction**



Construction at the Big Buddha site is affecting local villagers.

finished?"

Suporn Vanitchakul, president of the Phraphuttha Mingmongkol Sattha 45 Foundation and head of Big Buddha construction, apologized.

"I would like to apologize for the inconveniences caused by the

construction. My actions are well-intentioned," he said.

"I did not mean to harm anyone in the process and have agreed to compensate those affected. I want to help officials resolve the problems caused by Big Buddha construction."

Protected hillside slashed and burned to make room for rubber plantation

FOUR rai of forest on a hillside in Kamala was obliterated last Tuesday night to make room for a rubber plantation.

"The area has been ruined – all the trees were cut down and burned," said Phuket Natural Resources and Environment Office Chief Kasem Sukwaree. "Terracing had already been put up in preparation for the plantation."

A pair of men was seen cutting grass during the clearing process by a night patrol consisting of Royal Forest Department – Phuket officers, Kathu District officers and volunteers. When the officers presented themselves, the men managed to flee the scene.

"We spent hours searching for them, but couldn't track them



Governor Maitri Inthusut points out over the destruction on the protected hillside. Photo: PR Department

down," said Chief Kasem.

Last Wednesday, Phuket Governor Maitri Inthusut led an investigative team to the site.

"This is part of a very serious

issue. There are many people encroaching on preserved forests on steep hillsides. We have to stop them and protect this important natural resource for the island,"

Governor Maitri said.

"We must continue our investigation and patrol the area to ensure that we catch whoever is behind this."

– *Irfarn Jamdukor*

Squatters make plea for water, electricity

ABOUT 200 villagers who live in homes illegally established in a mangrove forest last Thursday asked the Chalong mayor to supply them with electricity and water.

"We have been living there since 1992," said Somporn Nookhong, the head of the Klong Mudong Community. We started with 10 families and now there are over 200."

Their illicit power supply is not enough for the whole community and children are forced to do their

homework by candlelight, he said, adding that the power network was unsafe.

Water supply to the community was also poor, Mr Somporn told Chalong Mayor Samran Jindapol.

Mayor Samran acknowledged the complaints and said he would discuss them with officials.

"We will try our best, but we cannot guarantee they will have water and electricity supplied 24/7 because the community is in a mangrove forest," Mayor Samran stated.

– *Chutharat Plerin*

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Karon wastewater runs free across tourist beach

By Saran Mitrarat

THE stinky, black water that blighted Karon Beach last month is the product of a faulty wastewater treatment system, Karon Village Chief (Kamnan) Winai Chidchiew revealed on March 19.

Canals blocked by huge berms of soil and broken water pumps are the chief culprits, as they prevent water from being pumped from canals to treatment plants and cause more wastewater than normal to reach the last pumping station before the beach, Kamnan Winai explained.

"The Wiset Road Pump Station can't handle all the water, and it overflows into the Nong Han Canal, producing the black sediment that flowed last month onto the beach," he said.

Wastewater that is not piped directly to treatment plants flows through a system of canals that lead to the sea. In theory, as the water flows by a series of water pumps within the canals, it is pumped up and sent to water treatment plants.



Untreated wastewater flows from Nong Han Canal across the beach.

"However, some of the pumps are broken," Kamnan Winai said, noting that in some cases residents have paid to have the water pumped in order to dissipate the rancid smell.

In other areas, large deposits of

soil and sediment in the canal are blocking the flow of water.

"The deposits block water from reaching the pumps, and furthermore, when it's high tide, the sea is blocked from entering the ca-

nal to mix with the water and dilute it," he said.

In an effort to combat the black water debacle, officials signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to temporarily relinquish control of wastewater management in the area to the Wastewater Management Authority of Thailand (WMA).

"Municipality officers signed the MoU on March 13. It allows the WMA to take charge," Director of Regional Environmental Office 15 Pornsri Suthanaruk said.

"As an initial short-term solution, WMA officers led by Deputy Director Cheera Wongburana will run a study and determine solutions to the wastewater problems in the area, including ways to control the release of dirty water directly into the public canal.

"After they finish their study, they will begin to expand the Karon wastewater-management system using the budget provided by the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment office in Bangkok," explained Dr Pornsri.



Gov Maitri at the advance polling stations on Sunday. Photo: Phuket PR

Call for better voter turnout after advance polling results

THE dismal turnout at the Phuket polls on March 23 for the advance voting in the national Senate election prompted the Phuket Governor to call on the public to turn out in force at the main polls.

Although about 90 per cent of voters registered in Phuket who said they would advance vote did so, only about 2.19 per cent of those registered in other provinces who had registered for advance voting turned up at the polls.

31,174 people from other provinces registered on March 11-14 to cast their votes in the advance polling, said PEC Director Kittipong Thiengkunakrit.

However, only 683 turned up to vote, Mr Kittipong said.

Mr Kittipong did not speculate why so many people would actively register that they would cast their ballots in the advance voting, but then not turn up to vote.

In response, Phuket Governor Maitri Inthusut called on the public to uphold their civic duty and cast their ballots at the main polls this Sunday.

Mr Kittipong pointed out that any voters who were unable to cast their ballots in the advance polling could still do so this Sunday.

- Chutharat Plerin

Gov warns against showing 'too much' skin during Songkran

GOVERNOR Maitri Inthusut issued a warning on Monday about showing too much skin during the Thai New Year Songkran Festival next month.

"Tourists need to be aware of how they dress and of their surroundings when participating in the Songkran Festival. Please do not just wear a bikini, as it might make you a target for sexual harassment," said Governor Maitri. "We want everyone to enjoy a safe and fun Songkran."

Additionally, Governor Maitri vowed to crack down on driving violations in an effort

to boost safety during the new year festivities.

"The Seven Days of Danger safety campaign will run from April 11 to 17. Last year, 27 injuries were reported, but no deaths. This year, we will work even harder to prevent injuries from happening," Gov Maitri said.

There will be 24 checkpoints throughout the island to monitor motorbike safety, including speeding and drunk driving.

"In Patong, we will be especially strict and check that everyone is wearing a helmet and has a driver's license," he said.

- Saran Mitrarat



Those taking part in the wet holiday are asked to wear more than a bikini. Photo: Gazette file



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AROUND THE nation



Farid Essebar has already served a prison sentence. Photo: The Nation

DSI officers net Russian hacker

RUSSIAN national Farid Essebar, who allegedly hacked and duplicated bank website pages to dupe 1,000 people out of about 128 billion baht, has been arrested in Thailand, a senior official at the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) announced on March 18.

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrested the 27-year-old suspect and an accomplice nine years ago for unleashing the "Zotob" computer worm to hack information. He served one year in prison.

Col Songsak Raksaksakul, director of the DSI Bureau of Foreign Affairs and Transnational Crime, said that after a request by Swiss police, his agency joined forces with the Immigration Police and the Office of the Attorney-General. They launched an investigation into some 10 Russian and Moroccan nationals on suspicion of hacking activities.

The Thai authorities' probe found that Mr Essebar and two other gang members had lain low in Thailand for three to four years. They allegedly hacked into computer systems to set up phoney bank front pages and used the victims' personal information on the internet banking system to reserve accommodation and flights.

The DSI followed Mr Essebar for two years before the Criminal Court approved his arrest warrant.

Mr Essebar is to be extradited to Switzerland, where he is wanted for computer crime charges, within 90 days of his arrest.

Pheu Thai Party pushes for rapid re-election

THE caretaker government is willing to work with the Election Commission (EC) in setting an appropriate date for a new general election, a Cabinet member said on Tuesday.

Varathep Rattanakorn, caretaker minister for the Prime Minister's Office, said a new general election should be held as soon as possible and that the government would request a royal decree setting the election date, if requested by the EC.

The Constitution Court last week nullified

the February 2 general election, reasoning that the balloting was not held on a single day, as stipulated by the Constitution, *The Nation* reported.

The February 2 election was held nationwide except in 28 constituencies in the South, where disruptions prevented candidates from applying or ballots were blocked from being distributed.

It is increasingly uncertain whether caretaker Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra will

last until the new election, due to the mounting legal challenges, reported Reuters.

People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) chief Suthep Thaugsuban said he would urge supporters to join a "massive" rally in Bangkok on Saturday to press for political reforms before a new vote takes place.

"Our rally will be the biggest signal to Yingluck Shinawatra and the Thaksin regime that the Thai public does not want elections before reforms," Mr Suthep said in a speech on March 23.

Thai trafficking victims believed to be Uighurs

By Ben Blanchard

CHINA'S foreign ministry said on Monday that it was too soon to say if a group of about 200 people rescued by police from a human smuggling camp in southern Thailand were Uighurs from China's restive far western region of Xinjiang.

Thai police sources told Reuters that the people were believed to be Uighurs, a Muslim people who speak a Turkic language, many of whom chafe at Chinese restrictions on their culture and religion.

"China and Thailand have unimpeded channels on law and order and security cooperation," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told a daily news briefing.

"As of now the identity checks on the relevant people are still being carried out and it's not reasonable to reach conclusions at present, (as this) lacks a factual basis."

The US State Department said last week that they welcomed reports of the rescue of the Uighurs.

Mr Hong implied that such comments were unwarranted.

"We've noticed that some countries have made improper comments while the facts are unclear, which is highly irresponsible," he said, without elaborating.

The latest trafficking victims brings the total number of people freed from human traffickers in Thailand to well over 800 since Reuters exposed the whereabouts



China says it is too early to say if the 200 people rescued from the smuggling camp are Uighurs. Photo: Reuters

of the illegal camps in a December 5 investigation.

The raid is further evidence that human smugglers in southern Thailand – already a notorious trafficking hub for Rohingya boat people from Myanmar – are exploiting well-oiled networks to transport other nationalities in large numbers, despite an ongoing enforcement campaign by Thai police.

Unrest in China's Xinjiang has killed more than 100 people in the past year, prompting a crackdown by Chinese authorities.

In 2009, 20 Uighurs were deported from Cambodia to China despite the objections of the United Nations and human rights groups, who said they faced lengthy jail terms upon their return.

New York-based Human Rights

Watch also criticized Malaysia for deporting six Uighurs to China last December.

At least 100 Uighur men, women and children are being held at an immigration detention center in Bangkok, part of a small but growing number arrested for illegally entering Thailand, most likely overland through Laos from southwest China.

– Reuters

Temples lead fight to save last Siamese rosewood reserve

THE last reserve of Siamese rosewood forest in the northeastern province of Ubon Ratchathani is under threat from illegal logging gangs.

As a result, monks and villagers in the Khemmarat district have teamed up to protect their 100-year-old rosewood forest.

Over 300 Siamese rosewood trees are located at the Wat Sa Bua in Ubon Ratchathani.

Abbot Banya Wattatako said he has instructed the monks to close the temple doors during the night to prevent illegal logging gangs from entering the temple and cutting down the trees.

"The Siamese rosewood tree is very important for people in the Northeast, as they believe that the spiritual power in these trees can support their lives," Abbot Banya said.

Lee Noikaew, village headman of Nongphue, said that he has instructed his village to save the trees as they are the last big Siamese rosewood forest in the northeastern region.

"We have been offered 500,000 baht by merchants to buy a single Siamese rosewood tree, but we did not sell it, because these trees should continue to belong to the temple and village," he said.

Wat Sa Bua is not the only one threat-

ened by the illegal logging gangs. Those at Wat Nong Kan in Yasothorn's Kham Khuan Kaeo district were also approached. They were offered 5 million baht for Siamese rosewood at the temple, according to Royal Forest Department director-general Boonchob Suthamanuswong.

Most illegally cut rosewood trees are smuggled to China via Laos and Vietnam.

Between 2008 and 2014, over 27,000 pieces of Siamese rosewood have been confiscated by police and forest officials in Ubon Ratchathani and some 395 offenders arrested, reported *The Nation*.

At present, more than 363,000 pieces of



Lee Noikaew, village headman of Nongphue, inspects a tree. Photo: The Nation

Siamese rosewood – worth 40 billion baht – have been confiscated nationwide. Eleven forest officials and police have been killed during operations to arrest illegal logging gangs.

Grief boils over

Chinese families clash with police, slam Malaysia over lost plane

AROUND THE region

By Megha Rajagopala
and Al-Zaquan Amer Hamzah

DOZENS of angry relatives of passengers on the lost Malaysian jetliner MH370 clashed with police in Beijing on Tuesday, accusing the Malaysian officials of "delays and deception" a day after it confirmed the plane crashed in remote seas off Australia.

About 20 to 30 protesters threw water bottles at the Malaysian embassy and tried to storm the building, demanding to meet the ambassador, witnesses said. Earlier, the relatives, many with tear-stained faces, had linked arms and chanted, "Malaysian government has cheated us" and "Malaysia, return our relatives" as



A relative of a passenger aboard the missing Malaysia Airlines MH370 wails in grief at the Lido hotel in Beijing. Photo: Reuters

they marched peacefully and held banners.

The relatives' grief and anger was unleashed on Monday night after Malaysian Prime Minister

Najib Razak announced that Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, which vanished more than two weeks ago while flying to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur, had crashed

in the southern Indian Ocean.

Malaysia's confused initial response to the Boeing 777's disappearance and a perception of poor communications has enraged many relatives of the more than 150 Chinese passengers and strained ties between Beijing and Kuala Lumpur.

After Najib's announcement, Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Xie Hangsheng demanded Malaysia hand over all relevant satellite analysis showing how Malaysia had reached its conclusion about the fate of the jet.

In a separate statement, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said China would ask Malaysia to provide more detailed and accurate information on the plane, according to a government microblog account.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will send a special envoy to Kuala Lumpur to consult with the Malaysian government, state news agency Xinhua said on Tuesday.

— Reuters

In brief...

Myanmar blasted for Buddhist only marriage proposal

HUMAN Rights Watch has publicly lambasted a proposed new law in Myanmar that would require individuals holding other religious beliefs to convert to Buddhism before marrying a Buddhist, and to obtain written parental consent if the bride is Buddhist.

The proposed law also sets out a 10-year prison sentence and confiscation of properties of any non-Buddhist who seeks to marry a Buddhist in violation of the law.

— *Phuket Gazette*

British pedophile jailed in Cambodia

CONVICTED pedophile Richard Fruin, 36, has been jailed for two years for sexually abusing three brothers in Cambodia.

He was arrested in a raid at a guesthouse in Phnom Penh, where he was found with a partially-dressed 8-year-old boy.

The boy's brothers, aged 10 and 11, testified that they were also abused.

— BBC

Jokowi security boost ahead of national polls

SECURITY measures around Jakarta Governor Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle's (PDI-P) presidential candidate, have been ramped up since his nomination for president in the upcoming Indonesian national election.

Despite Mr Jokowi's reluctance to detail the reasons behind the tightened security, a source within the party acknowledged that the steps had been taken to prevent possible attacks from his political rivals.

Having topped almost all recent opinion polls, Mr Jokowi is considered to be the candidate to beat in the upcoming presidential election, slated for July 9.

The security boost also comes barely two weeks before Indonesia goes to the polls for its national legislative election on April 9.

To prevent possible attacks against him, the Jakarta administration has stopped publishing his daily schedule on the city's official portal, beritajakarta.com.

Previously, during his trademark impromptu visits, Mr Jokowi was normally accompanied by one car with security detail. Now, however, at least two cars with a minimum of five security personnel guard his vehicle.

Fully armed police officers assigned to protect Mr Jokowi have been seen at several events, including during visits on the campaign trail.

"I am on the receiving end. The Jakarta Police and National Police decided to increase the number of



Jakarta Governor and Indonesian presidential candidate Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo. Photo: Jakarta Post

security personnel. As for the reason, ask them," Mr Jokowi said recently.

An official with the Jakarta administration's gubernatorial affairs and protocol division, who asked to remain anonymous, said no standard security measures were in place for regional leaders.

"It really depends on individual needs and requirements," he said.

Separately, National Police spokesman Insp Gen Ronny Sompie played down speculation that the police had found leads indicating a potential attack against Mr Jokowi, saying "for now, we have received no such reports from the Jakarta Police."

"However, we will act accordingly if we do receive such a report. Not just for Jokowi, but for any governor, regent or mayor."

Gen Ronny also declined to give any details about standard security measures for regional leaders, saying the informations was "sensitive".




— *Jakarta Post*




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In brief...

Over 100 people found in human smuggling raid

POLICE found more than 100 people from Central America and Mexico being held in a run-down Texas residence during a raid on March 19 into a suspected human smuggling operation.

The group was being held in a 204 square meter building with only one bathroom, said United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesman Greg Palmore.

Chinese detained 1,530 spammers

CHINESE authorities said on Tuesday they have detained 1,530 people in a crackdown on the use of fake telecommunication base stations to send spam text messages to mobile telephones, a persistent problem in the world's largest cellphone market.

The spam messages range from phishing attempts to access bank accounts and dubious real estate offers to pornography, which is illegal in China.

US in hot pursuit of warlord Kony

THE Obama administration is sending about 150 Special Operations troops and military aircraft to Uganda to help search for warlord and head of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) Joseph Kony, the Pentagon said last Sunday.

The LRA is known for using extreme violence, including chopping off limbs as a form of punishment, as well as raping young girls and abducting them for use as sex slaves.

Turkish ban on Twitter backfires

PRIME Minister Tayyip Erdogan banned Twitter last week, claiming it was used as part of a plot to portray his government as corrupt. In response, Turks in growing numbers are exploring ever more innovative ways to beat his ban in what has become a cyber-battle of wits.

529 Muslim Brotherhood members sentenced to death

AN EGYPTIAN court sentenced 529 members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood to death on Monday, a defence lawyer said, in a sharp escalation of a crackdown on the movement.

The ruling was the biggest mass death sentence handed out in Egypt's modern history, lawyers said.

Turmoil has deepened since the army overthrew Egypt's first freely elected president, Mohamed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood,

in July. Security forces have killed hundreds of Brotherhood members in the streets and arrested thousands.

The charges against the group, on trial in Minya since last Saturday, include violence, inciting murder, storming a police station, attacking persons and damaging public and private property.

Only 123 of the defendants were present. The rest had either been released, were out on bail or on the run.

— Reuters



Mursi and Muslim Brotherhood supporters protest in Cairo on February 14. Photo: Reuters

Russians snatch symbol of Ukrainian resistance

By Aleksandar Vasovic

RUSSIAN troops used stun grenades to force their way into a Ukrainian marine base in Crimea early on Monday, overrunning one of the last symbols of resistance left after Moscow wrestled the peninsula away from Kiev, Ukrainian officials said.

The Russians fired weapons as they charged into the compound in the port city of Feodosia, and Ukrainian officers were taken away for questioning, a soldier inside and a Ukrainian military official told Reuters.

Ukrainian flags were taken down inside the base two days after Russian forces used similar tactics to take Ukraine's Belbek airbase in Crimea.

Russia's seizure of Crimea after the ousting of Ukraine's pro-Russian president by mass protests in Kiev has triggered the worst East-West crisis since the Cold War.

The United States and the European Union have targeted some of Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest longtime political and business allies with personal sanctions.

Russian forces had already captured part of the Feodosia base, used by the 1st Separate Marine Battalion, Ukraine's top military unit, earlier this month.

But Ukrainians had previously appeared to be in control of the armory, the barracks and other facilities in the compound.



Armed men, believed to be Russian servicemen, in front of a Ukrainian marine base in Feodosia. Photo: Reuters

AROUND THE world

Ukrainian army officer, First Lieutenant Anatoly Mozgovoy, told Reuters by phone from inside the compound on Monday that the Russians had fired shots and the Ukrainian soldiers were unarmed. Asked if the base had

been taken over, he said, "Yes".

"The invading troops were using stun grenades and also firing automatic weapons. The interior of the compound is full of Russian troops," said Vladislav Seleznyov, a Ukrainian military spokesman in Crimea.

Mr Seleznyov said Russian forces were taking away all Ukrainian officers from the base to another location in the city for questioning.

Russian troops used armored vehicles, automatic gunfire and

stun grenades to take the Ukrainian Belbek airbase last Saturday. Ukrainian forces also abandoned a naval base after attacks by pro-Russian protesters, and had to surrender two flagship vessels to Russian forces over the recent days.

Moscow formally annexed Crimea on March 21, five days after the region overwhelmingly voted in a referendum to join Russia, in a move not recognized by Kiev and the West.

— Reuters

Turkey shoots down Syrian plane, says airspace invaded

TURKISH armed forces shot down a Syrian plane last Sunday that Ankara said had crossed into its air space in an area where Syrian rebels have been battling President Bashar al-Assad's forces for control of a border crossing.

"A Syrian plane violated our airspace," Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan told an election rally in



Mr Erdogan. Photo: Reuters

northwest Turkey. "Our F-16s took off and hit this plane. Why? Because if you violate my airspace, our slap after this will be hard."

Syria condemned what it called a "blatant aggression" and

said the jet was pursuing rebel fighters inside Syria. It said the pilot had ejected before the plane crashed.

— Reuters



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There are five different floor plans available, some with balcony, others without, but all units come furnished and ready to move in to. The project will come with all the features more or less standard for condo projects these days, including a swimming pool and jacuzzi, CCTV and 24 hour security, keycard access and WiFi, laundry, restaurant, fitness center and a public lobby space. There will also be parking spaces to accommodate 80 per cent of the units in the project.

— *Phuket Gazette*

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Hilton Hua Hin offered for sale

ONE of Thailand's most iconic beachfront hotels, Hilton Hua Hin, is being offered for sale. JLL's Hotels and Hospitality Group, which has been appointed as the exclusive brokering agent, expects the hotel to receive strong interest from both Thai and international investors.

Mike Batchelor, Managing Director of JLL Hotels and Hospitality Group, said "Hua Hin

has emerged as one of Thailand's dynamic resort markets over the past ten years in terms of demand and supply. Within only a two-hour drive from Bangkok, it is a popular weekend destination for Bangkokians. Hua Hin also continues to be a favored holiday destination for Europeans, and is gaining more popularity among international tourists. This is reflected by the strong trading performance of the hotel with av-

erage occupancy over 70% year round.

"Hotels of this caliber are rarely offered to the market especially given that it is a strongly trading asset with solid growth prospects due to its exceptional location, spectacular views and a globally recognized brand," said Mr Batchelor.

Hilton Hua Hin is situated on approximately 15 rai of freehold beachfront land, right in the heart

of downtown Hua Hin. The hotel features 298 rooms with sizes ranging from 42 square meters for a standard room to 450 sqm for the Chakri Suite. Every room offers unobstructed sea views. The hotel also features a complete range of facilities, including one of the largest ballrooms in Hua Hin as well as a number of highly popular restaurants such as the Hua Hin Brewing Company, and a rooftop restaurant offering panoramic views of the

Gulf of Thailand.

Another unique feature is the existing structure comprising a high rise tower with over 51,000sqm of gross floor area which is irreplaceable today as new high rise developments are no longer allowed to be built in such proximity to the beach under current zoning regulations.

Hilton Hua Hin is offered for sale through an international expressions-of-interest campaign, having launched this week with already a number of both domestic and international enquiries being made. – JLL

Airline Passenger IQ Test



Last Call

By Bill Barnett

STANDING in what, for just a moment, could have been termed a line which suddenly shifted into a frenzied rugby scrum, I take a moment to ponder the joys of travel on budget airlines (not).

Yes, today everyone can now afford to fly, well, except for the really poor people, but my thought is, should they be allowed to? What I am essentially proposing is a qualification system, or question and answer sheet, that could weed out a good portion of those really annoying folks who tend to flock to low-cost airline carriers like brain damaged simpleton sheep.

In fact, I've even come up with a short fire "what is/are?" questionnaire, which I've taken the liberty of providing an answer key to as well, that goes something like this:

Numbers – a system for assigning seats to passengers, which mean nothing to most of those who fly budget airlines as either they are unable to read or else have single digit IQ's which have rendered them illiterate.

Fifty Years – The collective age of the four flight attendants

on your airplane today who you entrust with your life and safety. This is also the same period of time it takes you to check in for a budget airline flight.

Leg Room Dimensions – Less than zero, be prepared to get up close and personal with your knees, as they are jammed into your face for the next two hours.

Turn Left – this traditionally has meant boarding the plane and finding a business class seat. Now it will either lead you directly into the loo and finding a garbage bag of trash stashed into the small space, or meeting Boris your pilot from Slovakia, or was that Slovenia?

Backpacks – large mummy like objects meant to thrust into other passengers' faces as they run the gauntlet, or else do the inevitable 180-degree turn, hence, coining the term "slap shot".

Deodorant – seemingly an unfamiliar personal hygiene item for over half your fellow passengers, which leaves you gasping for air as they aimlessly wander down the plane's aisles.

Elbows – no there is not an octopus seated on either side of you, but the commencement of the inflight entertainment game known as "elbow wars."

Complaints – an alien term to



Beware of the inflight entertainment game known as 'elbow wars'. Photo: Tabercil

budget carriers who do not list voice numbers to call, nor respond to email messages or offer any form of human contact whenever problems arise. There is a reason the flight is so cheap, as customer service has been fully eliminated

as an unnecessary cost element

Change of Travel Plans – you must be joking, the only option is to buy another ticket or else face a very long walk home, or swim.

Encounters of the Third Kind – why does the seat pocket in front of you contain a banana peel wrapped in a boarding pass from three weeks ago? Because the airline expects your teenage cabin crew to clean up passenger trash, and they aren't really into that part of the job.

Line – a mythical phenomenon not dissimilar to Atlantis or the Holy Grail. You seldom see these at budget airlines. When they call your flight, get ready to rumble.

In Flight Entertainment – a time consuming game involving systematically kneeling the passenger in front of you, who reclined their seat straight into your nose.

Delayed Flight – expect lots of these, given the Rain Man aptitude of those on your flight, it remains a miracle they can even find the airport, much less the plane.

Food – if anyone can help explain why they offer three types of stew, please email me. Other-

wise, anything else you might possibly want to buy is out of stock or else that blank stare and the verbal command, "no have." This is another form of inflight entertainment, and after five tries you need to return to kneeling the passenger in front of you.

Bus – expect to ride this to your plane as most budget carriers can't afford the cost of an airbridge. Actually, most budget passengers find this a familiar mode of transportation along with riding donkeys, water buffalo and the odd goat or two.

Jackpot – this is a term the airline applies to every passenger who they catch with even a fraction of a kilo overweight and extract any remaining money you might have. If they could take your blood, they would (I'm sorry to have listed this, as it might give them an idea).

So that's it, a pretty damned good start to weed out the riff-raff which we all find so annoying. Indeed, in the wide world of "Now Everyone Can Fly", from my point of view, a large percentage of these folks need to take a "staycation" instead.

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New GM takes the helm at JW Marriot

By Maciek Klimowicz

IF I had to guess what Oriol Montal's favorite tune is, I'd go for "Satisfaction" by the Stones as the new General Manager of JW Marriott Phuket believes that a hotelier can never be ultimately satisfied with a product. "Managing a hotel is about constant improvement," he says.

The *Phuket Gazette* had a chance to talk to the new addition to Phuket's Managers club about the challenges laying ahead, the perks of working in Asia and the reasons why his wife started screaming when she learned they were moving to Phuket.

Why did you come to Asia in the first place and why did you decide to stay?

Oriol Montal: In the Western world, Europe and the US, the economy and high costs make it really hard for a true hotelier to deliver high quality service, and this is what I like – to work with people, to create and deliver experiences to the customers. I think for that, this is the part of the world to be in – I also think that in the west, the costs put a lot of limitations on what you can offer, while Asia is still the place where the customer is king and you can really focus on delivering the best service.

In these two weeks here did you have time to evaluate the Marriott and get an idea of what needs to be improved?

I think it's still too early. I believe you need about three to four weeks to understand the team and the needs before making any deci-



JW Marriot GM Oriol Montal.

sions. Sometimes, there are managers who arrive the first day and act like they know everything but I think it takes more time.

There are a lot of high end resorts in Phuket. How can you make the Marriott stand out from the crowd?

Marriott has a very clear, strong motto – people first, and I'm a true believer of that. I have been working with the Marriott for 16 years and I know the brand is committed to making the employees happy and engaged with the brand and the hotel, and this will be one of my first priorities. I want to make sure that the employees will be even more happy working here than they were so far, because I believe that if I can make his happen, all other challenges will be easier.

Do you think there will be a moment when you will be able to say "I succeeded"?

In my opinion, in a hotel, you can never say, 'I fixed everything and I can move on'. A hotel is about

constant improvement, but what I would like to achieve here is to make sure that the employees of the hotel feel proud of having myself as the GM, and think that I was somebody they could trust and who was supporting them in improving the hotel. Secondly, we have a very clear indicator of guest satisfaction, and I want to make sure there has been significant improvement of these indicators. Also, here in Phuket, the Marriott hotel has been very close to the local community and environment, and when I'll be leaving this place in a couple of years, I'd like the people to be able to say that I was able to have a positive impact on that.

When you first learned that you had an option to move to Phuket, did it take a long time to make up your mind?

When you're married, you need to make decisions that will also please your spouse. You need to find a balance between the personal and professional benefits of a move – and on the personal side, I still remember my wife screaming 'Hooray! We're going to Phuket!'. I have to say that we loved living in Japan, but in our present situation with a new born baby, it was like a dream come true to be able to move here. On the other, professional side, after three years of working in Japan in a fantastic hotel, I had to decide what would make me happy at work. When I came here, I was immediately convinced that this was the place to move to. In my opinion this hotel is a great product with great potential.

Karon 18th best beach in Asia despite wastewater problems



Photo: Saran Mitarat

Karon beach has recently been plagued by wastewater problems.

DESPITE all the recent reports of waste water, including human waste, flowing across it, Karon Beach was recently named as one of the 25 best beaches in Asia by TripAdvisor. Three other Phuket beaches were among the top 25 in the 2014 TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards: Nai Harn, Kata Noi and Freedom. Nai Harn was in fifth place, Kata Noi in 14th, Freedom Beach in 16th and Karon in 18th.

With an additional four beaches in the south of Thailand also voted onto the awards list, the Land of Smiles' beaches account for nearly a third of peoples' choice votes for the best in Asia. In their second year, the awards are "determined based on the quality and quantity of traveller reviews and ratings for beaches on TripAdvisor gathered over a 12-month period," the website states.

Black water flowed across Karon Beach on February 24, and though Phuket Governor Maitri Inthasut declared the water clean on a visit the next day, Karon Village Chief (Kamnan) Winai Chidchiew revealed a month later that the water was run-off from a faulty wastewater treatment

system. Notwithstanding the black water scare, the new director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Anoma Wongyai said, "It's easy to promote Phuket's beaches because of their natural beauty."

"Because we have many beautiful beaches here, including those on nearby islands, tourists enjoy coming for their longer holidays," Ms Anoma explained.

Phuket has long been recognized as one of the world's top beach holiday destinations and continues to grow in popularity. "Phuket saw an increase in the number of tourists in 2013 over previous years, with more than 11 million people visiting the island. Chinese, Australians, Russians, Malaysians and Germans are now the top five represented guests on the island," she added.

"TAT Phuket is ready to promote and develop tourist attractions in Phuket in order to ensure more returning guests," said Ms Anoma.

Railay, Phra Nang, Koh Lanta and Koh Phangan are other Thailand beach destinations that have been voted among the best in Asia.

– *Phuket Gazette*

UK budget brings massive pension reform

Retirement Years

By David Mayes

MANY Phuket residents will likely be affected by the far reaching reforms of Chancellor George Osborn's recently announced UK budget. Even though many who retire in Phuket maintain non-resident status for tax purposes, something which is becoming more difficult to do for those who spend a decent amount of time visiting back home, many continue to have UK assets such as real estate and pensions.

The bad news that came with the budget, is that the government intends to extend its annual tax on enveloped dwellings to now catch properties worth 500,000 or more (previously the limit was 5-million pounds) and owned by "non-natural persons". (A non-natural person is generally a corporate vehicle.)

This would effectively force transfer of ownership to an individual and therefore open up the properties to inheritance tax. The budget would also give some pretty aggressive rights to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), in the event that a scheme fails in court against the general anti-avoidance rule, and would allow them to grab the cash they think they are owed upfront from all other defendants who have used the same scheme. HMRC would be able to actually take the money directly from the defendants' bank, who would need to prove in court their innocence in order to get it back. Think guilty until proven innocent.

The major surprises came in the area of pensions, with some drastic changes in the pipeline. The first, is a proposal to allow full access to defined contribution pension schemes at retirement, taxed at the member's ordinary rate of

tax. As it stands now, any unauthorized access above GAD rates takes a massive 55% charge. This may have huge implications for the QROPS (qualifying recognized overseas pension market), as HMRC has been very aggressive in ensuring these schemes follow the UK guidelines on drawdown. The opportunity may not be far off to transfer a defined contribution pension offshore and then completely cash-in the entire pot at extremely low tax rates.

The budget also called for a consultation on the death tax, which currently charges a pension of 55% before the beneficiaries can access their inheritance. Whether this will be reduced or a similar tax levied in transfers offshore of a defined benefits pension is still not clear. Many in the industry believe that this will lead to an increase in transfers of defined benefits schemes offshore where they

avoid inheritance tax altogether in certain jurisdictions, in case this window closes quickly at the end of the consultation. If you have a valuable defined benefits pension scheme and do not intend to retire back in the UK, now is probably the time to begin looking into transferring it out of the UK tax net.

Another change that would positively affect those with small pension pots is the increase in limits for trivial payments. Pensioners with small pension pots up to 10K GBP, and for a grand total of 30K from a maximum of three pension plans could cash them in penalty free. This would be a very welcome relief for those who would never have been able to live off of the income, especially with such low current interest rates, that a small pot would provide. The final interesting piece of the budget is a plan to introduce a UK government bond specifically for

pensions that gives 4% per annum over a three year term. The specifics of this will be interesting to see as generally when the government gets involved in these sorts of things it usually ends up as a big mess.

It is important to remember that at this stage the budget still needs to go through a consultation before being signed into law, but it appears very likely that going forward, the pension industry in the UK has just been turned on its head and will continue to face significant changes in the coming years.

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.

Thailand back at No 1 with rice

THAILAND has reclaimed its title as the world's top rice exporter after having shipped out 1.5 million tonnes of grain in the last two months, reported CP Intertrade Company.

Chief Executive Officer of CP Intertrade Co Sumet Laomoraporn said Thailand's rice export in January- February was higher than two closest competitors – India which exported 1 million tonnes and Vietnam, 800,000 tonnes – Thai News Agency reported last week.

The United States has predicted Thailand will surge back

to world's number one rice exporter this year given higher quality of rice and declining prices, he said, adding that Thailand will possibly export 8.5 million tonnes of rice this year.

He said the global rice prices are approaching the lowest level with 5% of rice sold at US\$400/tonne and the prices will fall to US\$360-380/tonne in March-April which is the harvest season in major rice producing countries, including Vietnam and India.

Rice prices will surge higher in the second half of the year as

buyers import rice to be stocked and the *El Nino* phenomenon will affect rice production in the third quarter, pushing up grain prices, he said.

Sumet said the termination of the government's rice pledging scheme has pushed down rice price to 7,000 baht per tonne, resulting in declining prices of packaged rice.

The price of packaged rice has been 10% lower since early this year and is on a declining trend, he said.

– NNT



A terraced rice field in the northern province of Chiang Mai. Photo: Echiner1

Communication key to luring foreign money

CONSTANT communication, accurate information, and awareness of opportunities are keys to successful ventures for European investors looking to do business in the Kingdom, the Thai European Business Association (TEBA) says.

"There are no obvious barriers for doing business in Thailand because there is nobody physically standing in the way. The key is to realize that there is potential here and match it with the right kind of investment," said Hugh Vanijprabha, executive director of the TEBA.

He said the current political situation did not pose a big threat to the confidence of foreign investors who understand Thailand, such as the Japanese, and others who have been here for a long time, because they realize the country's potential and resilience, its amazing ability to bounce back.

"Political crises are everywhere in the world. Therefore, investors have to look at how well the country is prepared for such situations, while having constant communication and information allows you to understand the local situation before you make an investment decision," he said.

Uli Kaiser, president of the TEBA, said lack of information was the biggest problem for foreigners who wanted to do business in Thailand because they did not realize the kind of opportunities this country can offer.

"In my last meeting with executives from Boeing and Airbus about the potential of the aviation and aerospace industry in Thailand, they said that the country was off their radar because they do not have the information and awareness of the opportunities present here," he said.

The TEBA believes that Thailand has many opportunities for investors besides tourism and the automotive industry, such as infrastructure-development projects, the expansion of digital television networks, agricultural and food industry, medical tourism, and oil and gas. But the industry it believes to have the best prospects is aviation and aerospace.

"With the launching of the AEC (Asean Economic Community) and its geographical location, Thailand could easily be the hub for the aviation industry in Asean," Kaiser said.

The infrastructure for building aviation parts and equipment is already present in the Kingdom through its 4,000 automotive companies, and with the region expected to be the largest air-travel market within the next decade, Thailand should be ready to exploit this opportunity.

Airbus has predicted that globally, air traffic will increase by 4.7% per annum over the next 20 years, along with an increase of revenue passenger kilometers (RPK) from 29% in 2012 to 34% in 2032.

"With the potential of huge air traffic coming to Thailand, the demand and need for maintenance, repair, and operations, airports and airlines will increase," Kaiser said.

"With this opportunity, Thailand can be on its way to becoming a major player in Asean's multibillion-dollar aircraft maintenance and manufacturing industries."

Vanijprabha said aerospace and aviation made up a big industry, as there were many components to one plane. For example, he said Thailand could easily take advantage of the know-how in the automotive industry and the supply of raw rubber to become a major supplier of aircraft tires.

As 80% of the TEBA's 50 members belong to automobile industry, Vanijprabha also commented on the prospects of this industry in the next five years.

"The automobile industry will continue to grow in the next five years here due to the prospect of the AEC and the emphasis on export driven by the global economic recovery," he said.

The TEBA believes that the biggest area for improvement is the research and development sector of the automobile industry, especially development.

Vanijprabha said Thailand's automotive industry was already the

tenth largest in the world and the biggest in Southeast Asia, but to be able to develop and complete the supply chain, the private and public sectors had to work together on investment in research and development.

Last year, vehicle production in the Kingdom reached just under 2.5 million units, accounting for 12% of gross domestic product.

Vanijprabha said Thailand's potential for research and design was endless because of Thais' high level of creativity, but what was lacking was the ability to develop and fulfill ideas. This needed a larger private-public partnership in order for it to be fruitful.

"Vocational training is needed and is important to the development of the automobile industry in Thailand," he said, adding that the government should channel private sector know-how into schools and universities.

– The Nation

TAT campaign: 'Honeyteering'

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has kick started a new campaign which will specifically attract honeymooners to come to Thailand for volunteering activities, aiming to raise the tourism income to over 1 trillion baht this year.

In an attempt to achieve the target of boosting revenue from foreign tourists by 13% to over 1 trillion baht, TAT Deputy Governor Sukree Sithivanich presided over the launch of a new campaign entitled "Honeyteering: We got so much love to give". The campaign's objective is to trigger the honeymoon market by promoting a new travelling trend called "honeyteering", in which newlyweds take part in volunteering work while on their honeymoon.

With an allocated budget of

about 10 million baht, the TAT is collaborating with Thai Airways International and hotels in offering volunteering packages to honeymooners as part of this campaign. In the initial stage, the campaign will be carried out in four popular tourist destinations, namely Samui, Phuket, Chiang Mai and Hua Hin.

Public awareness of the campaign is being raised through online media as related information has been made available at honeyteeringthailand.com.

The honeymoon market is considered important to the Thai tourism sector due to its high purchasing power and long period of stay. Honeymooners being targeted by this new campaign are those from China, Japan and Europe.

– Phuket Gazette

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Fairness for laborers

AFTER years of apparent neglect, it is good to see the Embassy of Myanmar's Labour Attache taking steps to ensure that at least some of the untold thousands of Myanmar workers on the island are being treated fairly by their Thai employers (see page 4).

The history of Myanmar workers in Phuket is a tale of sadness and suffering that stands in sharp contrast to all of the pro-AEC (Asean Economic Community) rhetoric that Thai children are currently being exposed to in government schools.

It makes for an interesting thought experiment to consider just what Phuket children are expected to think these days about Myanmar nationals, who make up a considerable slice of the local population and have done much of the hard labor to make the island what it is today.

Thanks to the interminable political saga, Thai society is successfully cementing a reputation abroad for, shall we say, "cognitive flexibility", in its collective struggle to grasp the true concept of the word "democracy".

If this rather unique ability to simultaneously hold mutually exclusive views needs to be developed from a young age, how Thai children are taught to feel about their neighbors should serve as a shining example of how to get the job done.

On the one hand, students are taught to accept their regional neighbors as brothers and sisters in a new collective economic community. On the other hand, they are exposed day in and day out to how little Thai officials recognize migrant laborers from neighboring countries as people worthy of basic human rights.

The recent introduction of a curfew on all Myanmar laborers in Patong highlighted this. The curfew harks back to only a handful of years ago when Myanmar nationals were not allowed to carry a mobile phone or own a motorbike and were even barred from entering a major shopping mall on the island.

It takes horrific incidents such as the 2008 death by suffocation of 154 Myanmar nationals at the hands of human traffickers for any formal action to deliver a modicum of justice.

That said, years of international news reports exposing the extent of slavery on Thai fishing boats has yielded no corrective action from local authorities.

The ordeals the migrants endure to get here, their conditions of work and quality of pay, as well as their health and safety are in reality all overlooked, and, by practice, deemed acceptable of an exploited labor force.

Make no mistake, children learn by absorbing what they see around them. If Thailand is serious about joining the AEC, the current attitude towards migrant workers needs to change.



Don't call corruption anything else

Re: Gazette online, Phuket dive companies move to end alleged police corruption, March 24

"A source of unofficial fines": I love a nice euphemism as much as the next guy, but when are we going to call a spade a spade? Aren't we talking about bribery and extortion here?

Once we call things what they are and deal with them accordingly, there is hope for progress.

Topcat
Gazette Forum

When softness hurts

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Police warn of slick roads after new graduate dies in motorcycle accident, March 24

How many times do you hear about a motorbike rider or passenger killed and no helmet to be found?

I've been to Phuket many times and have lost count of how many people I see on motorbikes without helmets every day.

Police need to do more policing and start giving heavy fines instead of ignoring no-helmet riders.

Sadly, another family grieves the loss of a loved one. Soft policies mean no change.

Steve
Gazette Forum

Look for those who turn a blind eye

Re: Gazette online, Protected Phuket hillside slashed and burned, March 20

It would be impossible for two guys in one night to clear this amount of land. Follow the money, and I think the culprits who looked the other way and allowed this to happen might be close at hand.

Me
Gazette Forum

Letters to the Editor

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

Pipes, not trucks

Re: Gazette online, Busted pipe leaves Phuket areas dry, March 22

There has been almost no water delivery through the pipes in Patong since last November.

We are buying at least one truck a day for our guesthouse, driving up our water costs 10-fold per month.

Have you seen all the fancy new water tankers driving around lately? They are not making those investments because they think that government water production will be going up. Another piece of infrastructure failing to keep up with the times.

Vegasd8
Gazette Forum

Poor against poor

Re: Gazette online, Phuket mangrove squatters make plea for water, electricity, March 21

As much as I sympathize with these people, they have to be moved. If they are not, hundreds of people who rely on the fishing industry and fish that cannot currently spawn in these mangroves will end up poorer than the protesters.

Chob
Gazette Forum

No excuse for filth

Re: Gazette online, Wastewater the source of rancid water on Phuket beach, March 20

What a total disgrace. With the amount of money that flows through Phuket from tourists there can be no excuse.

Phuket will be the loser in the end when the word eventually gets out about the dirty beaches, the polluted sea, the tuk-tuk Mafia and all the ripoffs, bag snatchers and so on.

Bjay
Gazette Forum

Not hard to find fault

Re: Gazette online, Migrant laborer dies after tumble from Phuket pick-up truck, March 22

Leaving aside the fact that Myanmar nationals are transported like livestock, if police are looking for charges, what about the possibility of bald tyres or an unroadworthy vehicle? And an outside chance of speed. RIP, father and husband.

Benvenuto
Gazette Forum

The secret is out

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Cycling: The power of Yao Yai Island, March 20

Why did you have to write this? We have been cycling, sailing and running hash for more than 15 years on this island and didn't publicize it. Now everybody will know about it and the island will be lost forever.

Horst
Gazette Forum

Make fines higher

Re: Gazette online, DSI and FDA officers seize B10mn of illegal drugs with fake FDA labels, March 21

A three-month prison term or a 5,000-baht fine doesn't seem to be much of a deterrent, especially when considering the estimated 10-million-baht value of the drugs.

It's time to re-evaluate the fines and sentences in this country.

Alien
Gazette Forum

Phuket Gazette

In association with The Nation Multimedia Group PCL

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The views expressed in the Phuket Gazette are those of the writers and contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Publisher, the Editor, the shareholders or the directors of The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd.

Volume 21 Issue 13

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Guarding health in a shifting populace

FIRST PERSON

AFTER spending only a few months in Phuket, I can tell you that the nature of the population on the island is probably the greatest challenge we are facing here as health officials.

The registered population is less than 500,000, but in fact there are about one million people on the island on any given day, including all the tourists who come and go.

Although we do our best, this makes it very difficult to identify and track the origin and spread of contagious diseases as our data is always incomplete.

To compare, we have ongoing programs for people with HIV or tuberculosis (TB). We keep records of where they live and the people they interact with and this helps us to provide medical care for them and contain the spread of these two particular afflictions. We also offer treatment, advice and support to their families.

For us to be able to do this effectively, we need patients or family members to report to us any persons they believe are suffering from these illnesses. Only then can we offer our programs of support through the three government hospitals on the island: Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town; Thalang Hospital; and Patong Hospital.

Identifying sick tourists arriving in Phuket is much more difficult.

We have two medical staff on duty at Phuket International Airport 24 hours a day, and more staff from the three government



Kajohnsak Kaewjarus, 49, took up the position of chief of the Phuket Provincial Health Office on October 1 last year. Phang Nga born and raised, Dr Kajohnsak graduated from Mahidol University with a master's degree in general surgery.

Here, he talks about Phuket's top health concerns and gives his prognosis on how to treat them.

hospitals can be called in to help if they are needed.

We ask airline cabin crews and ground staff to report to us any passengers who exhibit signs of illness during the flight. Anyone who arrives with a fever or who is suffering an intense cough is examined at the airport, and taken to hospital if required.

Although not all arriving tourists showing signs of illness require hospital treatment, they are required to understand that they may be carrying a contagious disease. In these cases, we urge the tourists to make sure they take as many precautions as possible to avoid infecting others during their stay.

The medical team on duty asks at which hotel the tourist will stay while in Phuket and their travel plans on the island. This information is vital if the disease is later identified as a serious malady. The medical team should be able to locate the tourist quickly and provide the appropriate assistance.

Our top health concerns at the moment are influenza, diarrhea and contagious diseases spread via the alimentary canal. These types of diseases spread easily in environments such as Phuket, where it is hot and humid, with many people living in close proximity and coming into close contact frequently.

As always, basic hygiene is the best defense against contracting a contagious disease. For example, make sure the food you eat is well-cooked and that you take basic precautions against cross-contamination, such as by using a serving spoon when dining with others.

The simplest defense is to wash your hands before and after eating.

These are easy, common ways of protecting yourself from diseases in your daily life. Please do not forget or ignore good, clean habits. They may prove the difference between good and ill health.



His fishing style is not the one to worry about. Photo: Kallerna

Tempest in a long-tail

Island View

By Alex Stone

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

I COULD feel the Sea Shepard weekend warrior rising up in me, ready for battle, after reading about the "Yamu Night Fishing Game."

As a sunny-weather marine conservationist, I have no issues with sport fishing competitions. However, I suffered a knee-jerk reaction to seeing "sharks and rays" listed as a category for the Yamu fishing tournament.

Glimpses of proud fishermen standing next to the podium with piles of shark carcasses flashed before my eyes, like images from *Jaws*.

Most shark species in Thai waters are not protected at all, and only a handful have recently been added to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Appendix Two.

The value of a shark in the water is exponentially higher in Phuket than it is on a dinner table or processed as fish oil. The money sharks generate from dive shops, but to mid and upper-range accommodations, restaurants, airlines and many other players in the tourism industry.

So why allow a local fishing tournament to encourage shark killing?

Every shark in the sea is important as their numbers continue to spiral downward in a trend which will inevitably lead to a significant change in the balance of the ocean ecosystem and have a detrimental impact on the dive industry.

I decided to go to Yamu with

my camera, document the sharks these five-man teams in their long-tail boats would catch using traditional fishing methods, and start a Facebook campaign.

Then, I took a breath. I let the rage fade. The red cleared from my eyes like dolphin blood eventually does from the cove.

These fishermen, celebrating a traditional way of life which includes consuming a wide range of marine creatures, are not the problem.

Shark processing plants such as the one uncovered by true marine conservation activists in China's Zhejiang Province are the problem. They process over 600 whale sharks a year. These establishments, along with local trawlers raping the Andaman Sea and mega trawlers like *Annelies Ilana* that are sweeping the entire world clean, are causing damage at a level we can't fully appreciate.

What the Yamu fishermen are doing is celebrating sustainable fishing practices.

With no intention of creating Facebook propaganda, I took the long drive up to Yamu Pier. Two hours of waiting from noon to 2pm yielded no sharks, only a few boats with paltry catches. Nothing to write the Sheperds – or cause an online scandal – about.

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

What's the legal limit on a motorbike?

How many people can legally ride on a motorbike?

It's pretty common to see three people on one, and I've often seen whole families of five.

I've never heard of anyone getting a ticket for overloading a bike with people.

What does the law say?

Cheryl Rawai

Sarayuth Meeboon, Thalang Police Deputy Superintendent replies:

There is a limit of two adults on a single motorbike.

If we see a motorbike carrying more than two people, we can stop it and fine the driver 500 baht.

We are flexible about the number of children allowed on one motorbike.



No more than two adults are permitted on a bike. Photo: Stougard

Are condos allowed in residential areas?

In our village Irrawadee Ket Ho in Kathu, a multi-storey condominium is being built. It has four storeys now and they are adding a fifth. Each one is about four-meters high.

It's in the middle of a residential area, surrounded by family houses that are a maximum of two stories. What are the building codes?

Richard Kathu

Waritchapong Likitwatthan-anukul, Kathu District Office engineer, replies:

In Irrawadee Ket Ho, where you live, there are two zones, a green zone and a yellow zone. Different building codes apply for each.

The green zone is an agricultural zone. In this area you are permitted to build houses or hotels, but not condominiums. Any hotel in the area must not exceed 15 meters in height.

The yellow zone is a residential zone. In this area it is legal to build a condominium. The maximum height may not exceed 23 meters.

When calculating maximum legal height for a construction project, please keep in mind that Phuket has another height restriction: a ban on any building exceeding the height of 80 meters

above sea level.

To identify exactly which zone a soi falls in, you are welcome to visit our office at 12 Moo 2, Vichitsongkram Road to look at our maps. You can also request that an officer visit your area to examine the property in question.



Condos are allowed in yellow residential zones. Photo: Supplied

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

Submit your issue at

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

YOUR Phuket

A NIGHT OF GLAMOUR FLASH

Central Department Store introduced a fresh new range of imported fashion lines and seasonal makeovers last weekend with their “A Night of Glamour Flash” red-carpet fashion show and mini concert by national singing sensation “Ritz”.



From left: Kanokwan Tiewlamsam; Pantuda Jiravisitnont; and Jirayut Tiewlamsam



From left: Potchara Kekina; Chudapat Phuakkarawut; Chanitnun Tephabuttra; Rit Tephabuttra; and Theerachai Chumnanyou

THE ATTITUDE CLUB SATURDAYS CONDO

The Attitude Club launched their latest project at Foto Hotel



From left: Jantana Jaikwang, assistance sales manager for the Phuket Gazette, congratulates Wirachai Pranveerapaibool, chief executive officer of The Attitude Club.

SANSIRI MEDIA TRIP



Sansiri Senior PR Manager Kamonwan Prasitwuttivech joins Phuket media members on snowbanks of Mount Fuji during a six-day media thank you trip to Japan.

KEEP CALM & LOVE TURTLE



Masa Luna Condominium joined the 'Keep Calm & Love Turtle' event at Nai Yang Beach. Pictured: Chisanucha Pakdeesaneha, CEO of Porch Land Group receiving a souvenir from Supot Chanakit, district chief of Thalang.



From left: Kiranee Narabal, founder of Unique Communications - Asia Co Ltd and owner of Thalang Wittaya School; Natchaya Suebsak, PR consultant for Honda Anuphas Phuket; and Sasimontra Sirikul, MC of Massa Luna Project

The Phuket Gazette's weekly

ISLAND TRADER

Phuket's **LARGEST CLASSIFIEDS** Marketplace – in Print and Online*

March 29 - April 4, 2014 | PhuketGazette.Net

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

PROPERTY of the week



CONDO FOR SALE

See page 23

JOB of the week



Hootersphuket.com

See page 26

INVESTMENT of the week

**Retirement Club
Program**

See page 28

BOAT & MARINE of the week



See page 31

All Property, Boat and Business Ads are **PAID!**

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Contact: Paew, Ton, Tux or Jane
Phuket Boat Lagoon
info@lambertbrothers.co.th
Tel: + 66 76 273 385

www.lambertbrothers.co.th

VILLA WITH POOL

4 bedrooms, pool villa for sale, fully furnished, 12.5 million baht or rent long term: 75,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-729 2989. Email: tabppg@gmail.com

LARGE SEAVIEW HOUSE AT LAYAN

3 rai, Chanote. Price: 54 million baht. Tel: 081-787 4383. Email: ruggdan@gmail.com

HABITOWN KOH KAEW FOR SALE
115sqm, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 4 aircons, includes built-in furniture, 2 floors. Resale down 150,000 baht. Tel: 089-772 7012. Email: gyb_giff@yahoo.com

HOUSE IN VILLA DOWROONG
Phuket Town. 3 beds, 3 baths, 47sq wah. Tel: 089-909 2771.

LAND & HOUSE FOR SALE

Location: Phanom District, Surat Thani, near Khao Sok National Park.
- Land: 120 rai + rubber plantation, 8 years old. 6 million baht.



- House: 1-rai area, furnished, 2 bedrooms, 2 aircons. 2.2 million baht. Please call 081-667 1637, 082-539 6433.

CHEAP LAND & HOUSE FOR SALE

Land of 35 rai and a house with aircon, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and kitchen at Tambon Bornok, Prachuap Khiri Khan, 20km from Prachuap Khiri Khan town. The land is 1.3km from Petchkasem Road. Price is only 10 million baht. Nor Sor 3 title deed. Please call 086-615 9719.

PRICED TO SELL

Patong. 5 separate luxury apartments in one block, each 100sqm, fully furnished and very large pool. Beautiful location, sea and mountain view. Freehold and Thai company limited. Would consider exchange for villa in Rawai area. Finance available. Massively reduced price 11.9 million baht. Tel: 081-271 7092.

Baan Yamu Residences

Condominium available for sale

PHUKET'S EXCLUSIVE RESIDENTIAL HIDEAWAY

- Award-winning design
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- Secure residential and investment opportunity

Please contact: 091-034 9909 or 089-729 8126
E-mail: info@baanyamu.com
Tel: 076-310507

LAYAN LAND FOR SALE

18 rai, subdivided 8.5 million baht per rai. For more information, please call 081-787 4383. Email: ruggdan@gmail.com

HOUSE FOR SALE NAI HARN

3 bedrooms, fully furnished, 5 minutes to the beach. Reduced to 3.9 million baht for quick sale. Tel: 088-168 5032

30 RAI IN TOWN

Flat land near Dowroong School in Phuket Town. Please call 081-691 25 26

POOL VILLA MISSION HEIGHTS

3 bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, huge living room, large swimming pool, priced 12 million baht or 15 million baht, depending on your needs. For more information, please call 076-528024, 087-060 8400 (English). Email: picharly@gmail.com

BEAUTIFUL POOL VILLA

For sale. Big garden, 15m pool, 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, office, quality furniture, new condition, security, freehold. Please call 076-388236, 089-727 5407 (English). Email: cosmocampbell@yahoo.com, www.villa-sale-phuket.com

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Available For Rent
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Contact Khun Nong for details or visit our website
m: 087 266 8400 e: plazadelmar@gmail.com
www.plazadelmar.nphuket.com

HOUSE
FOR RENT OR SALE

Fully furnished house for rent or sale. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Only 16,500 baht per month or 4.2 million baht for sale. Available April 1, 2014. Tel: 081-956 1660, +61 04-303 5856 (English & Thai). Email: sar_seal@yahoo.com

THAI VILLA AND POOL
Luxury 2 bedrooms in Nai Harn, long term: 37,500 baht per month. Tel: 081-270 5126. Email: mervyn.crocker@yahoo.com

HOUSE FOR RENT
CHALONG

2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 3 aircons, fully furnished. 30,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-266 7191.

POOL VILLA LUXURY

Live in tropical garden, near Laguna, has all, for 8 months: 25,000 baht per month. For more information, please call 089-594 4067.

LUXURY POOLFRONT
CONDO

Beautiful, fully furnished 2-bed/2-bath condo in Cape Panwa. 3 months minimum on rental. 35,000 baht per month. Direct pool access. Tel: +61 045-890 2692 (English), +61 042-499 9379 (English). Email: cindy@cindysgallery.com

KATA SEAVIEW
APARTMENT

Fully furnished, quiet, Kata Hill. Tel: 086-281 9311. Email: bao200@gmail.com

3-BED KATHU GOLF
VIEW PENTHOUSE

For rent, 330sqm, 3-bathroom villa, big modern kitchen, living room and balconies, big pool, 4km to BIS, fantastic view of Loch Palm golf course and valley, quiet on top of a private hill, fully furnished, maid, WiFi, security. 65,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-269 8492.

KARON BEACH CONDO

Oceanfront, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 167sqm, one minute walk to beach. 14.5 million baht. Lease with option? Rent? Please call 090-008 503, +10-40 6728 1124. Email: rtj1111@yahoo.com

RAWAI POOL VILLA
3-BED, 2-BATH

2-storey house, 140sqm, 3x7m pool, furnished, 6 months: 35,000 baht per month. Tel: 076-226422, 085-478 8010 (English). Email: c9000@gmx.de

FULLY FURNISHED
HOUSE

1-3 bedrooms, Chalong area. Start from 10,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-892 4311. For further details, please see our website at <http://palai.green.weebly.com>

1-BED KATHU
GOLF VIEW VILLA

For rent. 135sqm, 1 bathroom, big modern kitchen, living room and balconies, big pool, 4km to BIS, fantastic view of Loch Palm Golf Course and valley, quiet on top of a private hill, fully furnished, maid, WiFi, security. 30,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-269 8492.

TOP DESIGN VILLA



Direct from owner, 450 sqm, pool, 4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, private elevator, close to BIS and Royal Phuket Marina. 75,000 baht per month. Tel: 080-060 2060.

HOUSE FOR RENT



Fully furnished, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 4 aircons, small garden, quiet area. Rent: 18,000 baht per month. Please call 086-690 0626. Email: bcarrent@hotmail.com

PATONG NICE SEAVIEW
CONDO

Immaculate 14th floor unit, quality renovation. Please send email for video tour. Tel: 086-757 1362. Email: peteroconnor1980@hotmail.com

LUXURY POOL
VILLA

Near Laguna, live tropical garden, has all. Lease: 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-594 4067.

RENT APARTMENT
PATONG

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

CHEAP RENT HOUSE

1 bedroom, furnished, WiFi, near Panwa view point. Rent: 7,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-892 4311, <http://panwagreen.weebly.com>

PATONG 54SQM
STUDIO APARTMENT

Modern unit, large pool, gym, maid, free WiFi, cable, parking. From 22,000 baht per month. Tel: 080-052 8082 (English & Thai). Email: phvcondo@aol.com

4-BED POOL VILLA
CHALONG

4-bedroom, 5-bathroom pool villa in Chalong for long-term rental. Tel: 081-397 6921. Email: terryleetuck@hotmail.com, www.baybluevilla.com

KATA BEACH
APARTMENTS

1 bedroom, kitchen, WiFi, aircon, jacuzzi. Tel: 086-595 8512, 081-970 4638. Email: nalumana2000@yahoo.com

LUXURY VILLAS
FOR RENT KAMALA

2 villas in modern style, one of 3 bedrooms and one of 2 bedrooms, private swimming pool, big garden, jacuzzi. Contact Francesco. Tel: 085-790 7816. Email: francesco.bonta@gmail.com See our website at www.villa.cheloni.com

B.L. APARTMENT

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

LUXURIOUS
4-BEDROOM VILLA

For rent in Rawai. 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, big living area, big terrace, big balcony, big private pool, big garden, big parking. Great prices for long term available. Tel: 087-893 8747.

RENT / SALE
PRIVATE
POOL VILLA

Rawai area, 700sqm, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. 10 minutes to beach. Tel: 089-472 9870, 086-471 5226. Email: dchaibut@gmail.com

LUXURY 1 BED
KAMALA

Deluxe top floor 1 bed apartment, fully furnished, balcony, washing-machine, swimming pool & gym, cable TV, internet. No pets. No smoking. 27,000 baht per month, 6 months contract. Tel: 084-130 3234. Email: plongmore@hotmail.com

PATONG CONDO

58sqm, 5 minutes walk to the Beach, fully furnished, parking, 14,000 baht per month. Tel: 088-181 1965.

HOUSE IN LIPON

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

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IN PATONG FOR RENT

12 rooms, all with aircons, hot & cold showers ensuite + toilet, fridge, WiFi, flat SAT TV. Modern and clean, plus bar with pool table, lounge, small kitchen, 2 toilets, reception, outside area, free parking. Price: 900,000 baht. Rent: 90,000 baht per month for long lease. Email: herbert.rapp@gmail.com

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Household
Help

Or other times on appointment until March 30. At house 23/131 Boat Lagoon. Be quick as most items are almost new and well priced. Big fridge, freezer, carpets, 3 near new beds/mattresses, table and chairs, floorlamps, desk cabinets, TV cabinets, kitchen cabinets, Chinaware and crockery, 2 leather armchairs new, outside table and chairs, dressing table. Please call 093-757 4608.

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

Joob Joob designer cupcakes

Learn how to make and decorate cupcakes with Thailand's leading cupcake makers - Joob Joob!

We have 3 FULL TIME vacancies for girls keen to learn with us and have fun.

No previous experience is necessary, all that is required is a big smile and positive attitude. Females preferred. English and / or another language (e.g. Russian, Chinese) is a big advantage, but not essential.

We pay a good salary with performance bonus, and you will have the opportunity to work in both our shops, Patong at The Kids Club in The Promenade, and also Central Festival on Level 1, opposite Swensens, behind Mr. Donut. We also give English lessons each week by a qualified foreigner.

Please call
Khun: Ant on 081-601 2523, Khun Kea: 087-934 7089
or Anthony: 080 609-1128 anytime.



Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

REPORTER

- ▶ Thai national (able to read, write, speak fluent Thai)
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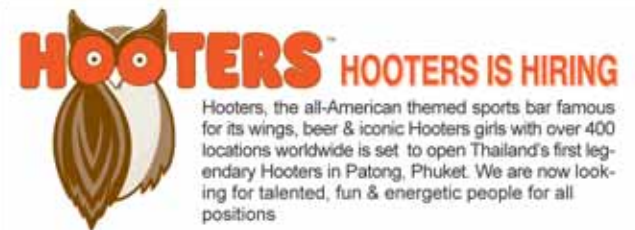
Aged 25 years or older, permanent resident of Phuket, Russian speaking with excellent knowledge of English and preferably Thai. Official papers (no benefits, work permit), salary starts from 30,000 baht. Tel: 089-870 2796. Please send CV to opaopa543@mail.ru

RESTAURANT STAFF

New restaurant "Thai Basil". Bartender: 15,000 baht. Waiters/waitresses: 14,000 baht plus tips. Manager: 25,000 baht. Soi Bangla, 58/7-8, contact, between 4pm and 7pm. Email: office@thai basil.phuket.com

ASSISTANT MANAGER, KHAO SOK

Our Jungle House is the top resort in Khao Sok, Surat Thani. Qualifications: Thai national only, minimum 2 years experience in resort, must truly love nature, excellent English and computer skills. Tel: 081-417 0546. Email: ourjunglehouse 1985@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at <http://khaosokaccommodation.com>



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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@luxury villasandhomes.com

STAFF WANTED

Thai Basil Restaurant, newly 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@thai basilphuket.com

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

FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANAGER

New 4-star hotel in Malaysia looking for young and energetic expat to run the food and beverage department. Previous experience in similar position not required but this position requires a strong kitchen background. Email: Nazri@an casanet.com

Authorized Agents for Classified Advertising:

CHALONG

- ▶ Julapan Stationery (Chaofa East Rd) Tel: 076-282254
- ▶ KL Mart (Patak Rd, Chalong Circle) Tel: 076-280400
- ▶ Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe (Fisherman's Way Business Center, Chaofa East Rd) Tel: 076-282403

PATONG

- ▶ Taurus Travel (Aroonsom Plaza) Tel: 076-344521-2
- ▶ Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe (Aroonsom Plaza) Tel: 076-290468
- ▶ Deli Supermarket (Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd) Tel: 076-342275

PHUKET CITY

- ▶ Earth Language Training Centre School (Phang Nga Rd) Tel: 076-232398
- ▶ Sin & Lee (Thalang Rd) Tel: 076-258369
- ▶ iTree complete printing service (Tesco Lotus Phuket Town) bank zone Tel: 076-255425

CHERNG TALAY

- ▶ Chaba Supermarket (at the Laguna gateway) Tel: 076-325586

RAWAI

- ▶ The Network property office (Saiyuan Rd) Tel: 076-613173

KARON

- ▶ EuroStyle Tailors (Luang Por Chuan Rd) Tel: 076-396911

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**RAW FOOD CHEF
WANTED**

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

**3 WAITRESSES FOR
RESTAURANT**

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

**PROJECT SECRETARY
(THAI) WANTED**

At least 3 years experience in the construction industry. Able to speak, write and read English and Thai. Full understanding of Microsoft Office (Excel, Outlook and Word). Salary based on experience, excellent benefits. Send your CV to info@avcpuket.com

**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

**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

**RECEPTIONIST
WANTED**

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

**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@sea staffing.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, 081-666 6622. Email: sales@theviewphuket.com, info@theviewphuket.com

British International School, Phuket

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

• PE and SPORTS Administrative Officer (Urgent)Qualifications

- Thai national
- Bachelor Degree
- Excellent English, Computer literacy and good people skills
- Able to coordinate with other departments
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills
- Interest in Sports & PE may be an advantage

• Graphic & Publications Officer (Urgent)Qualifications

- Bachelor degree in Computer Science or related fields.
- 1-2 years' experience in graphic design/desktop publishing.
- Excellent knowledge of computer graphics applications.
- Experience in using Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, HTML, CSS, Macromedia Flash and Macromedia Dreamweaver, Wordpress.
- Good communication and presentation skills (in Thai and English).
- Able to work in a team and independently without requiring close supervision.

Interested candidates please submit your cv and recent photo to kojchapant@bisphuket.ac.th, sirirats@bisphuket.ac.th

**British International School, Phuket (BISP)**

59 Moo 2, Thepkasattri Road, Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83200
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Brainy House is looking for part-time native English teachers. Start as soon as possible. Tel: 076-522822, 080-907 7466 (English & Thai). Email: na.ranong@hotmail.com

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Proficient in Word, Excel, uni graduate preferred. Photo shop online experience valued highly. Tel: 081-205 3932.

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- Strong attention to detail, with a commitment to high quality work
- Demonstrated record of sharing knowledge with colleagues
- Competent at understanding and navigating firm and service line structures, matrix relationships, key personnel, and policies and procedures
- Proven ability to take the initiative and focus on customer service
- Aptitude for learning quickly
- Highly skilled at working with financial management associates, schedulers, and other internal resources. Ability to collaborate on finance, scheduling, or other operational support matters and related tools/reports
- Competent at resolving complex problems, with strong analytical skills, and proficiency in research techniques
- Integrity/Honesty
- Provide high-level administrative support
- Multitasking

Salary : 35,000 – 45,000THB

Location: Hughes Krupica Consulting Company Limited (Phuket)

Job Type: 9:00 - 18:00 / Mon. – Fri.
Full Time, Permanent

Please send your CV in English to email: sukanya@hugheskrupica.com or tel: 081-370 1905.

Phuket Gazette

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- ▶ A good sense of organization and respect for details
- ▶ Knowledge of basic office software, InDesign and PageMaker would be a plus.

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- 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
- Regent Phuket Cape Panwa: 210 rooms

More Info? Please call 076-273555. Email: Kookai@phuketgazette.net or Diao@phuketgazette.net

On line: www.phuketgazette.net/tv | www.youtube.com/PGTVPhuket

Saloon Cars

UNIQUE LUXURY

This beautiful Jaguar XJ6 has served as our stylish transport but is now for sale, as we now use a SUV for business. It is fantastic to drive with a powerful, reliable and smooth Toyota 2JZ engine and gearbox with a Garrett GT35 turbo. It has recently been dyno tested delivering 340+ wheel hp which is 400+ bhp. The car is very reasonably priced at 420,000 baht. Contact Todd. Tel: 091-523 6680 (English). Email: steve@footefx.com

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Excellent condition! One owner from new. No accident, April 2010, 60,000km, all services done, registered, tax until August 2014. Price new: 1.55 million baht. Now: 870,000 baht (negotiable). Car is in Hua Hin. For more information, please call 032-826152, 081-162 2951 (English).

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FOR SALE

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HONDA PCX 150

6,400km, like new, black/red, 15 months old. YSS Shocks, adjustable aluminium break levers, first-class Thai Sri insurance. 60,000 baht - Fixed! Tel: 081-691 6147 (English). Email: info@baansuanvilla.de

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Turbo diesel, auto, by farang owner, perfect all, serviced by Isuzu, 7 seats, 175,000km, new tyres and brake. Price: 250,000 baht. Tel: 086-953 6522.

2013 TOYOTA VIGO
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Year 2000 with hardtop, metallic silver, AAS serviced, 36,000km, very nice.
Price: 4.59 million baht.

Contact Khun Lerd
Tel: 087-263 6706
(Proton Showroom)

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50FT BERTRAM SPORTFISHER
1989 Bertram 505 Convertible. Price: 7 million baht. Tel: 087-834 5293. Email: sfiori@hotmail.com

42FT BERTRAM SPORT FISHER
Strong seaworthy boat, priced to sell, thai registered, needs little work to the perfect fishing / cruising boat. 3 million baht. Contact Andy Tel: +014 471 539 4550. Email: as.ac@hotmail.co.uk

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CAPTAIN WANTED
For large motor yacht. Must be experienced and speak English. Also English speaking deckhand required. Tel: 081-787 1752. Please send CV to mjone illuk@yahoo.co.uk

GRADY WHITE 270 ISLANDER
For sale. Immaculate condition and fully equipped. Very new 2013 Suzuki 300hp, 4-stroke engine. Dry berthed. Cabin, wash-room, galley, sleeps 4 persons comfortably. An ideal boat for sport-fishing or cruising! US\$95,000 neg. Email: milynnad@hotmail.com

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Twin CAT 3208 TA, needs repair, new fiber glass and paint to hull October 2013. Urgent sale. Price: 800,000 baht ono. Tel: 082-839 7701. Email: ger ryhodes@live.com.au

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Wooden hull cruiser registered for 17 people. Cost 1.6 million baht, but will sell for 700,000 baht. Just refurbished. Tel: 082-414 6931 (English). Email: phil@krabikonnect.com For further details, please see our website at www.krabikonnect.com/#boat-for-sale/c10mg

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Looking for a boat?

See more classified ads
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THE SOLUTION TO THIS WEEK'S

Cryptic Crossword

COFFEE

break

1	B	2	S	3	R	4	A	5	E	6	S	7	P	8	F																																											
9	A	S	C	E	R	T	A	I	N	10	S	E	L	V	A	G	E	S																																								
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33	T	A	K	E	N	O	V	E	R	34	S	H	I	R	T	T	A	I	L	35	A	A	S	I	E	36	L	I	M	I	T	S	37	K	R	I	S	38	E	R	S	I	E	39	A	A	40	I	H									
41	P	O	N	T	O	O	N	S	42	C	O	N	T	I	N	U	A	L	43	T	S	N	S	44	H	Y	45	M	Y																													

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The ABBA Tribute group ready for the show.

ABBA TRIBUTE NIGHT AT TWO CHEFS



From left: Billy Argen, owner of Two Chefs Group; Raveewit Paladsri, manager of Restaurant & Deli by Two Chefs; Krister Wesberg, manager of Two Chefs Kata Center

PIWC COMMITTEE 2014



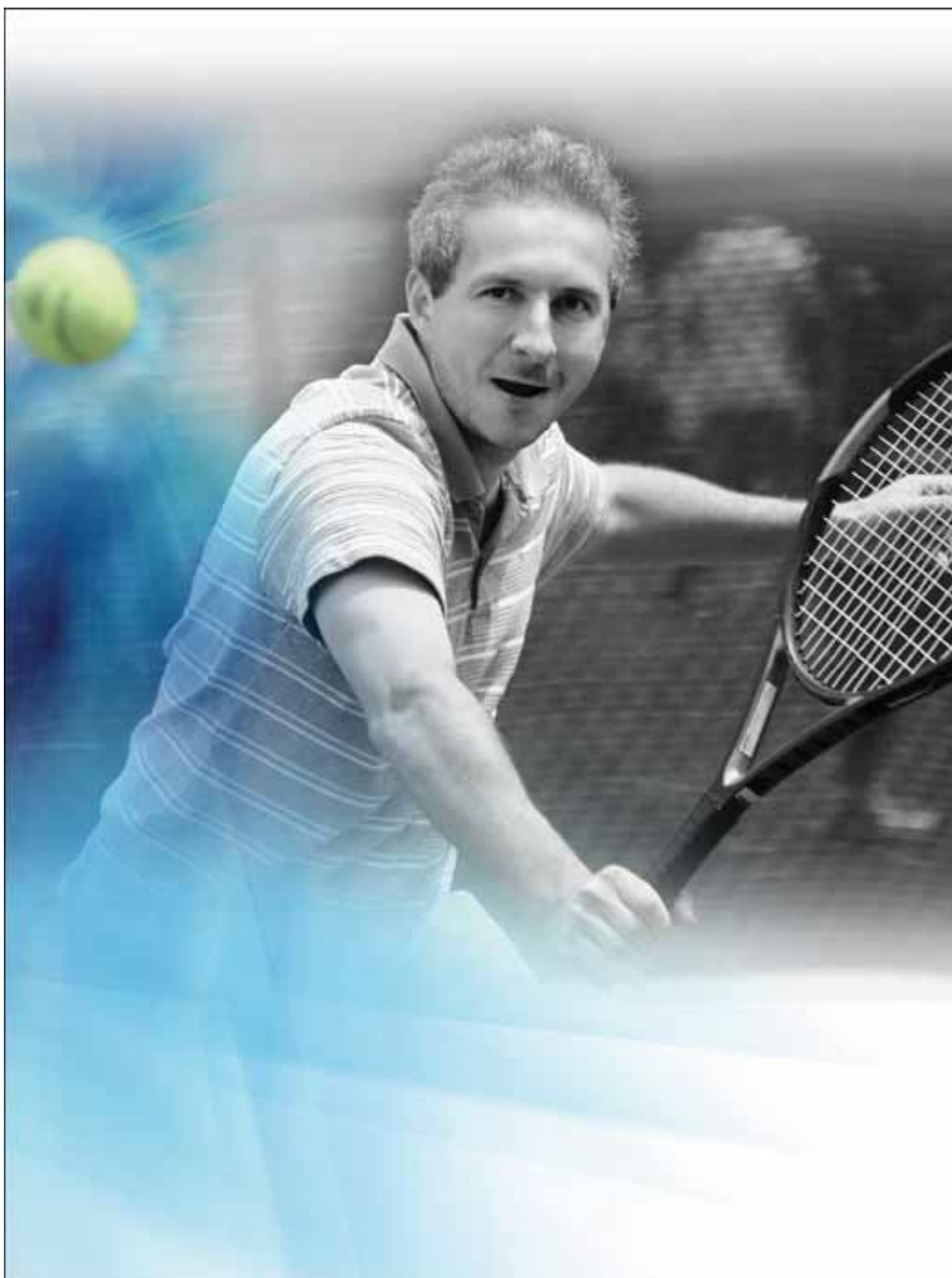
PIWC Committee 2014. From front left: Wipa Tanmanatragul, scholarship chairman; Lyn Carthew, vice president; Jureewan Smulders, president; Maggy Wigman, social coordinator; Back row: Sue Arnulphy, treasurer; Fran Quinn, secretary and Carole Dux, administrator.

WANABURI HOTEL

Phuket's brand new high-end hotel resort accommodation 'Wanaburi hotel' proudly celebrated their soft opening last week.



Justin Swart (2nd right), sales manager of Wanaburi Hotel with Wanaburi team members.



PHUKET ITF SENIOR PRO CIRCUIT 2014

7-12 APRIL 2014

ITF Senior Pro Tournament in Phuket
Played on world-class covered plexicushion tennis courts

MEN'S SINGLES & DOUBLES	35,40,45,50,55,60,65,70
WOMEN'S SINGLES & DOUBLES	35,40,45,50
MIXED DOUBLES	35,45

Sign in for Singles on 6 April (Sunday) from 4:00 - 6:00 pm. Start date 7 April (Monday)
Sign in for Doubles on 7 April (Monday) by 4:00 pm. Start date 8 April (Tuesday)

The official welcome dinner will be held on 8 April (Tuesday)
at 7:00 pm at Divine Restaurant@ THB 700 per person.



Phuket Gazette

Entry Fee: Singles / Doubles THB 1,500
IPIN: All players must have an IPIN and valid IPIN membership to enter an ITF Seniors Circuit event.
If players do not already have an IPIN they must go to www.Itfennis.com/IPIN to register.

7 Nights Package: Single THB 31,050 / Double THB 23,000
Accommodation / 1 Entry / 3 Meals per day / Airport transportation



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www.thanyapura.com [facebook.com/Thanyapura](https://www.facebook.com/Thanyapura)

Author of the Orient

Former Phuket entrepreneur Don Battles returns to the island to launch his autobiography

FROM growing up in a poor family after the great depression, to rocket engineer during the Cold War missile and space-race era, to entrepreneur in Thailand during the turbulent 1997 financial crisis, and to successful chili farmer in China and Northern Thailand – Don Battles' life could fill many books, but for now, one will have to suffice.

The autobiography in question is: *Merchant Of The Orient, An Entrepreneur's Journey In Life*. Don has written 362 pages covering 70 years of his life, and his biggest focus is on business – first and foremost, doing business as a foreigner in Thailand – a delicate art, in which Don has over 30 years of experience.

A big chunk of Don's entrepreneur years was right here in Phuket, after he arrived on the island in 1995, and where he turned his natural ingenuity and strong work ethic into producing a plethora of food supplies for Thailand's burgeoning hospitality industry.

Starting with one small shop in 1997, he eventually developed a processing center that has created 50 proprietary food products, including 12 different varieties of gourmet sausage, using his father's recipes.

But Phuket is just one of many fascinating chapters in Don's life. His book will take you on a journey through America and Russia, India and Korea, and of course, his beloved Thailand.

Now, an opportunity presents itself to meet Don in person, during the book's official launch party which will be held at the new Speakeasy Bar in the Royal Phuket Marina on Tuesday, April 8, starting at 6:30pm.

Don will talk about the *Merchant Of The Orient* during a 40-minute audio-visual presentation and take part in a Q&A session. For all who knew the very popular Don during his years here, and for all the budding expatriate entrepreneurs on the island, whether they knew him or not, this is one not to be missed.

– *Phuket Gazette*

The event is free of charge and free snack food will be served with guests buying their own drinks at the bar. Seating is limited and The Speakeasy is likely to fill up fast. Those wishing to attend are urged to arrive no later than 6:15pm to avoid disappointment. The book will be available at the event for 700 baht. RSVP at: don@donsfoods.com



Don Battles will be launching his autobiography 'Merchant of the Orient' at Speakeasy Bar in the Royal Phuket Marina on Tuesday, April 8, starting at 6:30pm. Photo: Supplied



Phuket Big Bike Week

JUST in time for Songkran comes this year's Phuket Bike Week 2014. Celebrating its 20th year, the event is expected to attract huge crowds of "rolling thunder" for the six days of festivities in Patong and Phuket Town.

The first four days of the event will be hosted at Loma Park in Patong from April 11-14. Activities will include a custom bikes competition, Miss Phuket Bike Week competition, tattoo competition, American cars show, plenty of music and partying and other activities and entertainment.

The two-wheeled party will make its way over to Saphan Hin, Phuket Town on April 18 and 19 for a safe riding demonstration, speeches by Governor Maitri Inthasut and the Phuket

Big Bike Club, the final round of the custom bike competition and Miss Phuket Bike Week competition and, of course, more music and beach parties.

Want to participate but don't have a big bike? Phuket Big Bike Week offers resources to help you find a bike to buy or rent as well as other resources which can be found on their website.

A plethora of bikes from the big names and artfully created custom setups will be represented. In 2010, Phuket Bike Week hosted 2,800 bikes, more than 30,000 visitors representing 26 countries which generated a reported 700 million baht in revenue.

– *Phuket Gazette*

For more information and schedule visit: phuketbikeweek.com

Katalina on sale



Photo: Supplied

THE Katalina Collection shop in Surin is moving, and starting from April 4 you can enjoy the biggest

swimwear sale ever and get ready for some Songkran festival fun! Buy exclusive swim-wear brands

such as Gottex, G. Oberson, Sunseeker and Katalina Beach Life, starting from 200 baht.

From the catwalk to you

CENTRAL Trading Company Limited, a company of Central Marketing Group (CMG) and an importer and distributor of leading clothing and accessory brands, is attempting to create a new fashion phenomenon for Phuket shoppers with their sale event titled "Runway Selected."

"Welcome summer with an array of more than 30 leading fashion brands including items such as clothing, swimwear, lingerie and handbags with prices discounted by up to 70 per cent,"



Photo: Petrolch2012

said a company spokesperson.

The sale will be held from March 26 to April 8 at Phuket Square Hall 1 on the ground floor of Jungceylon shopping center in Patong.

"We selected many famous

brands from different countries to provide special prices such as Nautica's Polo shirt from 1,359 baht, short-sleeve shirts from American brand John Henry are only 490 baht. For ladies, we provide skirts from Miss Sixty for only 500-850 baht, Jantzen swimwear 399 baht, and Maidenform's lingerie at 399 baht."

Other luxury fashion brands available at the sale will include: The Oddyssey, Azona, FCUK, Eastpak, Benetton, Energie, H.E. by Mango and many more.

WHAT'S ON in Phuket

March 29, 7pm-11pm, Earth Hour Wine Dinner at Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket

Casuarina Beach Restaurant & Pub invites you to gather at a specially created 'Earth Hour - Dinner under the stars' event. Featuring a four-course wine dinner by the sea, additional activities that evening include our resident Red Rhythm band who will perform an unplugged mini concert. Join us to celebrate our commitment to the planet at our 'Earth Hour - Dinner under the stars' Wine dinner. Priced at Baht 1,500++ per person (food only) and THB 2,500++ (food paired with wines). Bookings are essential. For reservations, call Food & Beverage Team on 076-362999 ext. 7303 or email dtlfb@dusit.com

Apr 3-6, 8-6pm. Arnco Phuket Oilfield Classic

The 6th annual Arnco Phuket Oilfield Classic will be held from April 3 to 6 and the organizers, Asian Golf Events, are expecting more than 130 oil and gas executives from around the world to gather in Phuket for four days of golf and entertainment. The event is being held at the Novotel Vintage Park in Patong where festivities will begin with a welcome cocktail party before players take to the course for a Texas scramble event at Red Mountain. The following day there is another individual stableford event at Loch Palm, after which there will be a gala dinner.

For more info, contact David Pettigrew on 081-988 0600, email davidjohnpettigrew@gmail.com or visit asiangolfevents.com

The *Phuket Gazette* and PGTV's 'Phuket Today' show, the island's only nationally broadcast television program (aired daily on True Visions channels 85 and 59), are proud to sponsor this event.

Apr 4, 7-11pm, Indian Curry Buffet

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 mouthwatering chicken tikka, samosas, freshly baked naans and more. Location: Navrang Mahal in Karon Sea Sands Resort. For more info contact Jaspal Singh on 076 286464, send an email to info@navrangmahal.com or go to navrangmahal.com

Apr 5-12. Phuket ITF Senior Pro Circuit 2014

ITF Senior Pro Tournament in Phuket at Thanyapura. Played on world-class covered plexi-cushion tennis courts. Entry deadline: March 19. For more information contact Club Ser-



Dubai 8th - 10th April 2014 International Property Show

Photo: Mike Robertson

vices on 76 336000 ext. 5055, email tslc@thanyapura.com.

Apr 6. 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. Substitute Holiday for Chakri Day

A public holiday in Thailand commemorating the Chakri dynasty.

Apr 13-15. 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.

Apr 20, 6-12pm Easter Buffet Dinner at Two Chefs

Large buffet including: Easter bread, pickled herring, smoked salmon, beet salad, liver p t, Easter ham, Easter eggs, Swedish meatballs, chicken & fish fillet skewers, beef Stroganoff, apple pie with homemade vanilla sauce, waffles with raspberry jam, Swedish chocolate balls and much more. All this and much more for only 695 baht, with children at just 350 baht, including a welcome drink. There will be egg painting for all the kids and live music from the famous Two Chefs house band from 8pm till late. Come for the food and stay for the fun! Form more information call 076-330065.

May 1. Labor Day

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

May 5. Coronation Day

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

May 17, 10am-6pm. IELTS in Phuket

An International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test will be held in Phuket and organized by Phuket Australian Visa and Student Services (AVSS). To register for the test contact: 076 210934 or 086-595 5148, email avsssouth@gmail.com or go to theavss.net

May 24. Visakha Bucha Day

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

June 12 to July 13. FIFA World Cup in Brazil

Football (soccer) fans around the world look forward to the excitement of the 20th edition of the World Cup. This year will 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. 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.

Jul 12. Buddhist Lent

This day of a full moon marks the start of the Buddhist Lent, or rains retreat - the three-month annual retreat observed by Theravada practitioners. It is the traditional time for Thai males to ordain as a monk, informally observed as the start of the rainy season, when the Southwesterly Monsoons are in full force.

Aug 12. Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday

Her Majesty the Queen Srikritiyakara's 82nd Birthday. Also celebrated as Mother's day in Thailand. Her Majesty's Birthday is a public holiday.

Oct 23. 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. 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.

Nov 19-22. Phuket Interna-

tional Sportfishing Tournament

Registration is on the evening 19 November 2014 from 6pm onwards, at the Tamarind Bar & Grill in Chalong. The weight station will be at the Tamarind on all three fishing days, 20-22 November. The final evening and prize giving party will also be held at the Tamarind. In an effort to showcase individual team skills, the rules of the Tournament (PIST) this year have been designed to allow teams to fish the event as they would while fun fishing.

This annual event, now in its 15th year, is proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and PGTV's 'Phuket Today' show, the island's only nationally broadcast television program (aired daily on True Visions channels 85 and 59). For more information send an email to uweschittek@yahoo.com.



Rallying to the cause

The 4th annual PVCphuket.com Invitational Rally recently raised money to assist the Raunjai Rescue Foundation

AN INTREPID twenty four teams explored the island this past weekend during the fourth annual PVCphuket.com Invitational Car Rally, which is held in support of the Raunjai Rescue Foundation. Organizers expect to have raised about 100,000 baht to buy the foundation a new heavy-duty stretcher.

Event organizer Byron Jones of Media Business Services was delighted at the response of the participants involved.

"The turnout coupled with the financial support from sponsors and the volunteers can only mean the continuation into a fifth year for this not-for-profit event," explained Jones.

The route, designed by Clerk of the Course Jum Ali Khan, took participants from the tail to the tip of the island with many people surprised at their discovery of new secret island spots. Things got started at the Green Man Pub in Chalong with a delicious stop-over for lunch at Dewa Resort in Nai Yang before the wrap-up dinner and ceremony at Bliss Beach Club.

First place overall and best Thai team went to Car # 2 Da Vinci Lifestyle 1. Second place went to Car # 10 Hangover 4 and third place was taken by car # 21 Dewa Phuket. The best female test drive at Thanyapura went to Supergirls.

Title sponsor Nathan Brown of PVCphuket.com says the entire day was a do-not-miss event, "I am so happy to have been able to support this worthwhile event. No one will want to miss it next year!"

Check out all of the event photos at: phuketinvitational.com or [facebook.com/phuketgazette](https://www.facebook.com/phuketgazette). To see all the action at the rally check out next week's 'Phuket Today' show on a television near you and online at: phuketgazette.net/tv.



In praise of the hose



A NEWS item informs us that the bidet, an invention of the French, is now being accepted as a fixture in upscale American households.

For readers who didn't know, a bidet (pronounced "bee-day") is a sort of assistant toilet. It squirts water upward to cleanse the nether regions of women. It could probably cleanse the nether regions of men as well, but we are getting into tricky territory here, censorship-wise.

Thanks to its enduring streak of puritanical morality, America has long held a bias against the bidet. As an American, it pains me to have to inform my fellow countrymen that they are not only way out of line in their unjust prejudice against the bidet; they are also way behind the times when it comes to toilet appliances in general.

If you were to ask me, "Curm, in your long and utterly misspent sojourn in the Land of Smiles, what aspect of Thai culture has impacted your failing brain most impactfully?", you would find me

quick with a ready answer. I would dismiss with disdain such prestigious icons of Thai culture as Starbucks, McDonald's, KFC, 7-Eleven, skin whiteners, and "buy one, get one free". Without an instant's hesitation, I would reply: "The hose."

What, you will ask, is the hose? Ah, dear reader, the hose is an invention that graciously accompa-



Photo: Nancy Wombat

Farewell, foul toilet paper.

nies almost every toilet in Thailand. It functions as the toilet's loyal sidekick. Batman has Robin, the Lone Ranger has Tonto, the Cisco Kid has Pancho...and the toilet has the hose.

If you doubt this, go to the bathroom of whatever building you are currently in. There, nestled snugly next to the toilet, you will behold the hose, basking modestly in the shadow of its big brother. It fits in a little metal holder attached to the wall and comes equipped with a small handle.

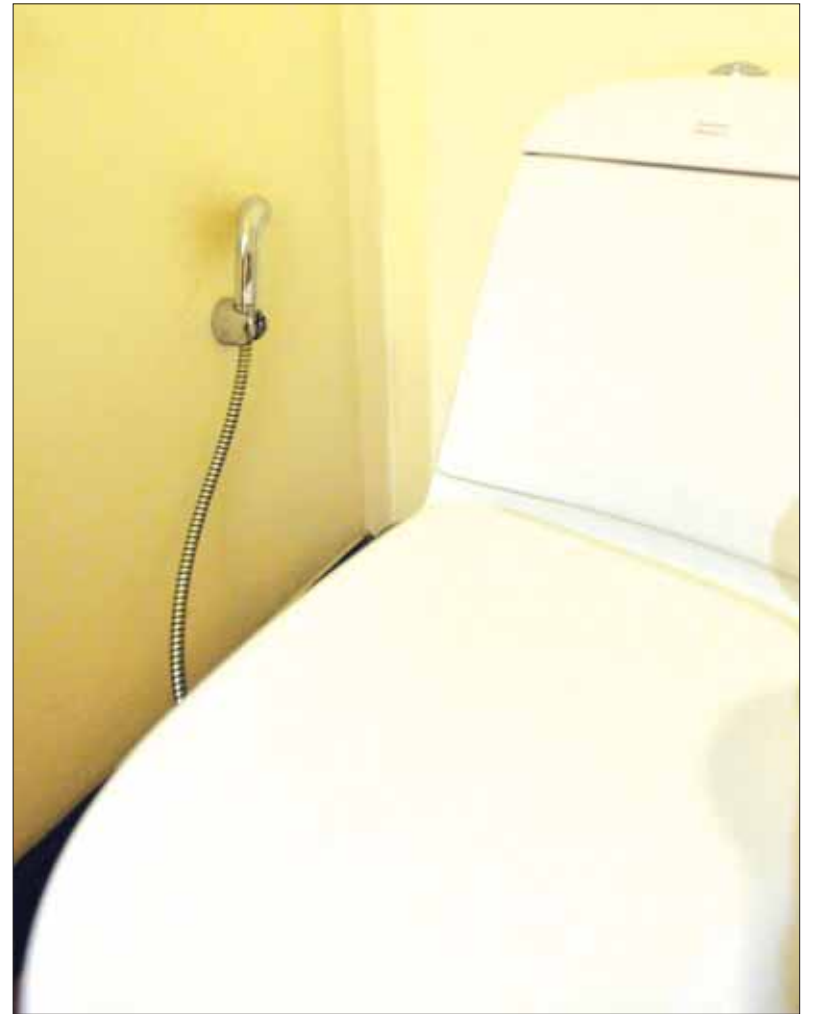
Why do I laud it in such glowing

terms? Because it does away with the necessity of using toilet paper after every major excretory event. Farewell, foul toilet paper! Thy day is done! Thou art bound for extinction! No longer must we endure the onerous burden of tearing several sheets off the roll, folding them delicately, and reaching back, down, and up to wipe residual excrescences from our most opprobrious orifice.

Instead, we detach the hose from its little holder, reach back and down, aim it up at the area of concern, and press the handle. Lo! A mighty stream of water gushes into the hole of shame, cleansing it of the aforementioned excrescences. We don't even have to wash our hands afterwards, for they have not come into even remote contact with any substance that might defile them.

I have long maintained that any civilization can be judged by the quality of its toilets. The universal use of the hose in Thailand vaults it to the forefront of every civilized nation. I urge the decadent nations of the West to embrace it without delay.

Ye Olde Curmudgeon can be lauded for his insights c/o s.tsow@outlook.com, except when he's in the bathroom embracing the hose.



The hose (sometimes referred to as the bum gun) can be found accompanying almost every toilet in Thailand. Photo: Jeremie Schatz



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Soaking up the sun



Indian milkweed has no problem thriving throughout a dry spell. Photo: Adityamadhav83



Thevetia peruviana are in full bloom around Phuket despite the drought. Photo: Forest and Kim Starr

WHEN I first started writing this column, a botanist friend gave me some sage advice. Always, he said, take note of the plants that are doing well in your locality. That observation will give you a good idea of which ones will flourish in your own patch. Such an observation is particularly apt now that we are experiencing a drought. Look around you to see which plants have the best survival kit in these bone-dry conditions.

Of course, ornamental trees and large woody shrubs are coping well because they have deep roots and are shedding leaves to limit water loss through transpiration. My magnolia (*michelia champaca* or *champak*) has lost perhaps 80 per cent of its foliage, but it will grow new leaves once the monsoon arrives and saturates the ground. My solitary acacia has deposited many of its leaflets in the pool, but it is as tough as old boots.

Other plants, however, are showing little sign of distress, even revelling in the conditions. *Neriums* (oleanders or *yii tho*), for example, are in full bloom all over the island, especially *thevetia peruviana*. Its

beautiful glossy foliage never seems to lose its shine in the noontday heat, and its golden or apricot, trumpet-shaped flowers make it an attractive addition to most gardens. Poisonous though, so not a sensible choice if you have young children who might be attracted to its glossy green fruits.

Bougainvilleas, as I recently noted are perhaps better than I have ever seen them in Phuket – a mass of color everywhere – and they have not had a drenching for perhaps two months. What is particularly impressive is the ever-growing number of colorful hybrids. Where we used to get only pink or pallid purple flowers, we now see vibrant displays of luminous vermilion, deep salmon-pink and chrome yellow bracts. In some cases, the blooms are a mass of color, completely enveloping the outline of the shrub.

Another lover of xeric habitats is the Indian milkweed (*calatropis gigantea* or *rak dok*). While bougainvilleas have usually been deliberately planted as a specimen yard



Gardening
By Patrick Campbell

shrub or to form a thorny barrier, the milkweed often crops up unannounced on waste lots where its seeds have

dispersed. Impervious to today's baked earth, its clusters of white flowers, some with purplish centers, are everywhere. A bonus for the larvae of monarch butterflies.

Even the concrete jungle has its share of surprises. Passing today through Phuket Town, I was struck by the floral displays in a number of small walled gardens, only feet from the sulphurous fumes of passing traffic. One wall was adorned with a gentian blue ipomoea (*I. indica*), the first morning glory of this particularly glorious hue I have encountered here.

Another, even smaller front yard, had an amazing flame vine (*pyrostegia venusta*). The whole wall was clad in a profusion of vivid orange tubular flowers. I have not featured this vine in dispatches – and it climbs conveniently by means of tendrils – because the prevailing wisdom is that it prefers the mountainous regions of Northern Thailand. Here, however, it was in sump-

tuous bloom. It actually belongs to the *bignonia* family and like the much commoner *magnifica*, with its mauve trumpet-shaped flowers, it thrives in full sun. No shortage of that commodity at the moment.

I spoke recently of the durable qualities of the coral vine (*antigonon leptus*). One climbing a roadside wall behind Home Pro in Chalong is still in flower despite the fact that nobody, it seems, takes the trouble to attend to its needs. It will surely outlast the dry spell. So too the roadside golden rain trees (*cassia fistula*), and the yellow bignonias, tecomastans. Plumerias, too, both the white *obtusata* and the multi-colored *rubra* seem unaffected by the conditions, as do the many varieties of *ixora*.

Among foliage plants – aside from the desert denizens such as yuccas, agaves and cacti, top survivors include *polyscias*, *duranta* and, my personal favorite, *schefflera*.

Sun lovers all...

If you have a question or a garden that you would like featured you can email me at: drpaccampbell@gmail.com

Tip of the week

Water conservation

WATER demands in Phuket will continue to rise. So water management becomes an even greater challenge.

Choose and locate plants sensibly. If you mix plants that require little or no irrigation with those that need regular moisture, you will be wasting water on the undemanding ones and may even harm them. Organize your garden into "hydrozones" – groups of plants with similar water needs. Placing your drought resistant plants further from the house will save lugging hoses to the far reaches of your estate. Try to identify root zones: the trick is to apply just enough water to moisten a plant's entire root system. Even tree roots are mostly located in the top two feet of soil. Don't use a spray; too



Photo: Hugo.org

Organize your garden into hydrozones.

much water will be lost through evaporation. A root irrigator is a good idea: it is a needle-like hose attachment that you insert 6-12 inches into the soil, which injects water directly into the ground near large shrubs.

Dog of the week

Muffin

THIS is Muffin and she is a sweet, gentle old girl who's had a rough life on the streets in Phuket. When the folks at Doggie Heaven found her, she was sick and had a very bad skin problem. More than anything, she was feeling unloved since her previous owners didn't want her anymore and left her on the side of the road to fend for herself.

Now that she has a full tummy and is getting some loving at Doggie Heaven, she feels a lot better, but more than anything, she wants to find a place someplace new to call home where she is allowed in the house and can be a part of the family.



Muffin wants to be a part of your family.

Please consider adopting her. You can see more photos of Muffins at : doggieheaven.net or you can contact Sherin at Doggie Heaven, 084-877 3566

Make it special at Sizzler

By Mark Knowles

INTERNATIONALLY famous steakhouse chain Sizzler has always been known as a place to go for great value food, especially top quality meat and their signature fresh salad bar. Sizzler Patong has just upped the ante with some fantastic daily specials that showcase some of their most popular dishes.

Now, no matter which day you get a craving for some tasty Western dishes, Sizzler has a special on offer that is sure to get your mouth watering. Kick off the week on Monday with a grilled chicken fillet, served with sauce and chips, for just 199 baht. Tuesday is for the gluttons among us, with all-you-can-eat barbecue pork ribs, so tender the meat just falls off the bone, and for just 399 baht with chips, you will not be leaving hungry!

Get over the mid-week hump on Wednesdays with a huge Sizzler burger, served with lashings of cheese and bacon, with a side of chips and a free beer for just 299 baht. Next up on Thursdays are some classic American comfort foods, like two hot dogs with tomato, onion and cilantro, smothered in your choice of condiments for 199 baht, or to really satisfy your hunger, grab the all-you-can-eat crispy chicken wings for 299 baht, both come with a side of chips.

Seafood lovers will be thanking God it's Friday with classic English style fish and chips available for 199 baht, but for even better value, it is suggested you go for the all-you-can-eat shrimp and chips which is a steal at 299 baht.

Saturday night is for steak lovers, and you can get a juicy chargrilled loin steak, cut from the finest imported Aussie beef,

for a very reasonable 319 baht, including chips and a sauce of your choice.

Round out your lazy Sundays with some melt-in-the-mouth pork fillet, marinated for hours in a deliciously tangy barbecue sauce and served with crispy chips for 299 baht.

To top off any of these great value specials, make sure you add the salad bar to your selection at the discounted price of 90 baht. You can make your own salad from the selection of fresh cut vegetables and greens and top it with your choice of dressings. Or simply grab one of the ready made salads such as Caesar, potato, coleslaw, pasta salad, or for something a little different, try the mango and cranberry salad. There is a range of soups to choose from too, but for my money it's got to be the creamy mushroom soup – so, that's all-you-can-eat soups, pastas and salads for only another 90 baht.

Even if you your favorite special isn't on when you visit, there are still plenty of Sizzler's classic menu items to select from. For example, the strip loin with Burgundy champignon sauce – 225 grams of Australian strip loin on a bed of sweet peppers and onions topped with a rich mushroom sauce, or the fisherman's platter with breaded calamari, tempura basa fish and shrimps served with tangy cocktail and tartar dipping sauces.

So no matter what day or time you are in Patong, Sizzler has a great value and delicious special to satisfy your hunger.

Sizzler Patong, Banana Walk, Patong Beach, Patong Beach Road, Phuket 83150, tel. 076-340953



Saturday nights at Sizzler is the time for steak lovers. A juicy chargrilled loin steak is just 319 baht. Photos: Supplied.



With the all-you-can-eat choices on Sizzler Patong's new specials menu, you will not be leaving hungry.



Classic American comfort food takes the shape of hot dogs with tomato, onion and cilantro.

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Catch a Racha



Blazing Saddles

By Baz Daniel

The Racha Islands situated 20 kilometers south of Phuket are better known for scuba diving than cycling, but our intrepid correspondent Bicycling Baz headed off there anyway with his mountain bike in tow....and was very glad that he did!

MAYBE it's just me, but the sense of relief these days when I depart Phuket with my bike seems palpable. As cycling on the island gets ever-more challenging, my increasing inclination is to hightail it to quieter locations, bike in tow, and see what I can find.

This sense of relief was most certainly apparent when I recently boarded the early morning Racha Resort speedboat from Chalong and left the chaos and bad tempers of the pier and the traffic-choked access road far behind in the speedboat's frothing spume.

Lying due south of Phuket are the paired small islands of Racha Yai and Racha Noi, which just to confuse matters, are also known as Raya Yai and Raya Noi. The 20 kilometer speedboat trip took about 45 rib-pounding minutes, but as we cruised into Batok Bay fringed by the talcum-powder white sands of Ao Tawan Tok (also known as Ao Bungalow) Beach, a sense of calming tranquility settled upon my fevered brow.

The elegant Racha Resort



Riding in Racha is quite challenging, the trails there are steep and full of rocks and tree roots.

stands sentinel, white and lovely, upon the little hillside overlooking Batok Bay and is without a doubt one of the premier resorts in southern Thailand. I had the pleasure of staying at the Racha seven years ago and so knew that their standards of accommodation, food and hospitality were second to none, and I was looking forward to a couple of nights reacquainting myself with their seductive luxuries.

What had changed since my last visit however, was the schizophrenic nature of Batok Bay. The Bay is a total delight of quietude with a picture-perfect beach, headlands and a limpid azure sea for most of the time. Unfortunately, this idyll is compromised from 10am until 4pm when the tourist day-tripper speedboats arrive from Phuket in a cacophonous scramble for space – outboards and anchors seemingly flying in all directions. It is definitely best to give the beautiful bay a wide berth while this is going on. But after 4pm when the day-trippers have gone, Batok Bay reverts to its true self as one of the most beguiling places in the Andaman. It is west-facing and so is a sensational sunset-watching locale with a terrific beachside bar and a little seafood restaurant at its northern end.

Racha Yai is only about three kilometers long and two wide, but

is covered in rocky trails that buck and weave their way around the island, providing some interesting mountain biking, with terrific ocean vistas. Immediately behind the Racha Resort you find yourself cycling through a bric-a-brac of abandoned buildings and then local resorts, restaurants and massage shops run by the island's dozen or so permanent Muslim residents. It's charming in a run-down and slightly haunted sort of way and makes you feel a long way away from the developing tumult of Phuket.

I set off to ride around Racha Yai's trails at about 5pm and found the riding quite challenging and technical because of their steepness plus obstructing rocks, tree roots and an abundance of fallen palm fronds. After a little while I came upon a muddy lake which was a hive of activity. Not only were abundant fish throwing themselves about in piscine abandon, but a huge pair of water monitor lizards waddled across the track, then stopped and glowered at me, daring me to ride any further. They were seriously big....about a meter and a half long from tip of flicking tongues to end of lashing scaly tails....and so I decided to give them all the time they needed to slope off into the muddy depths before I rode onwards.

I cycled along a coastal headland for a about a kilometer, as

the sun began to cast magical pink and purple traces into the sky. My heart had just about recovered from the lizard encounter when rounding a steeply descending bend I almost ran into a statuesque white goat that was as nonplussed as I. We stared at each other, and then he began to approach me steely-eyed. At the last moment he veered off the path and plunged down a steep rocky cliff towards the crashing sea.

Such are the adventures of biking on Racha Yai, and a well-sprung mountain bike is the order of the day... plus a crash hat in case of spills, or indeed braining by falling coconuts!

A little to the south of Racha Yai is its smaller twin, Racha Noi. This island is a five-kilometer-long strip of uninhabited land with more rocks than beaches. There is a small bay on its west coast that is a favorite spot for fishing, but apart from diving there is little else to do here and a hike upon the mountain trails was as much as I could manage during the following evening when I visited.

The Racha Islands are an incredibly laid-back and beguiling escape from Phuket and the Racha Resort offers accommodation and service without peer.

If you get the chance "Catch a trip to Racha" for sure!



There are no lack of trails with terrific ocean vistas on the island.



The 20 kilometer speedboat trip to Racha takes about 45 minutes and is well worth the time.

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Angels on two wheels

By Alan Hunter

ON March 15, the Second International Ride-4-Kids took place with two main goals. The first, was to donate at least 1,000 kilograms of much needed rice and other necessary supplies to the Hands Across the Water Orphanage in Baan Tharn Namchai, near Takua Pa, about 25 kilometers north of Khao Lak. The second, was to have more bikers representing more nations than the previous year.

The first goal was reached with an incredible 1200kg of rice carried by the fleet of supporting vehicles, and almost 200,000 baht in donations. As far as the second goal goes, there were a record number of over 80 bikes and bikers representing 15 nations, among them a biker from Belgium who traveled over 10,000km to the event.

The cavalcade of bikes and supporting vehicles started from the Bavaria House at 1:30pm and headed for the Tsunami Police Boat T813 Memorial Site just across from Bang Niang Market for a photo session. The procession then reassembled, and headed north for the twenty minute ride to the Orphanage at Baan Tharn Namchai.

Founded in 2004 following the horrendous Tsunami, their mission was to provide immediate aid and shelter for children who had lost their parents. At the orphanage, the children, staff, volunteers and local people were eagerly awaiting the biker's arrival. After parking their bikes, the riders carried all the supplies into the main Assembly Hall.

Having completed the transfer of goods, the visitors were treated

to some traditional Thai dancing by the young girls from the orphanage, and some not very traditional, but energetic, dance moves by the young boys. The riders were then formally welcomed by the orphanage's director, Khun Rotjana who explained how the work of the orphanage brings relief to the tsunami orphans, who still form the nucleus of the 90-plus children in the orphanage's care.

She first introduced Sky, a 10-month-old boy, who had been found abandoned in a garbage bag soon after his birth and had thankfully been nursed back to health in a welcoming and supportive home. Next, came the introduction of a young girl who was left pregnant after her ordeal, and who, along with her baby, received care and loving support from the orphanage. These stories touched the hearts of the bikers.

After posing for photographs, the procession reassembled and roared off to return to the Club House in Khao Lak. A sudden downpour caused the roads to become slippery and one biker came to grief when he skidded off of the road. He was attended to by the local rescue team and taken to Takua Pa Hospital where, thankfully, he was diagnosed with only a number of bruises and no broken bones. His bike didn't sustain any serious damage and is ready for the next years Ride-4-Kids event. See you there!

Special thanks to Tony Schnuerle from Augsburg, Boonma Eaibsub from Phuket and Sarun "Sam" Rongrueangkul from Khao Lak and of course to all riders and supporters. For more information go to ride-4-kids.com



Over 80 bikes and bikers representing 15 nations joined the ride this year. Photos: Supplied



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Stories of orphaned kids softened the hearts of tough looking bikers.

Landing in Legoland

By Saran Mitrarat

IF YOU are on a visa run to Malaysia or Singapore with your family, a visit to Legoland, the fantasy world created from millions of the tiny eponymous plastic bricks, is a must. It is a fair bet that most of us have played with Lego bricks during our childhoods. But even your wildest dreams of what could be created with them couldn't prepare you for the sight of the park's centerpiece, Miniland, where Asian landmarks have been painstakingly recreated using more than 30 million Lego bricks. It's an interactive world on a scale of 1:20, where people, trains and airplanes come to life at the touch of a button and children, and the young at heart, can let their imaginations run wild.

Legoland Malaysia Resort is the only one of its kind in Asia and brings together a Legoland Park, Water Park and Hotel in one location. It is truly a family-friendly holiday destination with more than 70 hands-on rides, slides, shows and attractions. Almost everything is hands-on, so you can push, pedal and program, or steer, squirt and splash your way through a truly interactive experience – and, of course, there's building too. It is located in Jahor Bahru, in the south of Malaysia, about four hours by car from Kuala Lumpur and just 45 minute by car from Singapore, so can be done as a day trip from either city.

Arriving at the entrance gate, the first thing you must do is take your family's photo under the sign of Legoland Malaysia. Created from oversized Lego pieces, the huge five-meter high gate draws you into the park and is also a great vantage point to see the Lego Hotel, a castle made from Lego, which provides the perfect backdrop for photos.

Covering about 188 rai of land and divided in six sections – Lego Technic, Lego Kingdom, Imagination, Land of Adventure, Lego City, and Miniland – there is no shortage of activities to keep the whole family occupied. For a thrill, try the mini roller coaster called Project X Adventure, and continue on to the Water Splash, Wave Racers, Dragon's Apprentice, and other adventure games, to keep the adrenaline pumping.

For a more sedate activity, try a walk around Miniland, where you can take a trip around the famous landmark buildings of Asia in no time at all, take care to observe the intricate detail in its construction, and you will see just how much effort went into building it. There are landmarks from many countries, including The Great Wall of China, Taj Mahal, Merlion, a Thai temple and many more. Moreover the beautiful buildings illustrate to children how patient and talented the people who made it are. It is worth pondering just how long they took to build all these miniature creations.

Next up, head to the 4D movie theater, where you can experience total immersion, as the action packed 3D movie progresses, the fourth dimension comes into play – you can not only see a flower garden but you can smell it too. Real water drops onto your head when the film shows a water scene and it seems like you are right there in the movie. Then shout out loud when you see danger lurking to earn a badge and play your part in the loudest shout stunt show in Lego city.

There are too many rides and interactive games to mention here, but rest assured there will not be a dull moment during your day at Legoland. And naturally, for those who want to take the experience



Legoland Malaysia Resort consists of Legoland Park, a water park and a hotel. Photos: Saran Mitrarat

home, The Big Shop stocks the largest range of Lego toys in Asia.

If you are looking for a nice place to spend your family holiday, then Legoland is the perfect part of any itinerary. Combination tickets which give you access to all of the Legoland and Waterpark attractions cost 175 Malaysian ringgit (about 1700 baht) for adults and 140 ringgit (1400 baht) for children under 12 – a discount of 20 per cent is also applicable if you buy your tickets online.

For more information visit the website at: legoland.com.my

The author travelled courtesy of Tourism Malaysia and Legoland Malaysia.



Legoland is located in Jahor Bahru in the south of Malaysia.



Asian landmarks have been painstakingly recreated using more than 30 million Lego bricks.

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Lord of the drain flies

By Somchai Huasaikul

MY goal is to never seek out conflicts with nature, however, I have been dragged into battle with my fair share of household pests. Over the years, I have eradicated rodents, terminated termites and executed enough cockroaches to dig myself into a pretty formidable karma cavity.

It was not until I moved to Phuket, however, that I ran up against an insect enemy so insistently annoying that I felt compelled to write about it here: my ongoing battle with a daunting, yet easy-to-underestimate opponent: the not-so-dreaded “drain fly”.

War is war. In the words of ancient Chinese war strategist Sun Tzu, “If you do not know your enemies, nor yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle.”

I cannot say how well I know myself, especially after downing a few beers, but I knew little to nothing about drain flies – until they decided to move into my home. I had seen them before, of course. These are the tiny black flies that one sometimes finds hanging about inside men’s urinals in public restrooms, where they make for fun target practice for the inebriated.

Being a live-and-let-live type of guy, when I first spied a few of these seemingly harmless creatures in my own bathroom and kitchen, my original reaction was, basically, to do nothing.

Sure, I smashed a few into the ceramic tile with my bare hand, surprised to discover how hopeless they were in almost every aspect of pesterdom. They are the easiest flying insect to kill one might imagine. They are ridiculously slow “off the mark”, and when they do man-

age to take to the air, their flight patterns resemble those of a drunken ultralight pilot on a kamikaze mission. Even easier to snatch out of the air in mid-flight than mosquitoes, these poor little critters also lack stamina – I have yet to see one fly more than a few meters before settling down once again, even when confronted with the greatest possible peril: an open palm.

Drain flies are equally hopeless in terms of camouflage. They land their little black bodies down on white ceramic, into which they are inevitably smeared – by me. Because it is so easy, killing them yields precious little satisfaction. Killing a cockroach is high, albeit messy, drama. Even smashing a blood-engorged mozzie caught red-handed in its blood-sucking act brings a

They are ridiculously slow off the mark, and when they do manage to take to the air, their flight patterns resemble those of a drunken ultralight pilot on a kamikaze mission.

strange sense of self-satisfaction. Yet smashing a drain fly amounts to little more than smearing a little protein torpedo onto the wall of your home, with a subsequent search for the toilet paper roll. They don’t even squish like regular bugs, smearing out much more like moths despite the disgustingly damp domain they choose to inhabit.

My retarded routine went on for months, during which time the daily death toll could easily reach several hundred. I tried to make sport out of it by keeping score, but even as I kept losing my tally they just kept coming, and coming – and coming. Finally, I realized that I was losing ground and eventually had no choice but to concede that I was

dealing with a full-blown infestation at the worst possible time, with my house now on the market. At the time, I did not even know the real name of these creatures. The Thai word, I was told, is *malaeng wee* – fruit flies, even though they had no interest whatsoever in fruit or vegetables.

Tiring of this, I finally decided to get to know my enemy. I am a big fan of Latin names, and this one was spot on, given the fact that this particular critter was driving me crazy: *Clogmia albipunctata* of the family *Psychodidae*, commonly known as a “drain fly” or “moth fly”. At the risk of sounding presumptuous, I have started my own effort to rebrand them in Thai as *malaeng suam* “toilet fly” which has caught on – at least under my roof.

Malaeng suam don’t fly right, and seem to enjoy few of the evolutionary advantages of many pests, except one: they reproduce at a truly astonishing rate. Further research informed me that they have a life cycle of about two weeks, hence their popularity in research studies by biologists.

Even though I am afraid of pesticides, I got desperate and eventually pulled a Saddam (he had chemical weapons, didn’t he?) hitting the drains with Baygone. This revealed another one of their previously unappreciated evolutionary advantages – chemical resistance. Other insects unfortunate enough to be caught in the crossfire did that pathetic “dance of death” before expiring, but drain flies appear to be in that state all the time. They are like boxers who never go down.

The key to turning the tide in this war came when, by strict scientific method, I managed to find out exactly where in my homes’ Bur-



A single pair of drain flies can produce thousands of offspring in just a few months’ time. Photo: Sanjay Acharya

mese-built plumbing system they were laying their larvae. This involved getting some see-through plastic containers, coating the insides with a layer of vegetable oil, and monitoring the situation to see where they became stuck. Internet research suggests doing this with crossed masking tape, but that did not work well for me.

As it turned out, the subterranean spot where they were laying their eggs was the one I least expected based on my research, which led me to focus on the bathroom floor and sink drains. In the end, it was the kitchen drain pipe into which my long washing machine drain hose was lowered. Hundreds of generations of these creatures had been living off all the dirt and dander that was removed from the clothes of my family of three: bleach and pesticides be damned.

The key to success was to simply not use that drain for a week and let it fully dry out, then hitting it

with a blow dryer to make sure all of the larvae were dead. Make sure the house is well ventilated if you try this, believe me – especially if you have been pumping pesticides down the drain. The number of *malaeng suam* was thus drastically reduced, and it has remained that way now that we cover that drain every time the washing machine is not in use.

The final secret to keeping *malaeng suam* at bay is simply to ensure that known risk areas remain dry and free of organic matter, and that any new “recruits” cannot fly in from outside, which in my case just meant keeping all the screens shut downstairs. Drain flies may not vector disease or eat your furniture, but like all unwelcome guests, if you find them in your own home, it is best to take immediate action before the situation becomes intolerable.

For comments and queries contact: khabarphuket@gmail.com



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At the sea's mercy

By Jeremie Schatz

THERE are two crazy Frenchmen sailing around the world on a tiny boat and they are here in Phuket but leaving in one hour. That was the first word we heard at the *Gazette* of the adventurers who were in Phuket on a brief hiatus from their voyage in Poseidon's watery world.

Scenes from great ocean-faring tales were instantly resurrected in my mind, such as *In the Heart of Sea*, the real-life story full of tragedy, suffering and cannibalism which was the inspiration for *Moby Dick*, and *Sailing Alone Around the World*, the epic maritime journey of Joshua Slocum's solo sail around the world.

While they were scrambling to stock up on provisions and prepare for the next leg of their journey from Phuket to Sri Lanka before the tide started going out, intrepid sailors Alexandre Seux, 27, and Florian Masnieri, 26, were gracious enough to sit down for a word with the *Gazette*.

Having departed Normandy, France in September 2012, the two Frenchmen looked the part: shoulder length hair bleached by the sun and whipped into a frenzy by the wind, bronzed skin from a year and a half out in the elements and a certain look in the eye that hints to some sort of water-borne wisdom only obtainable from time spent at sea.

"The project was to do a world tour, circumnavigation, on a 6.5 meter (21 foot) boat, so the challenge was to do the world tour with a small boat," says Alexandre matter-of-factly.

The looming question was... why use a small boat? "The small boat is because we had no money. If we would have bought a big boat, the sponsors would have a look at us and say 'enjoy your trip on your 40 foot', it's too easy."

The boat they chose to use is a Mini Transat 6.50 named *Adonf*. The Mini Transat is a purpose built yacht designed for the solo transatlantic yacht race of the same name. Because of the extreme isolation one must endure in the race it has been called "mad" – likely as a reference to the state of mind one must be in by the finish.

Built in 1992, the Frenchmen's Mini Transat lives up to its name, it is quite small indeed, having a length of 6.5 meters and a beam of 3 meters. However, the design enables the craft to plane like a motorboat and is capable of speeds up to 25 knots. Designed to sail single-handed, the rigging and quarters below deck were only intended for a single person. Since they have been exceeding the boats intended weight, they have had to deal with constant repairs of

failing equipment.

"We have been sailing from Normandy to Spain, Portugal, Caribbean, then we crossed the Panama canal, we sailed to Galapagos and then the Marquesas in Polynesia. We stopped in Polynesia for four months because we broke our mast and at that time we needed to find more money," explained Alexandre. "We were going upwind and that was not a good idea, we should have gone downwind. We didn't make a good choice."

After limping their boat from the "middle of nowhere" to Polynesia with a storm sail and the boom upended pretending to be a mast, they were forced to wait it out on the hard for a new mast to be shipped from the US. This delay gave them an opportunity to follow-up on another facet of their journey.

"The other part of the project is the economic project. When we tried to raise sponsorship, we talked about the sailing project, but we also told them that we will meet entrepreneurs around the world and write articles about them," said Alexandre. The two sailors are passionate about sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (CSR). A significant focus of their project has been to search out entrepreneurs whose work promotes environmental stewardship.

With the new mast finding its way to Polynesia, and being fitted in place, they pointed the bow of their tiny boat west north-west and continued on to Bora Bora, the Philippines, Tonga, Fiji, the Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Singapore and, finally, Phuket. After a year and a half and roughly 15,000 nautical miles, they were able to rendezvous with family and friends for three weeks on Phuket.

There are far too many stories from their incredible adventure to publish on this page and they still have another six months to go. Alexandre told the terrifying story of Florian falling overboard in the middle of the night, the 19 tedious days it took to cover 1,000 miles to the Galapagos in the doldrums and the saddening truth of not being

■ We stopped in Polynesia for four months because we broke our mast... We were going upwind and that was not a good idea, we should have gone downwind. ■

able to catch any fish for two months in the empty seas around Southeast Asia.

Preparing their boat, which looked like a tender compared to the boats surrounding it at the Royal Phuket Marina (RPM), they looked at home and eager to ride



Photos: Jeremie Schatz

Alexandre Seux (left) and Florian Masnieri have been sailing around the world on a 6.5 meter sailboat.

the tide out to sea on the next week-long leg of their journey to Sri Lanka. There, they hope to secure sponsorship to continue on the final push back to Normandy. Alexandre explained that, "After Sri Lanka there is a lot of piracy, we are not sure how we will manage it. The idea might be to load the boat on a cargo [ship] from maybe India to Egypt to avoid the risk and go sailing in the Mediterranean."

The sailors wanted to thank Assistant General Manager of RPM Mete Izmen for allowing them to dock there for their stay as well as providing them with equipment to dry dock their boat for repairs.

It appeared that they have been the subject of certain judgments thus far in their trip. As they "battened down the hatches" and prepared to depart, Alexandre offered a final thought, "We know what it



The sailors cast off from RPM to continue their westward journey.

looks like, 'two guys on a small boat sailing together', but it's not what you think." So, ladies, have at them.

To learn more about or follow the rest of their sailing journey, visit ideesdumonde.org or find them on Facebook at *Defi Voile 6.50*

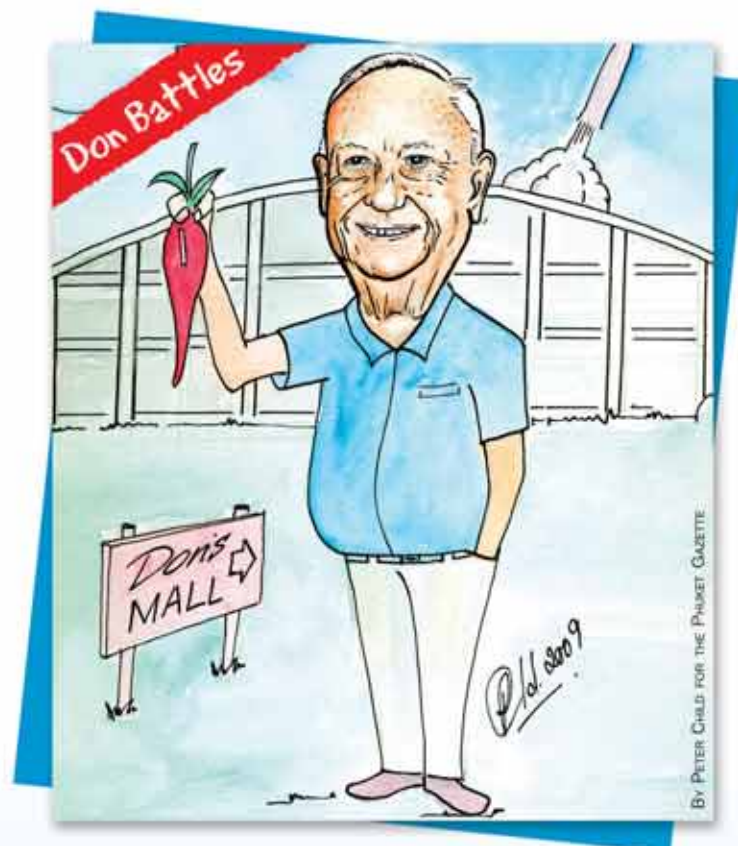
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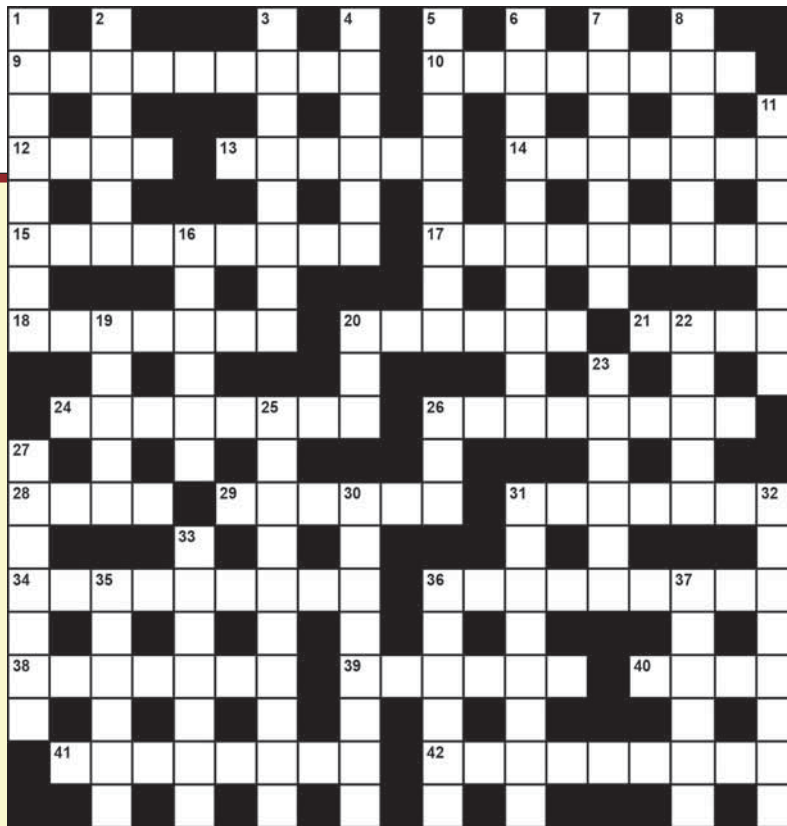
Guaranteed to fascinate. Free entry. Don't miss it!



COFFEE break

Across

9. Determine a second positive (9)
 10. Gave less cutting edges of cloth (8)
 12. End of devotion for adult males (4)
 13. Old students embroiled in maul (6)
 14. Old hand vet near broke (7)
 15. Scant tons produce unvarying quantities (9)
 17. Car, can't it move in an icebound area? (9)
 18. Thirst to back New York in dress (7)
 20. Dramatical musical works unsettled re. ' soap' (6)
 21. One about caught, one time (4)
 24. Note Dude, cat could be instructed (8)
 26. Perhaps no center for shiny cloth (8)
 28. Look lasciviously round moving leg (4)
 29. Serene, I'd clap possibly (6)
 31. Prohibit wild goat from Phuket beach (4,3)
 34. Acquired OK, never at an arrangement (5,4)
 36. Arrange this trial of something tucked into the nether garments (5,4)
 38. Not eat in, eating up pies of tiny fish! (7)
 39. Restricts maxima (6)
 40. Risk spoiling S.E. Asian weapon (4)
 41. Moving spot on, on flat craft (8)
 42. Nail count could be never ending (9)



Down

1. Knotted lace band - just! (8)
 2. Check partition (6)
 3. Fence caused angry complaints (8)
 4. In sum, a new feeling of ill-will (6)
 5. Reckon I set out, mate (8)
 6. Work hard, do business in the trafficking of people (5,5)
 7. Model gently hit bird (7)
 8. Search for half tame small creature (6)
 11. More off-color around the North to laugh unkindly (7)
 16. River fish around ditch (6)
 19. Missing turn, you led back the mountain folk music (5)
 20. Getting on line, do turn out (3)
 22. A musical composition; no, ten, in return (5)
 23. Hat for Ben? Not fixed up (6)
 25. I've let on is maybe set to view (10)
 26. Seafood to pay for when you receive it? (3)
 27. Tot wriggles in cage in small dwelling (7)
 30. Car-less out East? That's negligent (8)
 31. Maybe brainy teetotaler in Northwest France (8)
 32. Very solemnly arranged, how silly! (8)
 33. Persists in sin, sits badly (7)
 35. OK, part arranged for the driver in Thailand (6)
 36. Maybe much as a sub-tropical shrub (6)
 37. A trim about turn in the large space in the middle of a building (6)

Words from the wise:

"I'm sick of following my dreams. I'm just going to ask them where they're goin', and hook up with them later."

— Mitch Hedberg

"A word to the wise ain't necessary — it's the stupid ones that need the advice." — Bill Cosby

Medium

	1						6	
3		9	2		1	4		5
	6		4		7		1	
	7	4				2	9	
	9	5				1	3	
	4		8		9		2	
7		3	1		5	9		6
	5						4	

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

Hard

	3		5		6		2	
7				8				9
			3		1			
9		3				2		5
	7						8	
2		1				6		3
			1		8			
5				4				8
	2		7		5		1	

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20):



As April begins, your intuition is strong and this should guide you in the right direction. In the realm of romance, listen to your heart rather than other people's opinions. The stars suggest that jealousy is a factor where a water sign friend is concerned. Some golden opportunities are due in the coming year for Arians celebrating a birthday this week. The number eight can bring you good luck.

TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21):



Business is best taken care of early next week as the stars suggest that progress will be affected by stumbling blocks after Wednesday. On a personal level, Taureans' determination to be in the right can get in the way of communication with friends. The stars recommend allowing others to see things from their perspective. Number nine can lead to good luck around the end of the month.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):



This is an auspicious time for embracing new ideas. Geminis who have been stuck in a rut are forecast to be inspired towards creative output as March gives way to April.

Romance can be affected by your need for more time alone — balance is the only answer. Those who are single are intrigued by a water sign. Best days for money matters are Thursday and Friday. The number two is fortunate this week.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):



Cancerians who have been struggling to find answers should be satisfied at the end of March. The stars show that feeling more a part of your community will give you support where it's needed. A trip down memory lane reminds those who recently suffered a romantic split why this was necessary. Finances are auspicious during the first few days of April. The number one attracts luck this week.

LEO (July 24-Aug 22):



Finding middle ground is advisable for those born under the sign of Leo. The desire to be in control remains an issue and the stars suggest that everyone will be happier when you back down a little. In the realm of romance, opposites attract as you may be drawn towards someone with whom you have little in common. The number four can open a lucky door this week.

YOUR horoscope By Isla Star

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept 23):



Virgoans will be more tuned in to the needs of others as the end of March approaches. This trend continues into April and the stars suggest that bridges can be mended. Healing a relationship with another earth sign that fell apart recently is forecast to bring you peace of mind. A more compassionate outlook means you could become active in helping those less fortunate. Number five comes alive this week.

LIBRA (Sept 24-Oct 23):



Life settles down for those born under the sign of Libra as April commences. Your energy is positive and this is a good time to put personal affairs in order. Progress in the world of work is smooth, with another air sign ready to seal an important deal. Romance is rewarding this weekend; those who are single enjoy compliments from a surprising direction. The number seven is special for Librans this week.

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22):



The stars suggest that some Scorpios will have to accept a decision they are not entirely happy with. However, there are strong hints that facing up to bureaucracy could land you in an uncomfortable position and it would be wise to retreat gracefully. Turning a blind eye to disagreements between friends is also recommended as taking sides will not be to your advantage. Your lucky number this week is eight.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21):



Those born under the sign of Sagittarius are forecast to enjoy a wave of fresh energy as April starts. Your outlook for this month includes chances of finding more fulfilling work. Expect another fire sign to offer worthwhile rewards for your skills soon. Emotions can run high in the realm of romance — a water sign's inclination to over-spend becomes a serious bone of contention. The number nine stands out this week.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20):



Sharing your vision with the wrong person is highlighted as April gets under way. Those born under the sign of Capricorn who are keen to

find backing for a money making scheme can be taken advantage of by an air sign. The stars suggest listening to people who have experience in this area before taking action. Hot days for romance are Sunday and Monday. The number five is special this week.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19):



Events in the world of work can compromise your freedom as April commences. The stars indicate that this may be the result of a new colleague's inability to step up to the mark and patience is your only answer. In the realm of romance, keeping a cool head helps Aquarians to see a relationship with a water sign in a more realistic light. Your lucky number this week is six.

PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20):



Promises will be easy to make, but much harder to break. The stars recommend that those born under the sign of Pisces think carefully before they speak this week. Where work is concerned, a fire sign wants answers before you are ready to give them. In the realm of romance, a blossoming relationship with an air sign should be allowed to grow slowly. The number three should be fortunate for Pisceans.

Thalang trample ICC



By Andrew Macmillan

IN SUNDAY'S JLL league match, the Thalang cricket team chased down 143 runs in 22.4 overs at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) to defeat the Island Cricket Club (ICC).

In their first encounter of the season on February 9 ICC set the record for the lowest team total on the ACG of just 37 runs. Winning the toss this time around, ICC's captain, Anand Chand, choose to bat first on a pitch with some damp patches from an overnight shower. The pitch wasn't to blame for the running mix up on the third ball of the morning that saw the end of their top batsman Chand without facing a ball. Simon Wetherell of Thalang pounced on the ball hit to mid-on and fired it straight over the stumps to see the back of Chand.

ICC were 7-2 in the 4th over and this time it was a mix up of sorts for the Thalang team with two players colliding during the catch but the ball was safely in the wicket keepers gloves. Iqbal Malik (35 runs from 38 balls) was a bright light for ICC despite not getting full value for his shots from the lush ACG outfield. He helped ICC along to 49-3 at the first drinks break before Craig Murphy (2-14) bowled Malik in the 15th over to take the wind out of the ICC sails.

During the next 11 overs, Thalang's bowlers slowed down the scoring rate and snared another five wickets for just 31 runs. Umpire John King placed his lunch

order for one of the delicious tuna sandwich's from the Boundary Bar when he saw last batsman, Paresh Borkar, come out to join Saleam in the middle. Saleam didn't have lunch on his mind as he manipulated the strike, entertained the crowd with his hitting, and more importantly took ICC from 87-9 to a competitive 143 runs from 34.3 overs. Saleam scored 53 runs off just 43 balls including 8 fours and a six before he was eventually caught behind off the bowling of Andrew McMillan who chimed in with 4-37 from 5.3 overs.

With just five more matches to be played before the finals and all the teams still in with a chance of lifting the JLL league trophy, there were plenty of spectators at the ground with vested interests in the result.

Requiring 144 runs for victory from 35 overs, Paresh Borkar of ICC struck with the new ball on the fifth ball of the innings. A. Saleam, still on a high after his half century, opened up from the other end and had an immediate impact. He bowled experienced batsman Craig Murphy with his first ball and Thalang had lost 2 wickets from just seven balls. Simon Wetherell dug out another fast full pitched delivery from Saleam and then went about building a partnership with Bill Stahmer. The two Thalang batsmen took the score to 84-2 at the first drinks break. They were helped along by 11 byes from the ICC wicket keeper Shah Ullah and from four legs byes scored from a rare



Thalang picked up another bonus point to extend their lead over Laguna to four points in the JLL league championship. Photo: Michael Way

free hit opportunity.

The partnership was broken soon after the break with Stahmer seemingly playing a nice shot but being adjudged LBW for a well compiled 32 runs. Wetherell, who scored 35 well compiled runs, gave up his wicket while searching for a quick finish to the match and an extra bonus point.

The leagues luckiest man and highest run scorer, Justin Thomatos, then walked out to the crease and his spree of good luck continued. Any chance of ICC getting a much needed win was lost when bowler Syed Hussain over-stepped the line and gifted Thomatos a free hit that he dispatched to the boundary.

The final result may have been a given

at this stage but there was still time for some controversy when Paresh Borkar cleaned bowled Thomatos only to have the square leg umpire call a no-ball for the ICC having three fieldsmen behind square leg. Fresh from representing Phuket in the National Games in Srisaket, Thai teenager Paan, fittingly hit the winning runs for Thalang in the 23rd over.

Thomatos finished on 30 not out from 23 balls as Thalang picked up yet another bonus point to extend their lead over Laguna to four points in the JLL league championship.

This Sunday, March 30 at 10am, top of the ladder team Thalang play the undefeated Laguna outfit at the ACG.

Freediving competition continues

THE We Freedive Suunto Series continues this Sunday at Phuket Country Home in Chalong as competitors line up to participate in the "Dynamic Without Fins (DNF)" event.

The event will be monitored by Association Internationale pour le Developpement de l'Apnee (AIDA) judges Sarah Whitcher and Richard Wonka. All competitors' results will be entering the AIDA International ranking list.

Those participating in the DNF competition will attempt, in a controlled manner, to travel the farthest distance horizontally underwater without any propulsion aids.

"Dynamic without fins is the most natural of... disciplines measuring the distance for many freedivers, because it doesn't need any propulsing material, but very good technique," says the AIDA website.

— *Phuket Gazette*

Those wanting to participate in the event, or future Suunto Series events, can register at WeFreedive.org



Photo: Jean-Marc Kuffer

Freedive series continues in Chalong.

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World Cup should air for free

NATIONAL Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) yesterday declared that World Cup football in Brazil in June should be shown on free-to-air television channels, warning that any relaxation of the rules could lead to the emergence of more set-top boxes being sold specifically for viewing certain major sporting events.

RS, which won the World Cup broadcasting rights, had decided to allocate only 22 of 64 World Cup matches for broadcast on free channels, while the remainder could be watched on its "World Cup set-top box" due to be launched on April 1.

According to the NBTC rules, the football World Cup is one of the seven sporting events that must be televised on free TV channels, and yesterday the office reiterated its stand after a board meeting.

"We insisted that RS must

broadcast all 64 World Cup matches on free TV. We regard it as a protection of the customers' right. We want to ensure equality and accessibility to the general public. Many other countries such as England, Australia, Belgium and Malaysia have gone ahead in a similar fashion.

"We considered the matter carefully, talked to all the parties and gave a chance to them, including the rights holders, to explain why they needed to do that. They claimed that they would have contractual problems with Fifa should they televise all 64 matches on free TV. But, when we asked for the relevant documents, they refused to produce them and cooperate with us. Consequently, we enforced the rules strictly for the sake of the people and country," said NBTC vice president Colonel Natee Sakultarat.

With the Administrative Court



Photo: Cristian Cruz

Football fans are bracing for a spectacle. But if you can't make it to Brazil, will you be forced to use a satellite box?

yet to rule on RS's appeal against the NBTC regulations, Natee said his office has already prepared a plan of action.

"We cannot speculate on how the court would rule in the case but we have our plans for three different scenarios. Firstly, if the court rejects RS' s appeal, people

will be able to watch all 64 matches on free TV. Secondly, if the court allows RS to broadcast the tournament via its set-top box, we will appeal immediately. Finally, if RS brings a stay order from the court, the ruling of which will be at the end of the tournament, we would

appeal to the court to rule on the case on an urgent basis." Natee insisted that there was no double standard in NBTC' s dealings with RS, saying that unless rules are upheld it could result in the emergence of "Olympics" or "Asian Games" set-top boxes.

—The Nation

Super GT race coming to Buriram

By Kitinan Sanguansak

THAILAND'S first international-standard motor-racing track, Buriram United International Circuit (BRIC), will host the world famous Grand Touring (GT) car race in October as its inaugural event.

Having clinched the hosting rights for Japan's renowned super-car race for two years, Newin Chidchob, president of Thai Premier League football club Buriram United who also serves as BRIC's consultant, revealed that hosting a world-class race like Super GT was "dream" come true.

"BRIC was born because of our dream as motor sport lovers who wanted to see a world-class racing track in the country. It's thrilling that our track will be opened with the first-ever Super GT race staged in Thailand. The event will be a major boost to Buri Ram' s tourism and will bring fame to the country by put-

ting Thailand on the motor sports map," Newin told a packed conference at Pullman King Power Hotel yesterday.

At the same conference, state-owned public broadcaster MCOT was unveiled as the event's official broadcaster.

The company said the race, due to be held on October 7, would be televised in digital high definition.

"Securing the content of such a top-class racing event like Super GT, will help build the MCOT brand as leaders in HD broadcasting. We see this as an opportunity to showcase our capacity in broadcasting motor sports events that require high technology to transmit the thrills and spills on the track and make the viewers feel as if they were at the venue. It's a challenge as we're about to enter the digital-TV era," said Anek Permvongseni, MCOT president.

BRIC's young director, Tanaisiri Chanvittayaron, said the brand-new



One of the world's most famous car races is coming to Thailand. Photo: Sugo

circuit, still under construction, would be ready to host the penultimate race of the Super GT season starting next month.

"The track is now 60-per-cent complete, which is on track to stage

the Super GT race in October. Well-known track designer Hermann Tilke designed the circuit and the German also monitored the whole process of track building.

"The main feature of the track is

a long straight on which drivers could race as fast as 300km per hour, while the grand-stand spectators could also watch every corner of the track," said Tanaisiri.

—The Nation

Chang inks record deal with Everton

By Lerpong Amsa-ngiam

LOCAL beer brand Chang extended their record partnership with English Premier League club Everton by signing a three-year shirt-sponsorship deal here yesterday.

Everton's chief executive Robert Elstone and Thapana Sirivadhanabhakdi, president and CEO of Chang-makers ThaiBev, inked a 16-million deal, which is by far the most lucrative in the 136-year history of the Merseyside club.

The signing ceremony at Plaza Athenee hotel was witnessed by Blues' legend Graeme Sharp, current striker Arouna Kone and British Ambassador Mark Kent.

The Chang logo has adorned shirts in the Premier League for longer than any other team.

"Everton has enjoyed a special relationship with Chang for 10 years," said Elstone. "In that period, we have grown to understand each other, delivered great work, helped achieve objectives and developed a truly great partnership and, indeed a friendship, based on mutual trust, respect and affection.

"Chang is a business that has always provided great support, not just financially, but also as a gateway to our fans in Thailand. Everton is exceptionally proud to extend its partnership with a world-class organisation, an organisation where people matter; I would like to thank Khun Thapana and all our friends at Chang for supporting our team," said the Everton CEO.

—The Nation



16-million deal is by far the most lucrative in the 136-year history of the club. Photo: TheBigJagielka

Kewell announces retirement

By Ian Ransom

HARRY Kewell, Australia's first world-class footballer, will call time on his roller-coaster 18-year career when the A-League season ends next month, the 35-year-old said on Wednesday.

The Sydney-born former Leeds United, Liverpool and Galatasaray forward had signed a one-year deal with Melbourne Heart in a bid to play in a third World Cup finals, but has spent much of the 2013-14 season sidelined by injury.

"It's hard. It's a sport that I've only ever known," he told a media conference in Melbourne accompanied by his English wife and children.

"I started when I was four-years-old, I started professionally when I was 17, I've had a career of 18 years, it's all I've known.

"The way things panned out for me, I felt it was the right time, I could go out on my terms."

Voted Australia's greatest ever footballer by fans in 2012, Kewell shot to fame with a Premier League debut for Leeds in 1996 as a prodigiously talented 17-year-old and became his country's youngest international weeks later in a match against Chile.

A Champions League trophy with Liverpool and two World Cup appearances in 58 matches for the Socceroos were to follow a glittering 181-game stint for Leeds, but a succession of injuries over the last decade repeatedly curtailed his ambitions, frustrating the player and fans alike.

He shared in Liverpool's 2004-05 Champions League triumph, but lasted only

23 minutes before coming off injured after being named as a surprise starter in the final victory over AC Milan in Istanbul.

His role in the penalty shootout victory over West Ham to seal the FA Cup the following year was similarly ill-fated, another injury seeing him substituted after halftime.

"If you want to have a look at hindsight, I do sit there with my wife and close friends



Kewell: 'I go out on my terms' Photo: Toru Hanai

and wonder "what if?" said Kewell, dressed in a smart white shirt with matching sneakers.

"I feel like I can play the game, I understand the game. And I wonder if I didn't have those injuries, what could have been? But I believe that the path was set out for me and it's made me a better person."

Throughout his fitness battles, Kewell remained revered in Australia, helping the Socceroos qualify for the 2006 World Cup finals to break a 32-year drought since their maiden appearance.

He shrugged off injury to play a decisive role in Germany, scoring an equaliser against

Croatia, one of 17 in his international career, putting the Socceroos into the knock-out round of 16 where they were beaten by eventual champions Italy.

After parting ways with Liverpool in 2008, Kewell revived his career with a successful three-year stint with Turkish giants Galatasaray, and played another important role in securing Australia a second World Cup appearance.

He endured a torrid tournament in South Africa, however, sent off for a deliberate handball in a group match against Ghana as the Socceroos crashed out.

Kewell returned home in 2012 to play with Melbourne Victory in a huge boost for Australia's fledgling A-League competition, but left the club after a season for family reasons.

He played a telling role in the Socceroos' march to the final of the 2011 Asian Cup, but has been largely overlooked in recent years, winning his final cap under Holger Osieck in 2012.

His final season as captain of Melbourne Heart has been emblematic of his career, brief flashes of brilliance on the pitch tempered by long spells injured on the sidelines.

He has been ruled out of Heart's next two matches with an abdominal strain but will have a farewell appearance against

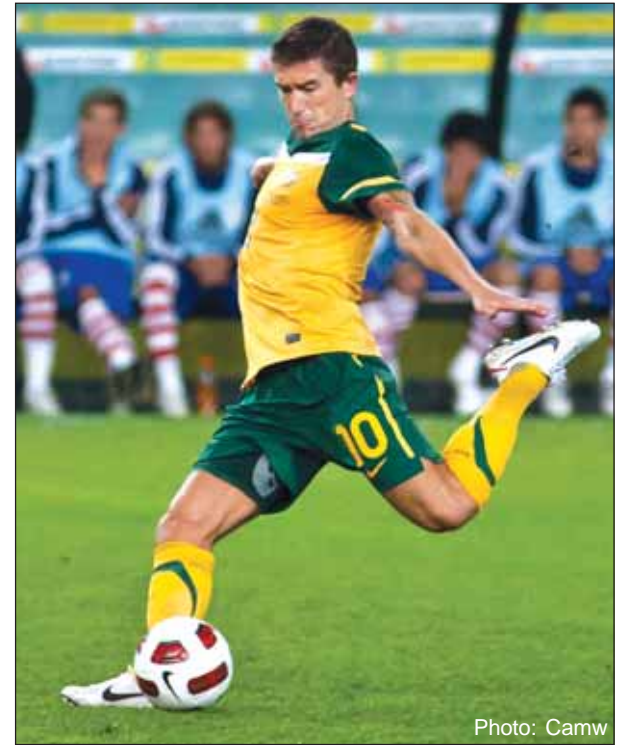


Photo: Camw

Kewell was voted Australia's greatest ever footballer.

Western Sydney Wanderers in the final match of the season on April 12 at the club's home stadium.

Apart from spending more time with his family, playing golf and continuing his clothes modelling, the telegenic Kewell said he looked forward to nurturing talent with his junior academy in Australia with a view to a possible coaching role in future.

"I've lived a life, and now I get to live another," he said. — Reuters

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Nets' owners head back to Russia

A RUSSIAN billionaire said on Monday he planned to relocate his company, that runs the Brooklyn Nets basketball team, to Russia in keeping with the Kremlin's call on Russian businessmen to repatriate their assets to help combat new US sanctions.

The United States and European Union have imposed visa bans and asset freezes on officials and businessmen believed to be close to Russian President Vladimir Putin in protest at Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region.

Mikhail Prokhorov, owner of the Brooklyn Nets, had said before that he planned to relocate the company that runs the NBA team to Russia, but his comments to reporters in the Kremlin underlined his support for Putin.

"A Russian company will own the basketball club," Prokhorov said before receiving a medal for services to Russia along with other national sports officials.

"This [move] does not violate any NBA (US National Basketball Association) rules and I will bring it [under Russian jurisdiction] in accordance with Russian law."

Prokhorov himself has not been hit by Western sanctions and, although he ran against Putin in the 2012 presidential election, he has underlined his loyalty to the president.

Putin waged war on the so-called oligarchs who amassed political influence as well as vast riches under former President Boris Yeltsin.

Some oligarchs have been driven out of Russia, former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky was jailed for more than a decade on financial crimes charges, and those who remained have largely stayed out of politics.

Prokhorov, one of Russia's richest men, made his fortune by acquiring former state assets during the chaotic years after the 1991 disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Prokhorov, with an estimated US\$10.3 billion fortune according to Forbes magazine, has owned other sports clubs as well, including European basketball powerhouse CSKA Moscow, but sold most of them several years ago. — Reuters



NBA Brooklyn Net's principal owner Mikhail Prokhorov (center) shakes hands with general manager Billy King in front of head coach Jason Kidd (R). Photo: Adam Hunger/Reuters

Sharapova silences Kvitova

FIVE-time runner-up Maria Sharapova closed in on a return trip to the Miami final by taming eighth-seeded Czech Petra Kvitova 7-5 6-1 on Tuesday to reach the semis of the Sony Open.

With the victory Sharapova, who lost in the final last year to Serena Williams, sets up a possible final four showdown with the world number one.

Williams, a six-time winner on the Miami hardcourts, takes on fifth-seeded German Angelique Kerber in another quarter-final clash later on Tuesday.

Sharapova, who has come up short in the Miami final each of the last three years, dropped her opening serve to Kvitova but that would be the only time the entire match.

The fourth-seeded Russian took control with a break to get back on level terms at 4-4 and then again to close out the first set. Sharapova then dominated the second set, storming through the first five games before a reeling Kvitova held her serve.

"I didn't have a good first few games, so I was happy that I was steady, that I kept trying to do the right thing, kept trying to be aggressive," said Sharapova. "I think that paid off as the match went on because I made a few



With her recent win over Petra Kvitova, Maria Sharapova has a shot to take on the world number one. Photo: Geoff Burke/USA TODAY Sports

too many unforced errors in the beginning."

Every time Sharapova has advanced as far as the quarters at Crandon Park she has reached the finals but could find a massive hurdle in her way if Williams gets past Kerber.

Sharapova and Williams, who have both achieved a career grand slam and held the number one ranking, were expected to develop into one of the great rivalries in women's tennis.

But it has not quite worked out that way with Williams dominating the series winning 15 of 17 career

meetings, including the last 14.

The two have clashed three times on the Miami hardcourts, Williams winning all three.

"It's no secret that she's been a big challenge of mine, an opponent that obviously I would love to beat," said Sharapova, looking ahead to a possible rematch. "There are certainly ways that I need to step up in certain situations that I haven't been able to do in the past against her.

"But it's great that I have come to that stage and have the opportunity to play her again."

— Reuters

FA Cup to be played on synthetic pitches



Photo: Rune Mathisen

SYNTHETIC pitches will be allowed in every round of the FA Cup from next season, the English Football Association announced on Monday.

Current rules bar the use of so-called 3G (third generation) surfaces after the first round.

FA general secretary Alex Horne said the rule change had been recommended by the board and wider use of synthetic surfaces would have benefits for the "grassroots football community".

"They are a very useful asset and capable of delivering 50 plus hours per week as compared to a natural turf pitch which can deliver perhaps five hours per week," he said.

"The value of 3G pitches has been clearly demonstrated during the recent wet weather where leagues within the grassroots game have migrated to them to address fixture backlogs."

Artificial surfaces were banned in English professional football in 1995 after Queens Park Rangers, Luton Town, Oldham Athletic and Preston North End had used 'plastic' pitches in the 1980s.

The FA said there were around 600 good quality artificial grass pitches in England used for training and development and they were looking at plans to get more delivered in the long-term.

— Reuters

Suspicious package pauses Sony Open in Miami

THE Sony Open in Miami was locked down while the bomb squad investigated a suspicious package on Tuesday, preventing thousands of spectators from entering or leaving the sprawling tennis complex.

The all clear was given at around 9:30 (local time), some 30 minutes after officials had confirmed the lockdown, allowing ticket holders to exit.

Local news reports had also said four-

lane traffic was halted in both directions in front of the complex while spectators were prevented from entering.

"Earlier this evening a suspicious package was left unattended at the front gate," the tournament said in a statement. "For the safety of the public the Miami-Dade police have set up a perimeter and cordoned off the area until the package can be secured.

"We apologize for the inconvenience but

the safety of the public must be placed first."

Word first began to filter through that people were not being allowed to leave the facility as world number one Serena Williams was playing fifth seeded German Angelique in a quarter-final on center court.

"Yeah, there was a bomb threat and a lockdown but that's all I know about it. Scary," said Williams after beating Kerber.

World number one Rafa Nadal was scheduled to play the final match of the evening session against Italian Fabio Fognini and the match went ahead as planned.

Security has been beefed up around major North American sporting events since last year's Boston marathon bombings left three people dead and wounded 264.

— Reuters

FIFA reform under threat

By Mike Collett

FIFA's self-acclaimed transparent reform process headed by New York lawyer Michael Garcia came within hours of being sabotaged from within the organization last week, Reuters has learned.

The position of Garcia himself and his role as the head of the Independent Ethics Commission looking into alleged corruption surrounding the voting procedure for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, and the 2011 FIFA presidential election, came under threat from a number of senior FIFA power-brokers.

Members of FIFA's executive committee have told Reuters they would have considered their positions had the investigation into FIFA's affairs by Garcia been halted before he had completed his work.

A number of reform-minded members confirmed they stopped the plan before it was even discussed in full session, after being approached in the corridors between sessions of the executive

committee meetings at FIFA's headquarters in Zurich on Thursday and Friday.

At almost exactly the same time, Garcia was in Zurich carrying out further investigations into FIFA's workings.

There is no suggestion FIFA president Sepp Blatter played any role in the plan to stop what he has widely acclaimed as FIFA's new "transparent" reform process.

Reuters understands from sources connected to the story that the plan not only involved removing Garcia from his post as the chief investigator into alleged corruption at FIFA, but also the game worldwide.

When approached to comment on the alleged plot to end the investigation, FIFA's British vice-president Jim Boyce told Reuters that as far as he was concerned, he would have had to consider his position had any attempt to halt the investigation succeeded.

Northern Irishman Boyce, 70, who is also the head of FIFA's

referee's committee and steps down from the committee in 15 months time, said: "There was a bit of informal chat about the possibility that some people wanted to see Garcia removed from the inquiry and that it might be raised at the exco meeting but it wasn't.

"As someone who has been brought up with honesty and integrity – and it was a great honor for me to be asked to be a vice-president – if this had been proposed at the exco meeting or I thought for one moment Garcia would be removed in any fashion from carrying out his full investigation, I and others would be aghast and would have had to consider our positions because things at FIFA have been improving greatly."

FIFA executive committee member Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein of Jordan told Reuters: "I am very happy that Michael Garcia will continue in his work. There were some questions raised about the necessity of having an Independent



Michael J. Garcia, Chairman of the investigatory chamber of the FIFA Ethics Committee. Photo: Michael Buholzer/Reuters

Ethics Committee but to be honest, I think that idea was stopped.

"There were certain people like myself who could not accept that this could happen.

"He was supported by our Congress and given a mandate and I am very happy he will continue

with his work.

"FIFA did not respond to requests for a statement, while a spokesperson for Garcia's office in New York issued a "no comment" reply to a request to establish if Garcia was aware of the plans to end his role.

– Reuters

RS set to push ahead with set-top box sales



RS HAS confirmed that the World Cup set-top boxes will go on sale as planned on April 1, said the company's CEO Surachai Chetchotisak.

Thailand's broadcasting right holders for this summer's Fifa World Cup were warned by the office of National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) on Monday that they would face a fine of up to 17 million baht if they fail to allow all 64 matches from Brazil to be shown on free TV. To that, Surachai said he would wait for the court's ruling before deciding on the company's next step.

"Our marketing process would go as planned. We'll wait for the court's ruling and until then we would not consider our next move. The matter is sub judice and we don't want to speculate how the court would rule the case. But, we can't wait. We have to do our business," said

Surachai.

Meanwhile, RS brought in four big names – Coca-Cola Thailand, Chang, AIS 3G 2100 and PTT Group – to co-sponsor the broadcast of World Cup 2014. The company said it will generate over 650 million baht from broadcasting the major tournament, which is a top attraction of Thai soccer fans, who will be entertained with some exclusive content produced by RS.

In 2010, RS were successful in broadcasting the Fifa World Cup in South Africa and earned the trust of major companies in Thailand who are delighted to be sponsors for this year's broadcast, Surachai said.

Surapol Utintu, executive director of Thai Beverage Marketing, said Chang has always been a broadcasting sponsor of the World Cup and would come up with "Chang World of Football" campaign very soon.

– The Nation

Nadal leaves no man standing

WORLD number one Rafa Nadal continued his ruthless rampage through the Sony Open on Monday, crushing Uzbekistan's Denis Istomin 6-1 6-0 to reach the fourth round at Crandon Park.

Also through to the next round is Australian Open champion Stanislas Wawrinka, who looked sharp in a no-nonsense 7-5 6-4 win over Frenchman Edouard Roger-Vasselin.

Nadal, who has reached the final three times but never lifted the Miami title, blew past Lleyton Hewitt in the second round before overwhelming Istomin in less than an hour in a center court master class.

Next up for the Spaniard is a fourth round meeting on Tuesday with Italian 14th seed Fabio Fognini, who advanced with a 4-6 6-3 6-3 comeback win over Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut.

Further down the road is a possible semi-final meeting with third seed Wawrinka, who beat the Spaniard in the final of the Australian Open to claim his first grand slam title.

Nadal has shown no signs of losing focus, however, and broke Istomin twice to open the match and grab a 4-0 lead.

The 57th ranked Istomin finally held serve at 4-1 but that would be the only time as Nadal thundered through the next eight game to complete the rout.

"I played a very complete match," said Nadal, who was given a warning for slow play. "No match is perfect but I did a lot of things very well. No mistakes, serving with good percentage, and playing a lot of winners.

– Reuters



Rafa Nadal takes down Denis Istom at the Sony Open. Photo: Geoff Burke/USA TODAY

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