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INSIDE TODAY

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■ 'THEY ARE TO CAUSE NO HARM TO THE PEOPLE'

Marching to a different tune

■ Chalong top cop set to shake out corruption

By [Saran Mitrarat](#)

OFFICERS at the Chalong Police Station are under tight scrutiny from their new chief. The recently reinstated superintendent Sirisak Wasasiri, following a blockade of the police station on Monday.

All officers must now provide daily reports of their activities, inform Col Sirisak each time they leave the station on police work and provide the results of their efforts when they return.

"I know the problem stems from poor control of the officers," Col Sirisak told the *Gazette*.

"I have repeatedly reminded them they are to cause no harm to the people they swore an oath to protect. We are to help as fast as we can to bring justice to the people in our community."

Col Sirisak's tight grip on officers at Chalong follows the blockade of the police station by an aggrieved family...

Continued on Page 9



Col Sirisak has returned to Chalong to restore discipline. Photo: Gazette file

Special Report

Shady business plaguing island beaches exposed

UMBRELLAS cover up to 80 per cent of many popular Phuket beaches. Last June, the Senate Standing Committee on Tourism said their excessive numbers have a negative impact on tourists' experiences.

The *Gazette* takes to the beaches to get a better understanding of the island's shadiest business.

Full Story Pages 6-7

Nunchuck ninja taken down by Phuket police

A SPANIARD has been arrested for mugging a Russian in Kata with a pair of nunchuks.

Police were able to track down the tourist based on CCTV evidence of the motorbike he was renting, for which he had left his passport as a deposit.

Full Story Page 5

Hundreds duped in Krabi resort booking scandal

POLICE are seeking an arrest warrant for the managing director of a Krabi resort after more than 50 pre-paid guests filed a complaint about being turned away at the door.

Now 231 complaints, amounting to millions of baht in lost bookings, have been reported to police.

Full Story Page 9

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This Week



Property

Sansiri unveils some great value deals on Dcondo units. **Page 13**



Business

English-language seminar for foreign businesses. **Page 17**



Events

Play safe and stay safe during this year's Songkran. **Page 34**



Community

Everything a family needs at QSI's Kid Expo. **Page 39**



Food

The evolution and revolution of the wine industry. **Page 42**



Sport

Exploring the new regulations governing Formula 1. **Page 49**

Saturday



36 - 24

Sunday



36 - 23

Monday



36 - 23

Tuesday



35 - 24

Wednesday



35 - 24

Thursday



35 - 25

10-year-old girl dies after three days on life support

By Woranut Pechdee

THE 10-year-old girl involved in a motorbike accident with her older sister last week on Thepkasatri Road in Koh Kaew died after being taken off life support on Monday after lying unresponsive in Vachira Phuket Hospital for three days.

"Rattanawadee Tukthin was taken off life support because her brain had been so severely damaged in the crash. Our medical team did their best to save her life, but she remained unresponsive," said hospital staff.

Nong Rattanawadee was returning home from Big C on a motorbike driven by her sister, Anjira Tukthin, 17, when the pair crashed into a utility pole.

Following the sisters back from Big C on another motorbike was the girls' mother, along with their other sister and Ms Anjira's son.

"My daughter was not riding fast. However, I wasn't close enough to see what happened. When I passed the accident, I saw my two daughters on the ground," said Anyanee Wanna.

"I was in shock... I don't remember anything outside of seeing rescue workers giving CPR to my little one."

Ms Anjira was conscious after



Anyanee Wanna, Anjira and Rattanawadee Tukthin's mother, was comforted by a friend at the scene of the crash.

the accident.

"My face hurts. I can't lift my right arm and my leg hurts," she told the *Gazette* at the scene.

Ms Anjira was treated for

wounds on her face and arms, and is recovering.

Only one helmet was found at the crash site, confirmed a Kusoldharm Rescue worker.

Official loses B4mn Benz in chicken run wipeout

A SIX-WHEELED truck hauling a battery of chickens bound for Krabi crushed a brand-new, 4-million-baht Mercedes-Benz belonging to a local official in Mai Khao, in the north of Phuket, on April 5.

The accident took place at 11am on Thepkasatri Road north-bound, about 300 meters from the entrance to Sai Kaew Beach.

"I came to check on a construction site," Mai Khao Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) President Sarawut Sisakukam told the *Gazette*.

"It started raining heavily so I got back in my car, then the chicken truck hit me."

Mr Sarawut's Mercedes E300, still sporting the red dealership license plates, plowed into a pickup truck that was parked in front of him.

Chicken driver Ken Pimpranom,



Mr Sarawut (in black) stands next to his damaged car.

45, told police that he lost control of the truck because of the heavy rain.

"It was so heavy I couldn't see the road," he said. "Fortunately, nobody was injured."

All three vehicles involved in the accident were taken to the Tah Chat Chai Police Station.

"Mr Ken was charged with reckless driving causing property damage," Lt Thanom Thongpan of the Tah Chat Chai Police told the *Gazette*. — **Thawit Biladullar**

Driver caught mid-nap

THE Phuket Airport taxi driver who was found asleep behind the wheel smelling of alcohol early Sunday morning will be called in for questioning by the Phuket Land Transportation Office (PLTO).

The news follows Thalang Police being called to Baan Lipon, between Thalang Town and the Heroines Monument, at 5:30am to find a registered taxi pulled over in the left hand lane and the driver fast asleep.

A Kusoldharm Foundation rescue worker at the scene said that the taxi driver, about 50 years old, fell asleep still clutching an unlit cigarette in his hand.

"It took us about half an hour to wake him up. And when he did wake, he just drove off," he said.

"Fortunately, there were no passengers in the vehicle and the driver did not cause an accident," said PLTO officer Jaturong Kaewkasi.

"We will coordinate with the Thalang Police and call in the



The driver was asleep at the wheel when rescue workers arrived.

driver. Any taxi drivers found guilty of drunk driving, especially with passengers in the vehicle, will lose their driving license."

The *Gazette* has yet to establish whether police officers who were at the scene will be pursuing charges against the driver as they can no longer establish his blood-alcohol concentration at the time he was in control of the vehicle. — **Thawit Biladullar**



Rescue workers prepare the body.

Worker dies on duty at shrimp farm

A MYANMAR national was found dead on April 4 at the Sri Soonthorn shrimp farm where he worked, marking the fifth work-related death within two weeks in Phuket.

The body of Nyi Paing, 25, was found on a boat in one of the farm's ponds after he did not return from his morning work routine, said Lt Col Watcharapong Plaiphon of the Thalang Police.

"Mr Nyi's body was lying face up in a shrimp-feeding boat that was floating next to a generator used to power the aerators in the pond," said Lt Col Watcharapong.

"At this stage, we believe he was electrocuted."

Mr Nyi's death is the second report of a work-related death in Phuket in two weeks. On March 26, four workers died in a sewer after exposure to lethal doses of hydrogen sulfide (see page 8).

— **Thawit Biladullar**

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Nine arrested in teen gang slaying

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

POLICE have arrested nine gang members, including six juveniles, for the murder of a rival teenager who was gunned down and hacked to death in Rassada on April 3.

Lt Col Somsak Thongkhang of the Phuket City Police named the adult suspects as Kiat Phanthong, 21; Panumas Ladnalao, 19; and Warawoth Malsu, 18.

"We are still searching for Saksit Pingnga, 19, who is wanted for the shooting," Col Somsak told the *Gazette*.

Police were alerted to the scene at 3am that morning.

"Sutthipong Muadthong, 17, was dead when we arrived at the scene, a housing estate on Anuphas Phuket Karn Road, near the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization [PPAO] Hospital," Col Somsak said.

"Tewarit Auwannarat, 17, a friend of Mr Sutthipong, was hiding nearby."

Mr Tewarit told police that he and Mr Sutthipong were riding home from a night out in Phuket Town when they saw a group



Six minors face charges for the slaying, while the alleged shooter is on the run after ditching the gun (inset).

riding towards them.

"There were about 10 of them on four motorcycles. We recognized them as the *Sum-Tai-Luk* gang. We had problems with them before and we saw they had knives. I

turned our motorbike around and tried to get away," Mr Tewarit said.

"They caught up to us, so we dumped the bike and ran off."

During their attempted escape, Mr Tewarit scaled a wall.

"But Sutthipong could not make it," Mr Tewarit said. "I heard a gunshot, so I hid there until I heard the police arrive... I was scared. I didn't know what to do."

Mr Terawit gave police de-

scriptions of the gang members and addresses where they could be found.

"We first arrested Mr Ah [a juvenile, not his real name] at a rented room in Soi Hon Saithong, where we found a pair of blood-stained jeans," Col Somsak said.

"Mr Ah was taken to Phuket City Police Station, where questioning led to the arrest of the other gang members."

At a house in Soi King Kaew, given as the address of the alleged shooter, Mr Saksit, police found a handmade gun believed used in the shooting. However, Mr Saksit was nowhere to be found.

"The gun was loaded with a .38 bullet," said Col Somsak.

"During the operation, we also recovered a sparta blade [sword] from a canal near the scene of the attack."

All nine suspects were charged with gang murder and carrying illegal weapons in public.

"The juveniles and adults will be tried separately due to their ages, but they all face the same charges," Col Somsak said.

"We are continuing our search for Mr Saksit."

Political divide blamed for stabbing in Patong

AN ARGUMENT over the political divisions being played out in Bangkok ended with a red-shirt supporter from Isarn, Northeastern Thailand, stabbing two Southern Thai fruit vendors in Patong on April 5.

One eyewitness told the *Gazette* that the argument erupted while seven vendors – who all sell fruit on Patong Beach for the same employer – were drinking together near the Sainamyen Intersection.

"Five of them were from Ubon Ratchathani and supported the red shirts, but the two Southern Thai men supported the PDRC [People's Democratic Reform Committee]," the witness said.

"They started to argue and shout at each other. Then they started fighting. After the stabbing, the five men ran away, leaving the two southern men injured with cuts on their arms and bleeding from their stomachs."

Patong Police have arrested one suspect for the stabbing, Maj Jakkapong Luang-aon of Patong Police confirmed to the *Gazette*.

"We were called to the scene



Within two hours police had caught Somnuek Thakham, 35.

at 8pm, and about two hours later had Somnuek Thakham, 35, in custody," he said.

"Mr Somnuek was charged with gang-attack. He still had a knife case with him, but said he threw the knife away in a pond. We have yet to recover it."

Praphan Boonsombat, 33, and Jarus Rattanasupa, 35, were taken to Patong Hospital.

They were reported to be in a safe condition, said Maj Jakkapong.

"We are continuing our search for the four other suspects," he said.

– *Thawit Bilabddular*

Russian kidnap victim flies away

THE Russian kidnapping victim who was recovered alive, Iana Strizheus, caught a flight from Phuket back to Russia on April 4.

"She has given her statement to police and been presented to the judge. Therefore, she is free to go home," Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Arun Kaewvatee told the *Gazette*. "This changes nothing for our investigation."

The 22-year-old woman was found lying on a bed in the Blue Garden Resort and Spa on March 16 with deep cuts to her neck and right wrist, four days after she was reported missing by her family.

Ms Strizheus' boyfriend, Alexey Slabinskiy, is still officially missing. However, police are confident based on the evidence, including dental records, that the body found in Cherng Talay about two weeks ago belongs to him.

"We are waiting for the DNA results to come back from the Forensic Office in Surat Thani to confirm whether or not it is him," Col Arun said.



Iana Strizheus returned home to Russia after giving her statement to police. Photo: Supplied

Police continue to search for the two main suspects in the kidnapping, Russians Oleksandr Boychuk, 44, and Aleksandr Novichkov, 58.

– *Chutharat Plerin*

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Kiss and tell drug dealer busts buddy

POLICE arrested an armed drug dealer in Pa Khlok last week after an inmate at Phuket Provincial Prison had his girlfriend incriminate his former business associate.

Officers arrested Surasak Paewparn, 28, at the Promphan housing estate at about 7pm on April 1, said Lt Col Jarun Bangprasert of the Phuket Provincial Police.

Inside Mr Surasak's house, police found a .38 Smith & Wesson hand gun, five rounds of ammunition, 8.26 grams of *ya ice* (crystal methamphetamine) and 133 pills of *ya bah* (methamphetamine).

"Mr Bandit Chaisit's girlfriend said that Mr Surasak was one of the dealers in her boyfriend's drug network and that he had sold drugs in Thalang for a long time," said Col Jarun.

Mr Surasak was charged with possession of a Category 1 Drug with intent to sell and illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition.

"He was handed over to Thalang Police, who will process the charges against him," Col Jarun added. — **Thawit Bilabdullar**

Foundation approves new leg for Soi Bangla vendor

By Saran Mitrarat

THE Prostheses Foundation of HRH The Princess Mother has approved a new prosthetic leg for Wilaiwan "Wan" Damnuai, a Phuket cigarette vendor born with a deformed leg and no hands.

"I was notified by the Prostheses Foundation of HRH The Princess Mother that Ms Wan would indeed receive a new, free prosthesis," confirmed Pornsri Suthanaruk, Director of the Regional Environmental Office.

"Ms Wan must travel to the foundation in Chiang Mai to have the prosthesis fitted. She must also train with it there for a week."

The foundation will provide accommodation for Ms Wan, but will not be able to cover the cost

of transportation and meals, said Dr Pornsri.

"Once she arrives, the Environmental Office in Chiang Mai will pick her up and take her to the foundation."

Ms Wan expressed her deep gratitude to the foundation.

The news of Ms Wan's new prosthesis provides a happy ending to a story that began with Australian man

Derek Clarkson. Mr Clarkson, a long-time Phuket visitor, was inspired by Ms Wan's independence and positive attitude toward life, so he reached out to the *Gazette* for help in getting Ms Wan a new leg.

"Because of Mr Clarkson's help and donation, I am ready to go to Chiang Mai at any time. Thank you Mr Clarkson for giving me this chance," Ms Wan told the *Gazette*.

'Because of Mr Clarkson's help and donation, I am ready to go to Chiang Mai at any time. Thank you Mr Clarkson for giving me this chance'

— Wilaiwan 'Wan' Damnuai



Wilaiwan 'Wan' Damnuai's independence and positive attitude toward life inspired Derek Clarkson into action, and will result in a new leg.

Gunmen open fire on armored van

THREE suspects who opened fire on an armored van carrying 10 million baht on April 4 were chased down by the van driver, but managed to escape.

The van had left Tesco Lotus in Samkong and was northbound on Thepkasattri Road, headed to refill ATMs in Bang Tao and at the Phuket International Airport when the men fired on it.

"We were near the Ta Rua Shrine at about 4:30pm when three men approached us riding a single motorbike. They cut us off, and then the two passengers turned to shoot at us with handguns," Jiriya Saelim, the van



Bullets hit the van's windshield.

driver, said.

Also in the truck at the time of the shooting was Mr Jiriya's co-worker, Sarawuth NhuChoo.

"I knew we were safe in the van, so we started to chase them, but lost them at a

traffic light," Mr Jiriya said.

"At the scene, we found eight marks on the G4S Cash Services (Thailand) van from where rounds of ammunition struck it," Lt Col Watcharapong Plaiphon of the Thalang Police told the *Gazette*.

Police are searching for the suspects and entertaining two possible motives: robbery and personal conflict, Col Watcharapong confirmed.

— **Thawit Bilabdullar**

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Six dodge jail time in beach land encroachment case

SIX people have received fines and suspended jail sentences for building and operating small beachside shops on protected land at Nai Yang Beach, revealed the Chief Administrative Officer of Sakoo Tambon Administrative Organization (OrBorTor) on Tuesday.

Of the six, two are still operating their shops, three have had their shops demolished and one has closed shop, but the building remains.

"We issued them notices before this, but they refused to remove the buildings as they claimed they had nowhere to go," Phuket Vice Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada said.

Sakoo OrBorTor Chief Administrative Officer Sumet Suwannarat also revealed that 13 more beach shop operators are currently on trial for encroaching on the beach.

During the meeting, eight others were named as being under investigation for land encroachment. These individuals all had prop-

erty ownership under the same document: SorKor 1 number 194.

"It is possible that it was illegally issued," said Mr Sumet.

"I will ask the Phuket Provincial Court if they can waive people's rights to appeal in public land encroachment cases in order to expedite the cases against them," Vice Governor Chamroen said.

"We have to reclaim all the beach we can."
— *Saran Mitrarat*



Mario Ferras was arrested after being identified by his passport, which he left at a rental bike shop.

Nunchucking man arrested for mugging

A PASSPORT left as collateral for a motorbike rental has led to the arrest of a Spaniard for the nunchuck mugging of a Russian in Kata early Monday morning.

Karon Police arrested Spanish tourist Mario Ferras, 23, at the Bonus Bungalow resort in Chalong, at about 7:30pm on the same day.

"Police seized a motorbike, a seven-inch knife, a set of nunchuks and an iPhone5," said Karon Police Deputy Superintendent Sophon Borrirak.

Mr Ferras' arrest followed Russian Sergey Agafonov, 29, being robbed under threat of nunchuks near Baan Kata School at 1:20am.

The robber, recorded on 7-Eleven CCTV, made off with Mr Agafonov's iPhone 5, US\$300 (about 9,300 baht) and 5,000 rubles (about 4,550 baht).

"Police learned that the vehicle the suspect used to make his getaway belonged to Janpen Jara," said Lt Col Sopon.

Mr Janpen explained that Mr Ferras started renting a motorbike from him last month, and handed the Spaniard's passport to police.

"We obtained an arrest warrant and tracked Mr Ferras to the resort in Chalong," Col Sophon said.

"He was charged with armed theft at nighttime and evading arrest. He has accepted the charges."

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Dive business blitz

Officers clarify remit of instructors' work permits

By Saran Mitrarat

Job descriptions in foreign dive instructors' work permits were clarified during an inspection led by Phuket Governor Maitri Inthusut in Patong on April 4, as the Public-sector Anti Corruption Commission (PACC) investigates allegations that ambiguities in the descriptions have led to police extorting instructors.

"We only came to check work permits and clarify the information within them to the employees. We did not come to make any arrests; that is not our job," said Phuket Employment Office Chief Yaowapa Pibulpol.

Job descriptions in work permits are only written in Thai. Despite a push from Governor Maitri and the Association of Thailand for Underwater Sports (ATUS), that will not change, explained Orakarn Tongkaew of the Employment Office.

"Work permits are the property of the Thai government and will only be written in Thai," said Ms Orakarn. "However, our officers must explain the job description and what is written on the permit



PEO Chief Yaowapa Pibulpol explains the general work activities a dive instructor can perform.

when the employee picks it up."

Ms Yaowapa explained that dive instructors are allowed to lecture students, as well as train with them in swimming pools and in the sea.

"You must carry out these ac-

tivities in Phuket province only, as the authority of the Employment Office only covers people working in Phuket," she added.

She went on to clarify that dive instructors are not meant to be tour guides or to help customers

carry equipment.

"Thai law lists 39 jobs that are specifically reserved for Thai nationals, and service jobs, such as carrying equipment and acting as tour guides, are included on that list," Ms Yaowapa said.

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Still no extradition request for Phuket murder fugitive

ONE month after his arrest in the Philippines, the extradition of British fugitive Michael Taylor, also known as "Mick the Pom", wanted in Phuket on murder charges, appears to be at a standstill.

Phuket's top cop Maj Gen Ong-art Phiewruangnont says he has no knowledge of the case, and the officer in charge of it, Lt Col Danprai Kaewwehol of the Phuket Provincial Police, has said only that he fully supports bringing Mr Taylor back to Thailand and will talk to a prosecutor.

Repeated calls to Lt Col Danprai since March 11, five days after Mr Taylor's arrest by Filipino police on visa overstay charges, have gone unanswered or yielded no information.

Phuket's Chief Public Prosecutor Chiengsean Panhya explained that he could not pursue the extradition without a formal request from the police.

"I don't have the authority to pursue it unless the police ask me to. Our office is not even permitted to ask the police to file such a request," Mr Chiengsean said.

"However, once they do, the next step would be for us to forward the case to the Office of the



Mick the Pom was arrested in the Philippines for overstay. Photo: Supplied

Attorney General in Bangkok, and it would then be in their hands to get Mr Taylor back to Thailand to face justice."

Mr Taylor, 50, is wanted for the 2004 stabbing murder of his girlfriend Jantra Weangta, 27, in Chalong. Ms Jantra was found dead in Mr Taylor's rented bungalow on August 17. Mid-way through his 2006 trial, Mr Taylor disappeared.

Taylor's arrest came after long delays and inaction by Phuket law enforcement authorities under the

previous Provincial Police Commander Choti Chawalwivat, who had been informed of his whereabouts last year.

Col Danprai told the *Gazette* on April 3 that he had been unable to follow up on Mr Taylor's case with the public prosecutor.

"We are very busy identifying [missing Russian expat] Mr Slabinskiy. Please give us some time. We will get back on the Taylor case as soon as possible," he said.

— Chutharat Plerin

Teen killed while trying to right his bike

A TEENAGER fell off his motorbike and was hit by a car and killed while he was trying to right his bike near Phuket International Airport on April 3.

Rescuers responded to a call just after midnight and found the body of Atthaphon Prasobsaeng, 19, on Route 4026, which joins Thepkasattri Road to the road to the airport.

"The accident took place about 500 meters west of Thalang Technical College," said Lt Thanom Thongpan of the Tah Chat Chai Police.

Teerapong Kongtab, 28, who was driving the car



The body is attended to.

that hit Mr Atthaphon, told police that he was on his way to the airport to drop off a friend.

"The road was curvy, and I didn't see Mr Atthaphon until it was too late," Mr Teerapong said.

"The last thing I saw was him on the road, trying to pick up his motorbike. I couldn't stop in time."

Mr Atthaphon's body was taken to Thalang Hospital to await collection by his relatives.

Mr Teerapong has been charged with reckless driving causing death.

— Thawit Bilabdullar

Umbrella

JUST over a generation ago, there were few chairs or umbrellas on the sands of Phuket. Now, they cover up to 80 per cent of many popular beaches. Last June, the Senate Standing Committee on Tourism said their excessive numbers have a negative impact on tourists' experiences.

The *Phuket Gazette's* Irfan Jamdukor and Leslie Porterfield report.

OVER 9,000 chairs, stacked in rows up to seven deep, were on Patong Beach when the *Gazette* counted them in mid-February.

The number of chairs, though astonishing, is not a violation of Phuket beach chair regulations, which do not specify a maximum. The number of rows, however, is.

Regulations set forth after the tsunami in 2004 put chair operators under the control of local municipalities and stipulated a maximum of two rows, later modified to allow three in high season. Yet vast areas of Patong and two other beaches have seven or eight rows of chairs.

"You have to understand that this is high season. The operators need a chance to make money," Deputy Patong Mayor Chairat Sukban said when told about the additional rows.

"How can I limit the number?" he asked. "Each operator has a different sized area. And if there's a beautiful area and a lot of tourists want to sit there, should I restrict the number of chairs?"

"Tourists demand the chairs. We have to serve the tourists, otherwise they won't come to Phuket."

Despite Mr Chairat's argument that demand is driving up the number of chairs, a vendor on the beach in February said that the last several rows of chairs in his area were not used, and a beachgoer on March 6 reported that about 50 per cent of the chairs were unoccupied.

Two other beaches of the seven visited showed the same pattern as Patong: Surin and Nai Harn.

At Surin on a January afternoon, a dense forest of umbrellas shaded the 2,139 beach chairs arranged closely together in rows up to seven deep. As in Patong, many of the chairs were set up cheek by jowl, in violation of another regulation that

says each set – an umbrella and two chairs – must be spaced three meters from the next.

"It's terrible what they are doing," said a regular visitor from Austria. "Ten years ago there were just 10 per cent this many chairs. They only make money and do nothing for the visitors."

At Nai Harn early one January morning, chair operators staked out their turf by setting up umbrellas in the sea before the tide had finished going out.

On February 23, most of the 1,821 Nai Harn chairs were set up in three rows, but a large section near the lagoon had eight rows and areas next to that ran five deep.

The row-rule is flexible in high season, Nai Harn Chair Club President Joung Solos said.

As in Patong, officials in Rawai do not know how many chairs are on their beach.

"It's hard to count the number of chairs," Mr Joung said. "At high tide, it might be only three rows, but at low tide, more."

The *Gazette* was unable to talk to officials in charge of Surin Beach, as all questions were referred to Cherng Talay Tambon Administration Organization (OrBorTor) President Ma-ann Samran. Mr Ma-ann declined repeated requests for comment, saying that he had been misquoted on a related issue by another publication.

ROW MODELS

Not every municipality lets beach chairs multiply uncontrolled.

Nai Yang and Nai Thon follow the rule for the most part, according to *Gazette* surveys of the area.

At Nai Yang, one hotel had five rows; and in some spots on Nai Thon, chairs under trees that fringe the beach bring the total

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Beach	Umbrellas	Length (km)	Rows
Patong	9080	2.6	up to 7
Karon	6201	3.3	2-3
Kata	3669	1.5	2-3
Surin	2139	0.8	up to 7
Nai Harn	1821	0.7	up to 8
Nai Thon	1033	1	1-4, more under trees
Nai Yang	795	2.6	1-2, 5 at one hotel

Length: Wikimapia

shadows, a shady business

number of rows to seven or eight.

Two beaches strictly adhere to the three-row rule: Kata and Karon.

"We insist on only three rows," said Sompong Darbpeth, Deputy Mayor of Karon, who is responsible for both Kata and Karon.

"If all the chairs on the beach are full, we will consider adding another row, but if just one operator is full, we don't allow it. We think it's unfair."

Some beach areas are more popular than others, Mr Sompong explained; for example, those closer to parking.

"If those areas get full first and we add more chairs, it's not fair to the operators who are not as close to parking," he said.

"It's better to let the tourists spill over to other operators."

LAISSEZ-FAIRE OVERSIGHT

In contrast, at the beaches most crowded with chairs, officials allow the chair operators to regulate themselves.

"It's up to the operators to know what's suitable or not," Deputy Patong Mayor Chairat said.

Patong Chair Club President Amorn Srithaweekul said that operators need to use their own judgment when placing chairs.

"They need to be aware of their area, and make sure that at high tide there's space for people to do beach activities. They have to judge the number of chairs they'll need, and they can't try to get rid of people who want to use their area without renting a chair," he said.

Tourists have the right to put their own towels, chairs and umbrellas on the sand and not rent a chair, said Nai Harn Mayor Arun Soros. However, beachgoers do



Rows of chairs and umbrellas stacked more than three deep dominate the lagoon area at Nai Harn Beach. Photo: Leslie Porterfield

need to leave appropriate room between themselves and the chairs.

PRIVATE USE OF PUBLIC LAND

Though businesses in Phuket are regularly investigated for encroachment – building structures on public land or even removing plants from public beaches – chair operators are permitted to stage their businesses on public property.

"It's part of a policy to help local people. Local people have a right to use public land in their area, but they have to follow the regulations," Mr Arun explained.

However, not every local person has the right, Mr Chairat noted.

"Only those who are already doing it," he said.

In Patong, businesses may not be sold; they can only be trans-

ferred to close family members.

"I don't know why only family, that's just the rule," said Meena Panun, Chief of Public Health Administration for Patong, whose department oversees chair operators.

THE MONEY

Though they pay no rent, Patong and Nai Harn operators do pay fees in order to run their businesses.

At Nai Harn, fees total 4,000 baht a year: a 1,500 baht membership fee paid to the club, 500 baht to register with the municipality and 2,000 baht for trash collection.

In Patong, operators pay 3,500 baht a year: 500 baht to register with the municipality, and 3,000 baht for trash collection.

Chair club presidents in each lo-

cation said that there were no other fees paid, though Mr Joung noted that the municipality collected money at times during the year for municipal activities and events.

"It is not like Pattaya, this is Phuket," said Patong's Mr Amorn. "There are no under the table charges."

The cost of renting a chair varies from beach to beach and even within a beach area.

The cheapest chairs are at Nai Thon, where they cost 50 or 75 baht each. At Nai Yang they go for 75 or 100 baht. At all other beaches but Surin, they cost 100 baht each.

Surin's many beach clubs mean a wide range of costs for chairs, as guests gain club membership with a chair rental, and sometimes beverages and food are included. Chairs at Surin can cost from 100 baht to 5,000 baht each.

ONGOING EFFORTS

A variety of initiatives and working groups since the tsunami have failed to bring order to all of Phuket's beaches.

The governor in 2007, Niran Kalayanamit, set up four working groups to impose order on the sands, but in 2009, Governor Preecha Ruangjan said that the beaches were still "in a state of disarray" with too many chairs. Last year, the Senate Standing Committee on Tourism repeated the complaint.

We are a far cry from just 35 years ago, says one frequent Patong Beach visitor.

"It was empty and beautiful, with just a few simple eateries and guest houses," she said.

"We sat on mats on the beach, and stayed under trees for shade."



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US Embassy Consular outreach clinic coming

THE Consular Section of the American Embassy in Bangkok will hold an Outreach Visit at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort in Karon on April 30.

Consular staff will be available from 8am to midday to provide the following services:

- Passport renewal applications (US\$110 or 3,410 baht for adult passports, US\$105 or 3,255 baht for a minor's passport).
- Notarial Services and Certified Copies (US\$50 or 1,550 baht), includes income affidavits for retirees in Thailand.
- Extra visa pages (US\$82 or 2,542

baht). Note: during outreach visits, consular staff can accept applications, but the passports will be taken to the US Embassy in Bangkok for processing the next working day. Staff will bring prepaid Thailand Post envelopes to the outreach visit that can be bought at cost (80 baht) if the passport is to be returned to the applicant by mail. Alternatively, applicants can pick up the passport in person at the Embassy. A friend can collect the passport at the Embassy if the applicant provides written authorization.

- Social security, VA or other federal benefits questions: staff will try to provide

forms and answers.

Consular staff urge visitors to bring exact change for payment of any services required. See the US Embassy website for information and requirements for each service.

Consular Reports of Birth cannot be processed during consular outreach trips.

Appointments are not necessary for consular services during outreach visits. For more information, email acsbkk@state.gov or call the American Citizen Services Unit at 02-2054049. Also, check @ACSBKK on Twitter for updates. – *Phuket Gazette*



US Embassy officials will be at Le Meridien Resort on April 30. Photo: Roger Sayles

Rescuer recovers from fumes

By Woranut Pechdee

THE rescue worker who passed out while attempting to save four maintenance men who died in a Phuket Town sewer on March 26 was released from the hospital on Tuesday.

Jessada Janpen, 25, was one of the first to arrive on the scene, and immediately descended into the sewer to rescue the men. Although he wore an oxygen mask, Mr Jessada was overcome by hydrogen sulfide fumes.

"I heard about the accident over the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) radio and rushed to the site with my friends, who are also rescue workers, even though it was my day off," Mr Jessada told the *Gazette*.

Mr Jessada jumped into the sewer, but quickly realized the gravity of the situation.

"I couldn't breathe down there, and it was really hot. The last thing I remember is trying to get out of the sewer. Next thing I knew, I was waking up in the hospital."



Mr Jessada jumped into a sewer to try to rescue four men, but was overcome by hydrogen sulfide fumes.

Mr Jessada said that when he woke up, his vision was very blurry.

"Doctors told me I was in Vachira Phuket Hospital and that I couldn't see well because my eye vessels had popped. I also had

trouble walking, and I got tired easily," he said.

"I can walk now, but only with support. Doctors tell me I'll be able to walk by myself in a month if I do physical therapy every day. My eyes don't hurt anymore."

Mr Jessada expressed his regret for not being able to help the workers out of the sewer that day.

"I am not sorry about what happened to me, I am only sorry that I couldn't help those men."



Ms Buachompoo. Photo: Customs

B7mn ya ice intercepted by customs

A THAI woman was arrested at Phuket International Airport yesterday after she tried to smuggle 2.5kg of *ya ice* (crystal methamphetamine) from China into Phuket.

Customs officers valued the drugs at about 7 million baht.

"Buachompoo Pattanapiyawach, 39, was caught with drugs in her luggage after it was scanned by an x-ray machine," Phuket Airport Customs Director Montira Cherdchoo told a press conference this morning.

Ms Buachompoo, a native of Bangkok, arrived in Phuket from Hong Kong at about 4:30pm.

"She caught our officers' attention because she was acting like she was in a hurry," said Ms Montira. "So the officers started chatting with her."

"She seemed nervous, and the officers asked to search her luggage after suspiciously dense items were identified during the x-ray scan."

The *ya ice* was found hidden in instant cereal packets.

Ms Buachompoo denied any knowledge of the drugs and said a friend has asked her to pick up the bag in Guangzhou, China, and deliver it to someone in Phuket.

Ms Buachompoo has been charged with possession and trafficking of a Category 1 drug with intent to sell.

If found guilty of the charges against her, she faces the death penalty. However, one Customs said, "If she confesses or gives useful information to the police investigating her case, her penalty may be reduced to life imprisonment." – *Chutharat Plerin*

New rumors of Andaman bridge stun officials

A STUNNED Governor of Satun Province has denounced reports that plans were afoot to build a four-lane motorway over the Andaman Sea to join Satun Town in Southern Thailand with Perlis in northwestern Malaysia.

Governor Nuachai Jiraapirak dispelled the rumors this week after news reports began circulating online early last month, unofficially calling the supposed joint Thailand-Malaysia initiative the

"Andaman Bridge".

"I don't know why this is in the news again. The project was raised in 1997, but it failed to pass its Environmental Impact Assessment [EIA] in 2001," Governor Nuachai said.



No bridge in 2001, or now. Photo: Supplied

protected mangroves."

Kanchitpon Netsuwan, the director of the Satun Highways

Department, said that although the project – priced in 2001 – would have cost 15 billion baht, Thailand was to pay only 3.9bn baht.

Phuket Tourist Association Vice President Sarayuth Mallam said he was not aware of the mega-project, but would have supported it, adding that any improvement in transportation links to the Andaman region would only help boost tourism along the Andaman coast.

– *Woranut Pechdee*

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Police hunt resort manager

Man wanted after hundreds of pre-paid guests spurned

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

POLICE are seeking an arrest warrant for the managing director of a Krabi resort that recently turned away 50 guests who had prepaid bookings.

"Several tourists booked and paid for Krabi tour packages at a travel fair in Bangkok, and even received booking confirmations. But when they arrived at the hotel, the Phu Pranang Resort, they could not check in because the resort was overbooked," said Wiyada Srirangkul, Director of TAT Krabi.

"Furthermore, the hotel did not assist the tourists in finding lodging at another hotel, they just turned them away."

Thanatip Srisangwat, 32, one of the victims, said "I bought a three-day, two-night package including trips to the islands and airport pick-up and drop-off for five family members for 2,900 baht per person."

The family arrived at Krabi In-



After tourists filed their complaints, the Krabi resort closed its doors to avoid further tarnishing its reputation.

ternational Airport to find that there was no hotel car to pick them up.

Since then hundreds more prospective travellers have filed

complaints that they had bought pre-paid packages that will not be honored, said Col Witaya Maksai of the Krabi Police.

"The case is going nationwide,

and so far in Krabi alone we have received complaints from 231 people, amounting to millions of baht," he said.

Krabi Police Superintendent

Phrutthipong Nuchanart confirmed to the *Gazette* last week that an arrest warrant for the resort's managing director, Prateep Kaewnont, was "imminent."

Nitikorn Pissawong, one of two employees assigned by the owner to look after the Phu Pranang Resort, explained that the owner, Peera Damrongmahasawat, was in Bangkok.

"The resort has been open for about nine years," Mr Nitikorn said. "Mr Peera managed it for the first four years, and then rented it out to Mr Prateep for the last five."

"Mr Prateep has not paid his rent or the employees' salaries for the last five months," Mr Nitikorn said, adding that Mr Peera had already brought a lawsuit against Mr Prateep.

After Mr Peera heard the news about the tourists who had been turned away, he decided to close the resort, rather than risk continued bad press and potential financial liability, Mr Nitikorn added.

Chalong Police amid cleanup crackdown

From page 1

...just one week after his return as superintendent. Col Sirisak was reinstated on April 1 after former Chalong Superintendent Krittapas Daz-intharasorn was ordered out, pending an investigation into allegations that Chalong Police officers were extorting cash from dive operators.

On Monday, Col Sirisak faced the family, which used a minivan and two cars to block the entrance to the police station.

Posters accusing officers of "supporting murder" were plastered on billboards in front of the station. The billboards promote the island's leading police officers with the slogan, "Police for People".

The protest was staged because of the lack of progress by the Chalong Police in apprehending a suspect wanted for a fatal hit-and-run nine months ago in which Surachai Taweessin, 59, was killed.

The family vowed that the blockade would remain in place until the owner of the pickup truck that struck Mr Surachai

dead offered cash compensation.

"I want to end the problem, as the vehicle is mine," said Moo 1 Chalong Headman Pradit Ongsatiparp. "If possible, I would like to pay the full amount at 1pm on April 12 at the Chalong Police Station."

"The driver was working for me for only two days. I do not have his identification card. I do not know where he is."

The family accepted the offer. However, they demanded that police still pursue the arrest of the driver, identified on the arrest warrant only as "Mr Dam". Mr Dam struck and killed Mr Surachai before 7am at Chalong Circle in July and then fled the scene.

"The police told me my husband was dead and that the body was at Vachira Phuket Hospital."

Over the next nine months, Ms Buppa and relatives paid 10 visits to the Chalong Police Station.

"We came to the police station today [Monday] because we want justice for our family and progress in the case," Ms Buppa said.

Additional reporting by
Woranut Pechdee



'We came to the police station today because we want justice for our family'

— Buppa Taweessin,
widow of hit-and-run
victim Mr Surachai

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Experts examine the damage from the bomb blast. Photo: The Nation

Warning issued over dangerous WWII bombs

LIVE World War II aerial bombs have been excavated at various construction sites since the war, prompting authorities to warn against any attempts to tinker with strange metal objects.

On April 2, construction workers found an old bomb in Bang Khen district and sent what they thought was an iron object to a scrapyard to sell for cash.

When workers tried to cut the object open, a blast rocked the whole area, killing at least eight. The most recent confirmed death was that of a 3-year-old girl.

Two days later, another bomb was spotted in Chachoengsao's Plaeng Yao district.

"Aerial bombs are about 30 centimeters wide and one meter long. They have an oval shape," an expert explained on Monday.

"Some more aerial bombs may still be buried underground now. So, if anyone digs down and finds something suspicious, please alert officials immediately," Deputy National Police Chief Aek Angsanant said.

Anyone coming across a suspicious item matching the description of the bomb should call 02 534-3535, reported *The Nation*.

Bomb blasts rock south ahead of Thai new year

SECURITY has been beefed up in the restive Deep South ahead of the long Songkran holiday (see page 34), following destructive bombing attacks in Yala.

Authorities in the southern border provinces on Monday began increasing security measures in risky areas after a bomb explosion at a goods warehouse in Yala led to a blaze that caused at least 300 million baht in damage.

The Sri Samai warehouse is the largest for consumer products in the region and distributes goods to the three southern border provinces of Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani.

A convenience store located next to the warehouse was among the four targets attacked that morning.

Yala Governor Dejratt Simsiri said the bombings in the province on Monday and on Sunday were certainly carried out by the same group of people judging from evidence found by investigators.

Governor Dejratt said that the attacks involved car and motorcycle bombs and were well planned and aimed at undermining the local economy ahead of Songkran.

The governor said that the authorities were convinced that explosions on Monday were caused by time bombs planted around the same time as those that exploded on Sunday.

"The perpetrators timed the bombs to explode at different times in order to make the attacks look worse," he said.

Local authorities have boosted security to the top level and thoroughly scrutinized possible target areas, reported *The Nation*.

He added that security had been provided to individuals who could be targeted by insurgents.

Noppong Thiraworn, head of the Yala Chamber of Commerce, said that the economic impact of the attacks was incalculable,

with the latest attacks being the most severe in 10 years.

"The perpetrators certainly wanted to scare away tourists when we expect Songkran to help stimulate the local economy," Mr Noppong said.

On Sunday evening, four almost simultaneous explosions rocked Yala, killing one person and injuring 28 others in the heart of the town.

Yala is one of several hot spots in the Deep South. Violence flared in the region in January 2004 and since claimed more than 5,000 lives. The authorities believe separatist insurgents are behind most of the violence.

In the neighboring province of Narathiwat, security has been heightened, particularly in the downtown and business center, following the attacks in Yala, Narathiwat Governor Nattapong

AROUND THE nation



Smoke from the bomb blasts rises over Yala. Photo: The Nation

Sirichana said on Monday.

More checkpoints have been set up to screen suspected vehicles entering those areas.

Mr Nattapong said that insurgents might attempt to carry out attacks in Muang and Sungai Kolok districts ahead of Songkran.

Security sources said that the latest attacks could be aimed at challenging the new commander of the Fourth Army Region, Lt Gen Walit Rojanapakdee.

The sources said that the bombings had a severe psychological impact on locals.

PDRC leader denies unconstitutional attempts to overthrow PM Yingluck

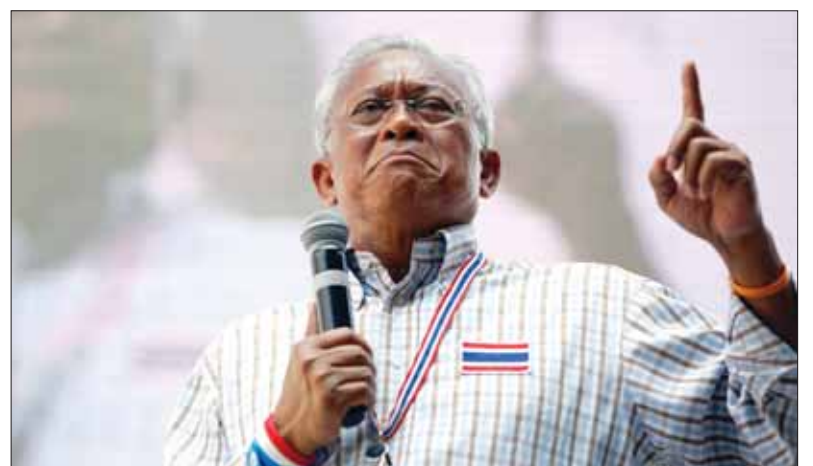
A LEADER of the anti-government People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) denied on Monday that the PDRC was trying to unconstitutionally overthrow the caretaker Yingluck Shinawatra administration.

The charge followed a declaration by PDRC Secretary-General Suthep Thaugsuban that the movement had the sovereign status to seek a royal endorsement to install a new administration, reported *The Nation*.

Thaworn Senneam, a PDRC leader, said Mr Suthep was referring only to a situation where red-shirt supporters and the government might refuse to accept two Constitutional Court rulings.

Mr Thaworn said that the government and its supporters must accept scrutiny and possible punishment by the independent organizations under the Constitution.

He denied the allegation by



PDRC Secretary-General Suthep Thaugsuban said that protesters could seek a royal endorsement to install a new administration. Photo: Reuters

Pheu Thai Party spokesman Prompong Nopparit that the PDRC was seeking to unlawfully overthrow the government. He said the Civil Court had ruled that the PDRC was peacefully exercising its right under the Constitution to demonstrate and urged the Phue

Thai Party not to distort things.

Mr Prompong insisted that Mr Suthep was violating Article 113 of the Criminal Code by inciting unlawful overthrow of the political system, and urged the chiefs of the Armed Forces to take a public stance on the matter.

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Pings echo hope

New black box signals refine MH370 search area

By Matt Siegel
and Swati Pandey

AUSTRALIAN officials said on Wednesday that two new "ping" signals had been detected in the search for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, boosting confidence after more than a month of fruitless searching for the missing jetliner.

The signals, which could be from the plane's black box recorders, brought to four the number of overall "pings" detected in as many days within the search area by a US Navy "Towed Pinger Locator" (TPL).

Angus Houston, head of the Australian agency coordinating the search, struck an optimistic tone when announcing the information, but urged caution as the task of searching the remote Indian Ocean region remained enormous.

"I believe we are searching in the right area but we need to visually identify aircraft wreckage before we can confirm with certainty that this is the final resting place of MH370," he said.

"I'm now optimistic that we will find the aircraft, or what is left of the aircraft, in the not too distant future."

The black boxes record cockpit data and may provide answers about what happened to the plane, which was carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew when it flew thousands of kilometers off its Kuala Lumpur-to-Beijing route and vanished on March 8.

But the batteries in the beacons have already reached the end of their 30-day expected life, mak-



A crew member aboard a Royal New Zealand Air Force P3 Orion search aircraft reacts as he looks at screens while flying over the southern Indian Ocean looking for missing Malaysian Airlines flight MH370. Photo: Reuters

AROUND THE region

ing efforts to swiftly locate them all the more critical.

Authorities say evidence suggests the plane was deliberately diverted by someone familiar with the aircraft, but have not ruled out mechanical problems.

Analysis of satellite data led in-

vestigators to conclude the Boeing 777 came down in a remote area of the Indian Ocean, some 2,261km northwest of Perth.

Up to 11 military aircraft, four civilian aircraft and 14 ships were to take part in the search on Wednesday. Unmanned underwater vehicle Bluefin-21 is on board the *Ocean Shield* and could be sent to look for wreckage on the sea floor once intelligence narrows the search area.

A US Navy officer on board the *Ocean Shield* said the inability to reacquire the "pings" may

be for several reasons, including: that the initial detection was false; that it was positive but the batteries have since run out; or that it had caught a mere "whiff" of the signal and had since moved too far from the correct location to reacquire it.

The potential search area is currently about 4.5km deep, the outer reach of the Bluefin's range.

"I can cover in one day with TPL the amount of area it will take me to cover with Bluefin in six days," the US Navy officer said.

— Reuters

In brief...

Indonesia security beefed up for polls for new parliament

INDONESIA'S security forces were called to safeguard the national legislative election on Wednesday, with special attention being paid to conflict-prone areas, including Aceh and Papua.

Indonesia is the world's third-largest democracy after India and the United States. The election saw 185.8 million voters able to cast their ballots to elect 560 legislators and more than 18,000 local councillors. — *Jakarta Post*

Khmer war crimes trial talks genocide

THE trial of former Khmer Rouge leaders Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea on Monday entered a new phase with charges related to genocide, forced marriages and rape, treatment of Buddhists, internal purges and targeting of former Khmer Republic officials.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia said the allegations involved crime sites at four security centers, three worksites and a cooperative.

— *The Cambodia Herald*

Italian ambassador held for child abuse

ITALIAN ambassador to Turkmenistan, Daniele Bosio, has been detained while on holiday in the Philippines pending an investigation into alleged child abuse after he was found in the company of three boys.

Justice Secretary Leila de Lima said police arrested Amb Bosio at a water fun park near Manila last weekend following a tip-off from a local child rights group.

— *Philippines Inquirer*

UK, UN call Myanmar over Rohingya aid crisis

BRITAIN summoned Myanmar's ambassador on Monday to call on the Southeast Asian nation to allow aid agencies to resume work in violence-torn Rakhine state.

The call came on the same day that Tomas Ojea Quintana, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, urged Myanmar to allow the return of aid groups forced to flee attacks in Rakhine.

The departure of aid agencies threatened "severe consequences" for Muslims sheltering in camps from violence by majority Buddhists. Water shortages could reach critical levels within a week in some displacement camps, where 140,000 people live as a result of communal conflict since 2012, Mr Quintana warned.

Aid agencies were forced to halt operations in Rakhine last month when hundreds of ethnic



UN special envoy Tomas Quintana warned of a humanitarian crisis if aid agencies did not resume work in Rakhine. Photo: Reuters

Buddhists destroyed staff homes, offices and warehouses as well as boats used to transport supplies.

Parts of the ethnic Rakhine Buddhist community have accused aid groups of favoring the mainly Muslim Rohingya people.

— Reuters

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In brief...

Pistorius describes slaying girlfriend to court, breaks down

SOUTH African Olympic and Paralympic sprinter Oscar Pistorius broke down and sobbed on the witness stand on Tuesday as he described the moments when he shot dead his girlfriend thinking she was an intruder.

As he described to the court bashing in a door panel to gain access to the toilet, he broke down, sobbing uncontrollably, leading judge Thokozile Masipa to adjourn the hearing for the day.

Army searches for Fort Hood killer's possible motive

THE United States Army was searching last Friday for a clear motive for the second mass killing in five years at a Texas base, one of the largest in the US. Ivan Lopez, the shooter, was battling mental illness, the Army said, but no motive has been given.

India holds biggest national election in world's history

THE first Indians cast their votes on Monday in the world's biggest election. Some 815 million people are registered to vote over the next five weeks across the country. Results of the general election are due on May 16.

Taiwanese protest trade deal with neighboring China

A CHAOTIC sit-in to protest against a trade deal with China has shut down Taiwan's parliament for the first time in its history and exposed deep divisions over the island's identity after seven decades of living apart from its vast, undemocratic rival across the strait.

Islamists to ban laughter and crying, says Chinese official

THE governor of China's restive far western region of Xinjiang wrote on Monday that Islamist militants were trying to ban laughter at weddings and crying at funerals, as he appealed to stamp out the "tumor" of extremism.

China's nervousness about Islamist extremism has grown since a car burst into flames on the edge of Beijing's Tiananmen Square in October, and 29 people were stabbed to death last month in the southwestern city of Kunming.

Beijing blamed Xinjiang militants for both. Writing in the *Xinjiang Daily*, Xinjiang

governor Nur Bekri said that acts of terror had been made possible by extremists taking advantage of people's faith, especially "young people who have seen little of the world".

People who do not follow the strictures of the Islamists are condemned by them as "traitors" and "scum", said Mr Bekri.

"They... push the banning of watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers, singing and dancing, and allowing laughter at weddings and crying at funerals.

"Resolutely eliminate the tumor of religious extremism," he said.

— Reuters



Guards stand watch at the Kunming train station after the March 7 knife attack. Photo: Reuters

Pro-Russian Ukrainians stand for annex of cities

By Lina Kushch and Richard Balmforth

POLICE detained 70 people occupying a regional administration building in eastern Ukraine on Monday, but pro-Moscow protesters held out in a standoff in two other cities in what Kiev called a Russian-led plan to dismember the country.

Kiev says the seizure of public buildings in eastern Ukraine's mainly Russian-speaking industrial heartland on Sunday is a replay of events in Crimea, the peninsula Moscow annexed last month.

Ukrainian authorities gave few details of the "anti-terrorist" operation that cleared the building in the town of Kharkiv but said two police had been wounded by a grenade that was thrown. Russia has denied Ukrainian charges of involvement but warned Kiev against any use of force against Russian-speakers.

Ukrainian special forces in combat gear, helmets and *balaclavas* and carrying *kalashnikovs* and machine guns stood guard early on Tuesday outside the building whose windows had been broken.

The pro-Russian protesters who also took over official buildings in Luhansk and Donetsk



Pro-Russians clash with activists supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity in Kharkiv on April 7. Photo: Reuters

demanding that referendums be held on whether to join Russia, similar to the one that preceded Moscow's annexation of Crimea.

"An anti-Ukrainian plan is being put into operation... under which foreign troops will cross the border and seize the territory of the country," Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk said in public remarks to his cabinet. "We will not allow this."

Interior Minister Arsen Avakov said on Tuesday about 70 "separatists" had been detained in Kharkiv.

Ukraine's Interior Ministry was quoted by Interfax-Ukraine news as saying those detained were suspected of "illegal activity related to separatism, the organization of mass disorder, damage to human health" and breaking other laws.

On Tuesday about 200 people gathered outside the building and

a group of National Guard stood to one side. But there was no sign of any attempt to enter by force.

The Russian Foreign Ministry later called on Ukraine to stop massing military forces it said were tasked with suppressing anti-government protests.

"We call for an immediate halt to military preparations which could lead to an outbreak of civil war," the ministry said. — Reuters

Defying UN admonition, North Korea threatens 'new form of nuclear test'

NORTH Korea said on Friday that the world would have to "wait and see" when asked for details of "a new form" of nuclear test it threatened to carry out after the United Nations Security Council condemned Pyongyang's recent ballistic missile launch.

North Korea fired two Rodong ballistic missiles into the sea on March 26. Its first firing in four years of mid-range missiles that can hit Japan followed a series of short-range rocket launches over the past two months.

Members of the Security Council condemned the move as a violation of UN resolutions and said that they would continue discussing an "appropriate



response".

North Korea (DPRK) reacted last Sunday with a threat to conduct what it called "a new form of nuclear test".

"The DPRK made it very clear, we will carry out a new form of nuclear test. But I recommend you to wait and see what it is," North Korea's Deputy UN Ambassador Ri Tong Il said last Friday.

Ballistic missile launches are

banned under UN Security Council resolutions adopted in response to North Korea's multiple nuclear tests and rocket firings.

Mr Ri accused the United States of being "hell bent on regime change" in North Korea by blaming its leaders for human rights violations. He also said Washington was blocking a bid for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula by ignoring North Korean proposals, so it can maintain military presence in the region.

While North Korea has detonated several nuclear devices, analysts have expressed doubt that it currently has the technical capability to reliably mount a nuclear warhead on a missile. — Reuters

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Sansiri unveils great deals on Dcondo Creek

Fully furnished units, ready to move into from B1.49mn

Sansiri PLC recently unveiled Dcondo Creek, their latest completed development in Phuket, which they describe as a resort-style condominium in the heart of the island. The project features a massive 100-meter swimming pool, surrounded by verdant green landscaped gardens aimed at creating a relaxing and harmonious living environment.

Executive Vice President of Project Management and Marketing at Sansiri, Suriya Wannabuit, said that the company had received much positive feedback from owners of units already transferred, and that with its prime location, Dcondo Creek offers a unique rental opportunity.

"Dcondo Creek is the third Dcondo development in Phuket to be completed after Dcondo Kathu and Dcondo Kathu-Patong. Dcondo Creek's resort-style concept is inspired by nature – a spacious design that provides comfortable living, a recreational space in natural surroundings and a stunning 100m long swimming pool," he



said.

"Now complete, the condominiums are fully furnished and ready to move into, or available for purchase with strong rental potential. We have experienced a lot of good feedback from owners on the transfer of units," he added.

Dcondo Creek is located on Wichit Songkram Road on a four-rai plot in the Kathu district. The development comprises four eight-storey buildings with a total of 806 units and two room types – 750 studio units and 56 two-bedroom units. The development is conveniently located near a wide variety of shopping, restaurant, school and entertainment options.

At 29 square meters in size, the studio units have their own balcony, kitchen area and bathroom, while the 60sqm

two-bedroom units come with an en-suite master bedroom, dining area, living room and private balcony. Each unit has a holistic functional design and maximizes space for residents.

Incredible Value

Sansiri has also announced a raft of special offers on current Dcondo developments in Phuket, which include some fantastic price deals:

Dcondo Creek: Units with views overlooking the swimming pool start from 1.49 million baht.

Dcondo Kathu: Unit prices start from 1.29 million baht.

Dcondo Kathu-Patong: Unit prices start from 1.39 million baht.

There is no transfer fee and a managed rental program is available.

For more information, please visit: sansiri.com or contact the Sansiri call center on 1685.



The centerpiece of Sansiri's Dcondo Creek is the 100-meter central swimming pool. Photos: Supplied.



A resort-style condominium in the heart of the island.



Pool view units start from just 1.49mn baht.



Sansiri unveiled their latest deals at a recent event.



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<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> 5 Banyan Tree Residence THB 37.5 M </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-bedroom Pool Villa • Fully furnished • Rental Program by Banyan Tree • Sanctuary Club benefits 	<p>For more information on these and other properties, please call:</p> <p>+66 (0)76 362 333</p> <p>email: resale@lagunaresale.com</p> <p>www.lagunaresale.com</p>

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Walking the brand dogma



Property Watch

By Bill Barnett

ONE of my recurring nightmares is that of a tropical island sunset framed by a sinking orange ball, and the erotically charged image of a scantily-clad, swimsuit-model type gently grasping onto the edge of a mega-villa infinity swimming pool, staring aimlessly onto an empty horizon.

Please bear with me, I have not entirely lost my mind. Not yet anyway, but please, read on.

Meanwhile, back in paradise, the golden moment suddenly

takes a dark twist when a giant reptilian tail appears out of nowhere and after the gushing sounds of water breaks the tranquility, the lovely girl disappears in a flurry of bubbles.

My imagination runs wild with an image straight out of the Black Lagoon – a half-man, half-reptile, who preys on those who would dare to go swimming solo in their waterfront cliff-hanging mansions.

I did sit next to a man on an airline a few years back who claimed to be deep into the study of “ichthyology” (study of certain types of fish), but that’s an entirely different story.

Welcome to my nightmare, and let me fill in the missing link between the disappearing pool girl and a real estate investor who once embraced the hotel-branded pool villa craze in Asia.

As I take the brand dogma out for a walk, we can look back to the golden age of the two icons

As I take the brand dogma out for a walk, we can look back to the golden age of the two icons of the movement – Aman’s Adrian Zecha and KP Ho of Banyan Tree. These two propelled the entire leisure experience of getting out of the box and into your own private space.

of the movement – Aman’s Adrian Zecha and KP Ho of Banyan Tree. These two propelled the entire leisure experience of getting out of the box and into your own private space.

To sum up their approach – the concept of getting naked, swimming, and staying naked, was sure to be a far greater stimulant for the rich than Viagra could ever be.

During the lead up to the “Big Sleep” of 2007, hotel-branded resort villas were flying off the shelves across Asia’s leading resort destinations – Phuket, Bali, Koh Samui, Vietnam and even Cambodia. “Brand-ologist’s” and

property-types quoted the the hallowed doctrine like hyped up Jehovah’s Witnesses, pitching the value-add of brands to real estate offerings – premium pricing, amped-up sales pace, and that intangible yet valuable resource, prestige.

The truth be known, the house came crashing down around eager developers in that specific

segment, and to this day it has yet to see clear air. While multi-million-dollar, hotel-branded leisure residence projects once garnered a few sales each month, today, the trading remains sluggish, with even leading markets Phuket and Bali taking four to five months to sell just one villa.

In many ways, real estate is just like The Talented Mr Ripley and Asia’s developers took to a different tactic – going low and high and staying out of the meaty part entirely. While not exactly vegetarian, the extremes put pressure on size and price, so we



During the lead up to the crash of 2007, hotel-branded resort villas were flying off the shelves across Asia’s leading resort destinations – Phuket, Bali, Koh Samui, Vietnam and even Cambodia. Photo: Sri Panwa Hotel



For now, branding has definitively gone to town, and while you might want to take the dogma for a walk, it’s hard to say if it’s going to be heading back to the beach for a holiday anytime soon.

ended up with smallish investment types that might be more suitable for a vegan, rather than a hungry carnivore. Domestic buyers replaced the elite international crowd and the rise of

the Asian middle class created a new East – where the West once lived.

At the same time, large smart property developers spotted a money trail that still existed after the crash, and investors came off the beach and into town. Suddenly hotel brands clamored to urban offerings.

In each Asian country, as investment became more of a domestic affair, the large listed institutions grasped the concept of capturing both rich locals and an increasing aspirational class who loved upscale retail malls, hotels and city-center living. What better way to showcase a large mixed offering than with prestigious hotel brands, lending a rarefied air to an entire lifestyle complex?

Today, in every CDB across Asia, international hotel brands and celebrity designers have been caught up in a high stakes name-game in city locations,

launching a massive number of new offerings.

Where and when the saturation point comes is anyone’s guess, but taking a look at the Philippines, where a Paris Hilton-affiliated residential resort project has prospered, might signal that the air is getting pretty thin?

Illogically, the familiar resort destinations in the region are again seeing a new splash out of hotel-branded multi-million-dollar pool villas. Can they defy gravity at a time when big numbers of consumers remain at the aspirational level?

For now, branding has definitively gone to town, and while you might want to take the dogma for a walk, it’s hard to say if it’s going to be heading back to the beach for a holiday anytime soon.

Bill Barnett is Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks; he can be contacted through c9hotelworks.com

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A Phuket developer's perspective

FOUNDING member of the Phuket Real Estate Association (PREA) and president of Phuket-based developers The Onella, Sam Sethi, is a Phuket native and part of a successful family-run business on the island with a strong track record in residential and hospitality development.

Over the past 20 years, Mr Sethi has focused on developing mixed-use commercial and residential properties that are a notch above the mass market, including Bangla Square in Patong; bungalows, restaurants and retail shops near Kata Beach Resort; and Phuket Golf & Country Homes at Phuket Country Club.

In a recent interview with the *Gazette*, Mr Sethi discusses the emerging trend in central Phuket's property market and gives his take on the kind of investors the island is destined to attract over the next decade or so.

Sam Sethi: Although Phuket's property market has largely blossomed from a fertile bed of tourism-based industries – inevitably turning coastal areas into prime plots of real estate – reliance on the fickle mass tourism industry alone is not the way forward.

Instead, smart investors are now turning toward central Phuket as the ideal multi-purpose regional hub can provide much more stability than mass tourism, especially with the inevitable influx of

commercial diversity in 2015 and beyond, with Thailand's inclusion into the Asean Economic Community (AEC).

The goals of the AEC, in which Phuket already plays a significant role, is to create a single market and production base, a highly competitive economic region, equitable economic development and a region fully integrated into the global economy.

This makes now the best time to invest in order to capitalize on central Phuket's growth in the years ahead. Like many of the island's coastal areas, central Phuket is being defined as a luxury destination thanks to both government and private sector investment, such as the ongoing infrastructure improvement projects, and the massive investments by Thailand's largest retail corporations, which are aimed at cashing in on the growing high-end lifestyle market.

This, in turn, brings more executive types from around the region to central Phuket on a long-term basis. They will need the convenience of a central location for their lifestyle needs, as well as accommodation of a certain standard, in private home-like living environments.

Central Phuket's global-standard facilities such as international schools and hospitals also make it the perfect location to conveniently cover family and



President of Phuket-based developers, The Onella, Sam Sethi. Photo: Supplied

lifestyle needs.

As a local developer, we at The Onella have focused on a structure for long-term returns by developing prime locations that offer convenience and a certain level of exclusivity.

Our latest project, Prive 49, is a low-density residence comprising just seven floors with only seven condominium units on each floor with single corridor advantages. They offer exclusive hospitality facilities and services right in the heart of Phuket, next to Makro and opposite Head Start International School.

Prive 49 is a combination of exclusive accommodation with a focus on privacy and high-quality hospitality to fit snugly in the central business district's property niche. The residency has two types of large,

secluded units: 42 units measuring 33.25sqm and seven units with 32.96sqm of living space – both fully furnished with a fitted kitchen and extra large en-suite bathroom.

There will also be a regular shuttle service to nearby stores and places of interest, secure parking and advanced security systems.

An additional facility we are offering is Cafe 49, which is a separate cafe and restaurant with a garden attached to Prive 49, to provide a place for residents and non-residents to meet, drink, eat and have fun, fruitful times.

– *Phuket Gazette*

For more information about The Onella Co and Prive 49, visit prive49.com, email: info@prive49.com or call 095-079 7779.

Ministry of Commerce to crack down on Songkran price gouging



Photo: Takeaway

Retailers and food traders caught overcharging could face seven years in jail, up to a 140,000 baht fine or both.

THE Ministry of Commerce has assured consumers that prices will be kept under control this year to stabilize the cost of living, including during the Songkran holiday break.

"The ministry will continue to hold down prices this year and during long weekends," Director General Srirat Rastapana of the Department of Trade Negotiations said.

"To ensure consumers are treated justly during the Songkran

Festival, the ministry has instructed the Internal Trade Department to send teams to inspect prices at hot spots such as bus terminals, train stations, airports, tourist destinations and rest areas along highways nationwide."

Retailers and food traders could face seven years in jail, up to 140,000 baht in fines or both under the Price of Goods and Services Act, should they overcharge consumers, she added.

Somchart Soithong, director general of the Internal Trade Department, said shops would also be checked for clear labeling of products so that consumers will not be cheated.

"If prices are not plainly stated, merchants could be fined up to 10,000 baht. If consumers find an unfair practice, they can call the department's 1569 hotline. After receiving the complaint, officials will be sent to investigate the case," he said.

– *The Nation*

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Tesco Lotus expands online shopping service to Phuket

TESCO Lotus customers in Phuket can now buy their groceries with the click of a mouse after the company extended its popular online shopping service to the island. The online service is based at the company's Tesco Extra store on the bypass road.

"Customers in Bangkok, Pattaya and Chiang Mai have responded positively to the Tesco Lotus Online Shopping service we started a year ago," said Tesco Lotus Marketing Director Wanna Swuddigul.

"They have told us Tesco Lotus Online Shopping service makes their lives more convenient and saves them time and money on travel. Customers also enjoy a wide range of fresh food and grocery products available for them to choose online at Tesco Lotus

prices... We are now proud to announce an extension of the Online Shopping service to Phuket, launching on April 10, 2014, to bring the country's foremost online service for fresh food and groceries to Thailand's most popular holiday island."

With over 20,000 product lines on offer, Tesco Lotus remains the only retailer in the country that offers online ordering and delivery of fresh food. It uses specially designed vans with separate compartments for frozen products, chilled products and non-perishable groceries for delivery to customers' doorsteps.

After choosing products online, the customer can pick one of six delivery time slots, which are available from 10am to 10pm, seven days a week.

"All online shopping orders are sorted by our professionally trained personal shoppers, who seek out the freshest produce and longest expiry dates just like our customers would do. The shopping will then be delivered to customers' doorsteps based on the specified time slot or customers can collect the items at a selected Tesco Lotus store," explained Ms Wanna.

Tesco Group offers online shopping services in South Korea, Malaysia, Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, the UK and Thailand, which together continue to experience sales growth as more people migrate to the online option.

"Online shopping is a part of the Tesco Lotus strategy to grow



Tesco Lotus remains the only retailer in the country that offers online ordering and delivery of fresh food. Photo: Supplied

our business through multiple formats and multiple channels. Apart from online service expansion we are continuing with our plan to open around 300 new stores this year across all formats, including Extra, Hypermarket, Department

Store, Talad and Express. Our comprehensive set of store formats will help us meet the needs of various consumer groups and changing lifestyles," concluded Ms Wanna.

– Phuket Gazette

Asia Pacific Superyachts makes port in Tahiti

ASIA Pacific Superyachts, represented in Phuket for more than a decade by long-term expat Gordon Fernandes, has branched out to welcome Tahiti Ocean into its fold.

Tahiti Ocean converted to Asia Pacific Superyachts Tahiti as of April 1, joining a network covering the regions of the Andaman Islands, Borneo, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, New Zealand, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Phuket and Koh Samui, Thailand – providing world-class service and supplies to meet every need of visiting superyachts.

Founded by Etienne Boutin in Pateete, Tahiti, in 1995, Tahiti Ocean was the first port agency exclusively dedicated to the service of luxury yachts visiting French Polynesia, and one of the first in the South Pacific.

"Since 1995 we have assisted more than 600 motor and sailing yachts from 20 to 140 meters, welcomed more than 8,000 owners and their guests and worked with 4,000 crew members to achieve the unique mix of pleasure, professionalism and self-dedication common to the modern yachting industry," Mr Boutin explained.



Etienne Boutin, founder of Asia Pacific Superyachts Tahiti. Photo: Supplied

Tahiti Ocean was instrumental to the development of a charter regulation in Tahiti allowing large yachts to legally charter with reasonable taxes. In doing so, the company developed procedures and standards to create a favorable environment for large yachts visiting French Polynesia.

Tahiti is the largest island in the Windward group of French Polynesia (an overseas country of the French Republic), located in the archipelago of the Society Islands in the southern Pacific Ocean. It is the economic, cultural

and political center of French Polynesia.

The island was formed from volcanic activity and is high and mountainous with surrounding coral reefs and is the most populous island of French Polynesia. The capital, Papeete, and nearby marina Taina, are located on the northwest coast with the only international airport in the region serving as a hub to famous Bora Bora, to the dive paradise of Tuamotu islands or to the remote and spectacular Marquesas Archipelago.

– Phuket Gazette

Thailand to lure more filmmakers



Maya Bay, where the hit film 'The Beach' was shot. Photo: Fah Rojvithee

THE Ministry of Tourism and Sports is preparing to roll out a slew of benefits to lure filmmakers to shoot on location in the kingdom, in an industry that generated 2.17 billion baht last year.

Key to the campaign will be a "one-stop" center to streamline the often complex process of obtaining the permits and permissions needed to film in Thailand, explained the ministry's Department of Tourism director, Ubolwan Sucharitakul.

"We are also organizing several road shows overseas to raise the profile of the kingdom as a country with the readiness, skills and expertise to help film makers.

"We want to show how Thailand truly is one of the best locations in the world to make movies and to encourage more movie-making, so we are offering incentives, such as tax exemptions for foreign movie actors starring in films shot in the kingdom," she said.

Other initiatives to lure filmmakers include a series of training sessions and seminars to educate local film crew co-ordinators about collaborating with foreign film crews as well as pre- and post-shooting techniques to ensure a smooth and efficient production.

In 2013, Thailand attracted a total of 269 film crew co-ordinators comprising 185

companies and 84 individuals. An additional 71 film crew co-ordinators have approached the DOT with inquiries about film shooting in Thailand in 2014.

Some 717 foreign film productions came to Thailand to shoot movies in 2013, generating around 2.17 billion baht. The Indian film industry was the biggest market with over 150 titles, followed by Japan with 140 titles. These are not all feature films but made up of 356 promotional videos, 150 documentaries, 107 television shows and 47 music videos.

"International film production in Thailand both directly and indirectly helps to showcase the kingdom and attracts further visitors who want to experience the film location themselves," TAT Governor Thawatchai Arunyik said.

"For example, following the release of the hit Chinese movie, *Lost in Thailand*, which was filmed in Chiang Mai, many Chinese travellers came to Thailand to see the film location, and several airlines have introduced new direct routes and increased flight numbers between several Chinese cities and Chiang Mai itself."

As recently as late last year, the Hollywood blockbuster *The Coup* starring Owen Wilson was shot partly on location in Chiang Mai.

– Phuket Gazette



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Advice on foreign-owned businesses

By Chutharat Plerin

THE Phuket Business Development Office (BDO) has announced that it will be hosting a lecture aimed at educating foreign business operators about the provisions of Thailand's Foreign Business Act B.E. 2542.

Topics addressed during the lecture will include whether it is necessary to set up a company to do business in the Kingdom, avoiding red tape and issues surrounding the appointment of Thai nominees.

"The lecture will be held at Kata Beach Resort & Spa Hotel on April 29," Phuket BDO Chief Nimit Kangkajit told the *Gazette* on April 1.

Reservations for the lecture must be made by April 20 at the BDO in Phuket Town, opposite the Red Cross Center in Saphan Hin. To reserve your place call 076-224419 or 081-753 8496, telephone lines will be manned by English-speaking staff.

"There will be two sessions. A morning session from 8am to midday and a second session from 1pm to 4:45pm. The lectures will be delivered in English by facilitators from the Office of Alien Business Administration, from the Ministry of Commerce's Department of Business Development," Mr Nimit explained.

"A 2,000-baht application fee is required for each session. Snacks and lecture-based materials will be provided. Anyone who would like to attend both sessions must pay the 4,000 baht in advance and lunch will be served at the venue," he noted.

The morning session, where the number of attendants is not limited, will cover the topic "Knowledge of the Foreign Business Act B.E. 2542". It will explain which types of businesses can be operated in Thailand by a foreigner. Following a 15-minute break, the session will resume at 10:45am to cover "Applications for permission to operate a business in Thailand", and will include a discussion on permission criteria and requirements.

The afternoon session, which is limited to 30 attendees, will cover "Application Production for Alien Busi-

ness Operation Permission".

"In this session, foreign business operators will have a chance to ask questions and get information directly from officials," said Mr Nimit.

This is the first time the BDO has ever held an English-language lecture in Phuket. It will be a great opportunity for applicants to get in touch with experts, he explained.

"There are a lot of foreigners operating businesses here in Phuket. We want to acknowledge them, and inform them about what they can and cannot do with their business. Moreover, they can have sound advice from experts about their business during the lecture," he said.

"Attendees will be able to get in touch with government experts for advice, including how to own a business without having to set up a company in Phuket.

"Foreign business operators do not [always] need to set up a company. There might be some other way around to save your money and make your business easier," he said.

Some accounting companies will just advise foreigners to set up a company, no matter what business they want to do in Phuket, or any other place in Thailand, just to get their money, Mr Nimit said.

"Setting up a company is not the only one thing you can do to start your business. Do not waste your money with accounting companies," he noted.

"Setting up a company [involves organizing] shareholders, financial capital, employees, social security, tax and so many other things [that must be done] in order to open and maintain the company legally," Mr Nimit said.

He added that officials are aware of the nominee issue in Phuket, but admitted they are powerless to stop it if proper documents are submitted.

"We are aware that there are companies setting up with Thai people as nominees. However, we cannot do anything when applicants submit proper documents to us. This [lecture] is one chance for foreign business operators to get better advice and possibly save a lot of time and money," Mr Nimit said.



BDO Phuket Chief Nimit Kangkajit says it is not always necessary to set up a company to do business in Thailand. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

Phuket 'unaffected' during 28-day power disruptions

THE Phuket Provincial Energy Office (PPEO) has assured that Phuket and other tourism provinces along the Andaman coast will remain unaffected as a major natural gas supply line that feeds the national grid goes offline for 28 days in June and July.

The news follows the announcement that the supply of natural gas from field A-18 in the Joint Development Area (JDA) between Thailand and Malaysia in the Gulf of Thailand will be disrupted from June 13 to July 10 for an upgrade.

"The shutdown could result in a gas shortfall of about 420 million cubic feet a day, and could suspend operations of the

700-megawatt Chana Power Plant in Songkhla province,"

PPEO Acting Chief Rattakorn Klinchan said.

In preparations for the shortfall, and to avoid blackouts across the 14 southern provinces, the Energy Ministry has ordered that millions of liters of fuel oils be stocked at the power plants in Krabi and Surat Thani.

"A total of 27 million liters of bunker oil will be stocked at the Krabi power plant and 14mn liters of diesel will be stocked at the Surat Thani plant," said Mr Rattakorn.

"This will be enough to produce the power needed while the Chana plant is offline."

— Chutharat Plerin



PPEO Acting Chief Rattakorn Klinchan. Photo: Chutharat Plerin



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Three cheers for clean police

THE opening of the Karon Police Station in 2012 to service the southwest of the island was a well-intended move, one expected to take pressure off the Chalong Police that were previously responsible for the entire south of the island.

Events in recent months have shown that the truncation did not stop the scandals that have plagued the station for years, collectively undermining its reputation and ability to maintain law and order in what must be one of the most diverse demographics in the Kingdom.

For reasons that remain somewhat unclear, the area under the jurisdiction of the Chalong Police remains the most popular destination among the large and ever-growing legions of long-stay expats: from the tattoo-covered martial arts practitioners of Soi Ta-iad to the bar stool yachties of Chalong Bay.

Throw in untold scores of migrant workers from other parts of Thailand, not to mention Burmese workers, and it comes as little surprise that the Chalong Police area has developed a reputation as a place “where anything can happen, and usually does”.

With so much going on, no precinct on the island could stand to benefit more from the assistance of foreign volunteer police. Unfortunately, the station's former “go to” guy, New Zealander Gary Halpin, was arrested last year for allegedly selling methamphetamine to foreign tourists.

More recently, the station fell under scrutiny after officers under the command of former superintendent Col Krittipas Dazinthasorn allegedly used their positions to extort money from dive instructors. True to form, his higher-ups tacitly admitted the “impropriety” by suggesting Col Krittipas “had been there a long time”, and had developed “close relationships with his men, which made it hard for him to maintain discipline.”

As is usual following such allegations, Col Krittipas was simply transferred to another post, with no specific mention of further investigation into the incident.

In the latest fiasco to befall the station, a family grieving the death of their patriarch in a hit-and-run accident (page 1) blockaded the station's entrance for some five hours to protest the department's inability to bring the perpetrator to justice.

While extending our condolences to the family, the *Gazette* cannot help but note the irony that in trying to “finesse” some justice in their own case, the family denied access to other members of the public who might also have been seeking justice through the station.

With all this in mind, and too many other scandals to mention in this limited space, the *Gazette* would like to offer newly reinstated Chalong Police Superintendent Col Sirisak Wasasiri the best of luck back in the saddle. We suspect he might need it.



Dive permit locales too provincial

Re: *Gazette online, Foreigners in Phuket: Dive shop blitz clarifies instructors' work descriptions*, April 4

“You must carry out these activities in Phuket province only, as the authority of the Employment Office only covers people working in Phuket.”

That means a dive instructor with a Phuket work permit who takes students to Phi Phi, Khao Lak, the Similans or Myanmar is breaking the law.

The Employment Office should match the work description to the job as it is actually done.

Perplexed
Chalong

...and no English is a hole for corruption

Re: *Gazette online, Foreigners in Phuket: Dive shop blitz clarifies instructors' work descriptions*, April 4

Ms Orakarn insists they won't write anything in the work permits that the average holder of such a permit can read. “However, our officers must explain the job description...”

There we go – nothing in writing, so lots of latitude for the police when they feel like a sting.

Amused/Not amused
Gazette Forum

Seminar sounds good

Re: *Gazette online, Phuket Business Development Office holds Foreign Business Act seminar in English for the first time*, April 8

I will attend the seminar because I really like a couple of the things this guy says, especially his frank admission about nominees. Also his advice about using accounting services and whether I really need a company at all to do what I want to do.

Joe Detweiler
Gazette Forum

Letters to the Editor

Lifeguards should be government staff

Re: *Gazette online, Phuket lifeguard president threatens to cut number of guards*, April 4

Club? Just make it part of the local government, provide salaries and monitor performance.

Jon Fernquest
Facebook

Blame both boat drivers, not neither

Re: *Gazette online, No charges yet in Krabi boat collision case*, April 2

In the interest of public safety, if blame cannot be ascertained they should both be punished, sending the message that when in the vicinity of other boats proceed with caution. There are clear international rules regarding a boat's right of way, however proof maybe difficult to determine. Escaping without blame or punishment should not be an option. Who learns from this? It only encourages accidents.

Anon
Gazette Forum

Share wastewater burden with business

Re: *Gazette online, Governor pushes for black water solution after Karon Beach water runs foul again [video]*, April 2

He is probably right, the black sediment in water might be natural, I saw water like this in stagnant lagoons in many places. Even in remote areas with no human activities around.

For the wastewater treatment, they must enforce the existing

law. Big businesses like hotels must have wastewater treatment plants and test water quality every month.

This will reduce how much the municipality needs to invest in treatment facilities.

Ekapol Tharasiroj
Facebook

Upset about sharks

Re: *Gazette online, Tempest in a longtail*, April 6

That is so sad, I've barely calmed down about the story of the Russian who murdered the shark at Kata Noi beach a couple of weeks ago and now this...

They are magnificent creatures that play a key role in the ecosystem and are already very rare. I wish Sea Shepherd Global would get behind sharks now that whales are safe.

Grant Ward
Facebook

Environmental fines no match for the rich

Re: *Gazette online, Phuket Lake Filling: A sneak behind the watershed*, April 5

There's no real deterrent, is there? Even if the case ends up in court, the landowner would only have to plead guilty, receive a halved fine of 50,000 baht – and carry on. What's that in this day and age? The price of a top end mobile, a couple of nights in an upmarket resort...

Agogohome
Gazette Forum

Police monotasking

Re: *Gazette online, Still no extradition request for Phuket fugitive arrested a month ago*, April 8

The police should be able to handle two big cases at once.

Jolene
Mai Khao

Phuket Gazette

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Sustaining people and environment

FIRST PERSON

MY FOCUS in Phuket is completely different from my focus in Narathiwat. There, I emphasized safety. I had to do inspections frequently, and because of the high level of danger, I had to be very circumspect when taking action.

In contrast, Phuket is defined by tourism. Here, I see my main job as supporting tourism while at the same time protecting people – and the island too – from some of the side effects of development: drug abuse, environmental degradation and road dangers.

Take the issue of drugs, for example. From what I've seen, people in Phuket spend almost all their time working. This means less time for family, and less time for parents to monitor and advise children. Children who have no one to turn to when they encounter problems may turn to drugs.

On the drug enforcement side, we are continuing to use the Singharat special team set up by Veera KerdSirimongkol, my predecessor. The team checks for drugs all over Kathu, and sends drug users to Vachira Phuket Hospital for rehabilitation.

Hospital staff have told me that drug use has been going up, so I started a grassroots team called "25 Pineapple Eyes". The group is made up of local volunteers who prevent drug problems where they live. They pass on information to police officers, and keep an eye on and support people who've been through drug rehab.

When it comes to the environment, a critical battle is keeping



Here, he talks about his three priorities for Kathu.

Sayan Chanachaiwong, 56, has been Kathu District Chief for about five months. With a master's degree in Political Science from Ramkhamhaeng University, he worked as district chief in the restive Deep South province of Narathiwat for more than nine years, most recently in Su-ngai Padi, before coming to Phuket.

concrete from overwhelming trees. Preserving forests is not just about preserving beauty, but about maintaining our safety and well-being. Cutting down trees on a slope increases the risk of landslides... and trees produce oxygen and cleanse the air we breathe.

With that in mind, my job is not only to catch encroachers on forest land and illegal loggers, but to repair the areas they've damaged.

In the last five months, I've made several arrests, but I don't want to say much to the media because investigations are ongoing.

When people think of road dangers in Kathu, they are likely to think of the Patong Hill road. In cooperation with other authorities, we've already taken a number of steps to make that route safer.

We've opened a Traffic Management Center near the Thung Thong checkpoint that operates every Monday and Thursday. Officers there inspect buses, vans and other public transport before they go over the hill and also provide information and advice to

first-time Patong Hill drivers.

We've also installed red boxes along the hill road that contain emergency supplies, such as wheel-blocks which can be used to stop vehicles that don't have enough power to get up the hill.

And the Highways Department plans to improve the road itself.

I have overarching goals for the whole district of Kathu, but unique management priorities for each sub-district.

Patong is about tourism and it's our job to ensure visitors are safe there while enjoying their holidays.

In residential Kathu sub-district, we need to make sure that the infrastructure – electricity, roads, water and so on – are sufficient for people to live comfortably. And we need to help preserve and protect its old town.

Finally, there's Kamala. It's also residential, but more rural feeling than Kathu sub-district, and what we want to do there is preserve local traditions and undertake public health projects and other social programs.



Showing respect for elders is still key on Songkran Day. Photo:Gazette file

Songkran bucket list: respect before fighting

Island View

By Damian Evans

Do you have an opinion to voice?

BY THE time you read this, I hope you took a plastic bag with you to the shop to buy your copy of the *Gazette*. Songkran is upon us once more, and the Thai New Year is being celebrated by the traditional bucket load.

Most Phuket oldtimers I know choose to stay indoors at this time of year, happily avoiding the deluges of ice-cold water tossed amid the stifling heat.

I am usually – and rather ironically, among them – as my primary fear during these holidays is being inadvertently taken out by the drunken mayhem on the roads.

But this year I will venture out. I will no longer stand accused of being a Songkran grinch.

In years past, I have taken part in the traditional water blessing to elders as the first order of business on the national day of revelry. It is a beautifully humbling experience soaked in respect.

Far too often have I heard the cries of whining farang espousing that the Thai youth of today

have forgone this ritual for the sake of engaging in street battle water fights.

I cringe every time I hear it, for it is simply not true.

All the Buddhist Thais I know start the day with the respectful water-blessing ceremony, and then enjoy the water fights. The Muslim Thais I know start the day with respectful blessings for their elders, but without the pouring of water over hands, and then join the water fights. To me, there is very little difference in the essence of ceremony.

So this year I will endeavor to be a little more Thai, to respect my elders and to have fun.

There is no reason why we can't do both.

So I'll see you out there...
Sawasdee Pi Mai!

Issues & Answers...

...asking the questions that affect you...

Benefits of being laid off, and quitting too

I have worked in Phuket for the last four years, paying about 750 baht a month for social security. Less than two months ago, I was laid off from my job. As a foreigner, am I eligible for unemployment benefits?

Jay Hadduck
Phuket Town

Phuma Thammakul, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Social Security Office (PPSSO), replies:

Yes, foreigners are entitled to unemployment benefits.

If you worked at least six months, you may apply for the benefits whether you quit or were laid off.

If you quit, you may receive benefits for up to three months at a rate of 30 per cent of your former salary, up to a maximum

salary of 15,000 baht.

If you were laid off, you may receive benefits for up to six months at a rate of 50 per cent of your former salary, up to a maximum salary of 15,000 baht.

You should apply for benefits at the Employment Office on the day after your last day of work. If you were laid off two months ago, you may still apply, but you will only receive benefits for the remaining four months of the six-month period.

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

Submit your issue at

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

Help for a homeless man in Karon

A homeless person has been living for about four months directly across from the Karon Municipality Office.

He sleeps in front of the 999 Minimart. He doesn't have a proper sleeping roll and uses the wall as a toilet.

Can't someone help him?

Anton Freund
Phuket

An officer of the Social Development Department of Karon Municipality replies:

We are very concerned about the homeless in our area. Since last year, we have recorded two homeless people in Karon.

A tourist informed us about the man you saw about three weeks ago, and we went to talk to him. He told us that he is 40 years old,

and had walked to Karon from Phuket Town. He didn't provide any more information about himself, and said he just wanted to stay alone for awhile. He refused our help, and about a week later he left the area. Our officers are keeping an eye out for him.

We do not have any shelters to offer the homeless, but we can get in touch with other government agencies that can provide a place for them to stay. We can't force the man to go to a shelter. Only if he causes a disturbance can we pick him up against his will.

Naovanit Intarasakul, Chief of Ban Mit Maitri Shelter, replies:

We are responsible for taking care of homeless people in Phuket, but we have not been informed about this man. We will contact

Karon Municipality and send an officer to inspect the area you mentioned.

We offer the homeless a place to stay, but can't force them to join us if they don't want to. By law, we can insist they stay with us only if they cause a disturbance.

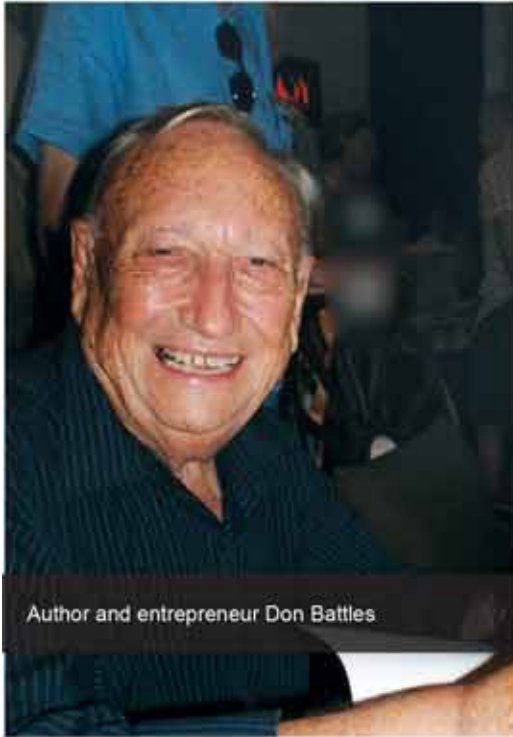
If they want to stay out on the street, we have our officers keep an eye on them.



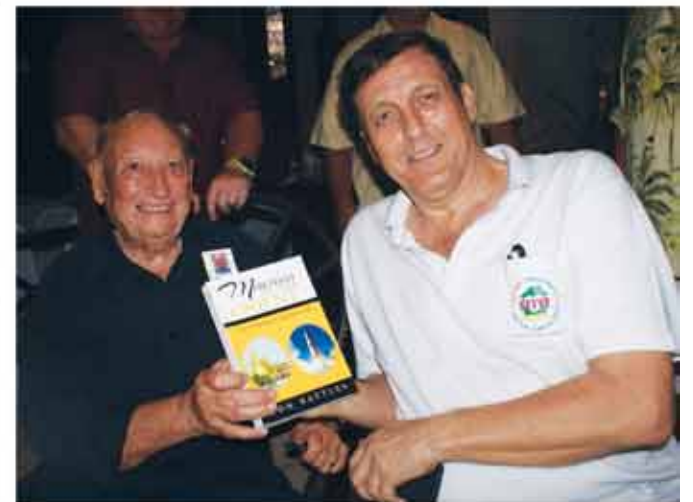
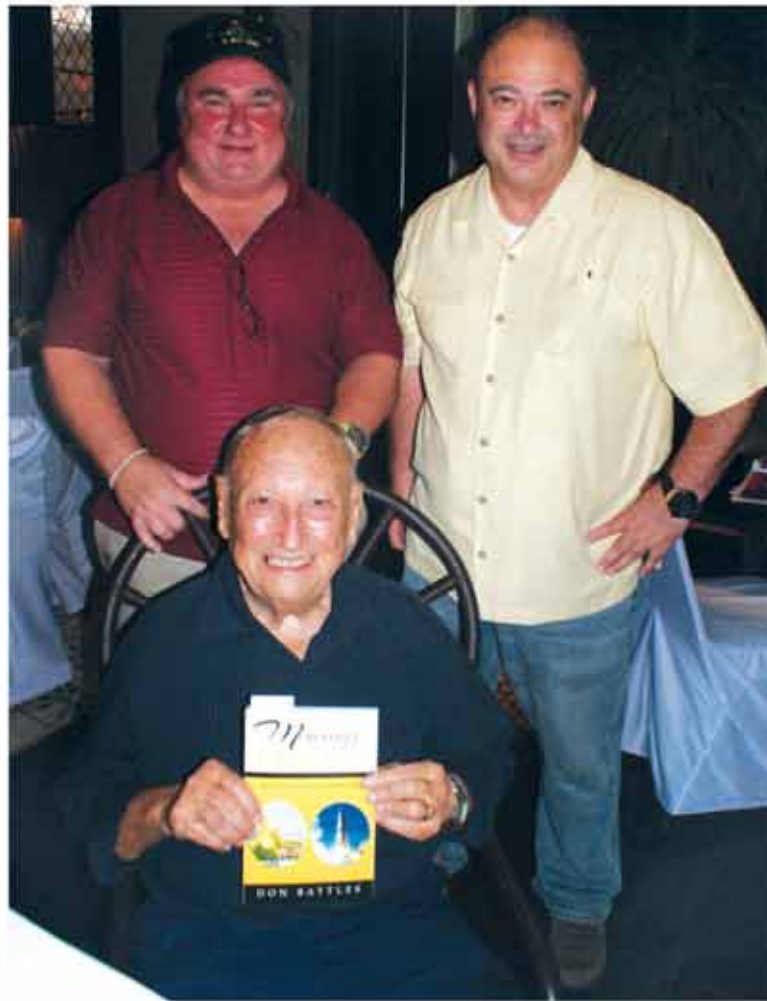
Beds for the homeless at Ban Mit Maitri. Photo: Gazette file

YOUR Phuket

Former Phuket resident and entrepreneur Don Battles launched his autobiography *Merchant of the Orient: An Entrepreneur's Journey in Life*, at Speakeasy Bar in the Royal Phuket Marina on Tuesday. Don regaled the crowd with some of the many funny and fascinating tales from his incredible life, answered questions and signed copies of his book.



Author and entrepreneur Don Battles



From Runway to Realway

JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa was the host venue for the "From Runway to Realway" makeup workshop. The event was held by NARS to mark the official launch of their cosmetic boutique at Central Festival Phuket.



Kewalin Sukumjittanon, Senior Marketing Communications Manager (left)
Palin Nandakwang, Senior Brand Manager NARS Cosmetics Division (right). Photo: phuketindex.com



Varintip Kulpalbool, Promotion & Event Manager (center) with the makeup artist.
Photo: phuketindex.com



Photo: phuketindex.com

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PROPERTY of the week



CONDO FOR SALE

See page 23

JOB of the week

Bang Tao Beach Ltd

Luxury Residential
Villa Estate Project
at Layan

See page 27

EDUCATION of the week



Oak Meadow International School

See page 29

BOAT of the week



See page 31

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Mark Smith
080-141-6040
http://marksmithproperties.com
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<p>Apt. for Sale in Kata Ocean View Kata Beach PRICE: 7,600,000 THB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sea View - 91sqm. - 2 Bedrooms - Fully Furnished 	<p>Apt. for Sale in Kata Ocean View Kata Beach PRICE: 6,450,000 THB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sea View - 91sqm. - 1 Bedroom - Fully Furnished <p>HOT PRICE !!</p>	<p>Penthouse for Sale in Emerald Terrace Patong Beach PRICE: 10,900,000 THB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Down Payment / Freehold - 7th & 8th Floor Sea View - 116sqm. - 2 Bedrooms 	<p>Apt. for Sale in Emerald Terrace Patong Beach PRICE: 4,950,000 THB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Down Payment / Freehold - 6th Floor Sea View - 39 sqm. - 1 Bedroom
<p>Apt. for Sale in The Deck Patong Beach PRICE: 5,600,000 THB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Down Payment / Freehold - 4th Floor Pool View - 40.5sqm. - Fully Furnished 	<p>Apt. for Sale in The Charm Patong Beach PRICE: 4,900,000 THB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company Freehold - 2th Floor Pool View - 45sqm. - Fully Furnished 	<p>Studio for Sale in Emerald Central Phuket Central Festival PRICE: 2,250,000 THB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Down Payment / Freehold - 6th Floor Mountain View - 31sqm. - Fully Furnished 	<p>Apt. for Sale in Emerald Central Phuket Central Festival PRICE: 3,200,000 THB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Down Payment / Freehold - Pool Acces - 39sqm. - Fully Furnished
<p>Luxury Villa for Sale in Rawai beach PRICE: 6,500,000 THB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land 232.8sqm. - Building 214.49sqm. - 3 Bedrooms Ensuite Bathrooms - Fully Furnished 			

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THAI VILLA AND POOL

Luxury 2 bedrooms in Nai Harn, long term: 37,500 baht per month. Tel: 081-270 51 26. Email: mervyn.crocker@yahoo.com

B.L. APARTMENT

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KATA BEACH APARTMENTS

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

COOK / CHEF

Cook wanted in a small Ban Moon noodle bar, to cook basic Thai and European food. Room available as part of wages. Tel: 083-690 7014 (English). Please call or email micknppr@hotmail.com

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

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.aqua master.net/job.html

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: ourjunglehouse1985@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at <http://khaosokaccommodation.com>

ENGLISH-SPEAKING GUIDES

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

NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHER

Brainy House is looking for part-time native English teachers. Start as soon as possible. Tel: 076-522822, 080-907 7466 (English & Thai). Email: keng.na.ranong@hotmail.com

EARN 30,000-120,000 BAHT/MONTH

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

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

REPORTER

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

Good salary for the right candidate.

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

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

79/94 Moo 4, Thepkrasattri Rd, Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000

Tel: 076-273555 Ext.402 Fax: 076-615240

RAW FOOD CHEF WANTED

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

LOOKING FOR MANAGER AT WAKE PARK

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

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@avcphuket.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: jmiles@iinet.net.au

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

CLASSIFIEDS ADMINISTRATION 1 POSITION

Qualified candidates will be:

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

and should have:

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

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

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

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

Live in Patong?

Place your GAZETTE CLASSIFIEDS at Andy's Real Estate Agency (AREA)



Simply write out your ad, pay and leave it with **Khun Andy: (076-341644)**

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

The Gazette Online is always on top in Google!

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

- NEW** ▶ **Andy's Real Estate Agency** (Opp. Savoy Seafood) Tel: 076-341644
- ▶ **Taurus Travel** (Aroonsom Plaza) Tel: 076-344521-2
- ▶ **Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe** (Aroonsom Plaza) Tel: 076-290468

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: 076-388144

KARON

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

Business Opportunities

HOTEL FOR SALE

27 rooms (bar, restaurant and pool table), 5 minutes walk to beach (good location), well established. 6 years left on current contract. 3.9 million baht (negotiable). Tel: 090-067 3033 (English). Email: lyntoncraig@gmail.com

RESTAURANT FOR SALE, KAMALA

Restaurant and bar for sale, clean and big place with 140sqm house. Sale: 1.4 million baht. Cheap rent: only 20,000 baht per month. Tel: 080-537 6125.

HOTEL SEA VIEW BEACH 1KM

24 rooms and apartment, very good profit, 4 years old, Chanote full property, 1km from the beach. Tel: 080-528 1536. Email: christian10thai lande@gmail.com

MARKETING EXECUTIVE

We are now looking for marketing executives to join our real estate company. We are looking for staff at Jungceylon, Homepro Chalong and Kamala Beach. Good spoken English is a must. Send CV to info@phuket-condos-homes.com or call 076-341045, 081-459 0152 (English). Email: andres@phuket-condos-homes.com

RESTAURANT FOR RENT PATONG



250sqm, fully equipped and furnished with license, on Sai Nam Yen Road, close to Sai Nam Yen Plaza. Tel: 086-268 3963.

RESORT FOR SALE



Small high yielding resort for sale in Rawai. Three, 2-year-old 3/4 bedroom pool villas on one rai. Perfect pension plan. Price: 19 million baht. Please call 082-048 2568 (English) or email caperaawai@gmail.com

Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous

If you want to drink that is your business

If you want to stop that is ours

Daily Meetings

Patong, Phuket Town, Chalong, Surin, Karon

081-895 4763
084-307 7408

Email: phuketaa@yahoo.com

Google AA Phuket

NEW GUESTHOUSE PATONG BEACH

12 rooms and 3 apartments. Rent: 90,000 baht per month. 2 years on contract, will be extended every 3 years. Sale: 1,900,000 baht. Tel: 082-810 9670. Email: adrenorange house@hotmail.fr

LEGAL INCOME PRODUCER

Phuket Country Home, large 5-bedroom, 4-bathroom bungalow, bed & breakfast potential. In Chalong. High season: 15,000 baht per day income. No Thai taxes. 10 million baht. Garden/koi ponds/waterfall. Please call 087-266 7514 (English). Email: rucker4012@gmail.com

HIGHLY RATED PATONG HOTEL

Successful, 2 years old, 17-room guesthouse. 1.5 million baht or best offer. Tel: 080-143 3660 (English). Email: marcusmccown@gmail.com, http://themark4sale.weebly.com/

KARON GUESTHOUSE



2 minutes walk to beach, located on the tourist road, 5 storeys, 7 furnished bedrooms. Price: 13 million baht. Tel: 081-171 9705.

PATONG MASSAGE SHOP NANAI

8 beds, 5 chairs, staff accommodation. Wide shop front, rear access. Quick sale needed. 350,000 baht or best offer. Email: roy_baldman@yahoo.com

INCREDIBLE PROJECT INVESTMENT

Luxury project for sale. 50% process done. Only 5 million baht. Tel: 080-891 1611. Email: aopoproject@gmail.com

RESTAURANT FOR SALE

Excellent location, Chalong main road, 400sqm, new 6 years on lease. Low rent. Please email for information: attivitaphuket@yahoo.co.uk

SPACE FOR RENT

110sqm. Only 200m from Patong Beach. Perfect location for restaurant or shop. Contact Tatiana. Tel: 087-044 6134, 081-089 7098. Email: man gusstin@mail.ru

5 LUXURY APTS. PATONG



Twice the size, yet half the price. 100sqm each plus terrace. Fully furnished, pool, great location. Would consider villa swap to Nai Harn area. Priced to sell 11.9 million baht. Tel: 081-271 7092. Email: bricothailand@hotmail.com

THAI CO., LTD. FOR SALE

Name: Scuba-Travel-Trade Co., Ltd. No property! Just clean papers. Price: 9,999 baht + lawyers bill + etc. Tel: 084-744 2101 (English). Email: dieter_seubert@yahoo.de

UNIQUE STRETCH LIMO BUSINESS

Only stretch limousine in Thailand. Turnkey business with website and many customers. Just start and make money! 2.8 million baht. Tel: 089-932 5175 (English & Thai). Email: wojdkowbengt@hotmail.com

Phuket Gazette

CLASSIFIED AD ORDER FORM

STANDARD AD (Text only): 140 baht/line

OPTIONS (NEWSPAPER ONLY - NOT WEB):

Special font / layout	250 baht	<input type="checkbox"/>
Box	250 baht	<input type="checkbox"/>
Box with red headline	350 baht	<input type="checkbox"/>
Box with black background	350 baht	<input type="checkbox"/>
Box with color background	500 baht	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photo	650 baht	<input type="checkbox"/>

NUMBER OF INSERTIONS: issue(s)

ONLINE OPTIONS:

Web link	350 baht	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photo	500 baht	<input type="checkbox"/>

All ads in the newspaper run online automatically and free charge.

TELEVISION OPTION:

Your ad with photo displayed by PGTV on 3 cable networks, 70 times a week 350 baht ☐

Total cost of your classified baht

Each line is 140 baht, with a minimum of 4 lines (headline included). All ads must be paid in advance. The editors reserve the right not to publish any unsuitable material. In the event of non-publication of an advertisement for any reason, the publisher's liability shall be limited to the amount paid for the advertisement.

Please note: We are unable to offer refunds for any unused ads.

For more information, Please call 076-273555.
Email: Kookai@phuketgazette.net, or Diaoo@phuketgazette.net

PROMOTION PRICE
Your Ad on PGTV

SAMPLE ADS

TOYOTA HILUX HERO

Pick-up. 4-door. 2.4L diesel. Good condition. Stereo. Only 95,000 km. Carefully maintained, service record available. Quick sale at 120,000 baht. Tel Khun Noi on 076 668126/7.

Standard: 840 baht (incl VAT)

Standard + Special font/layout + Box: 1,340 baht (incl VAT) →

NATIVE TEACHER OF ENGLISH TO YOUNG CHILDREN SEEKS CHALLENGING POSITION IN PHUKET

I will move to Phuket soon. Three yrs teaching in Bangkok.

Phone Mr Reece
(02) 668-1268

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

..... (Headline)	
.....	
.....	
.....	560 Baht
.....	700 Baht
.....	840 Baht
.....	980 Baht
.....	1,120 Baht
.....	1,260 Baht
.....	1,400 Baht

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Australian Taxation & accounting services for Australian expatriates in Thailand & abroad. Please contact Anabel. Tel: +61 404 006 236. Email: anabeld1@me.com or anabeldasilva@dasilva-accounting.com For further details, please see our website at www.dasilva-accounting.com

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

WHEATGRASS JUICE

Lumpoons Coffee House. At Chalong. Please call 081-476 5808.

**FREE ITALIAN
ESPRESSO MACHINE**

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

**SEO-SOCIAL MEDIA
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A customized campaign by our SEO specialists will improve your Google ranking and focus your internet marketing efforts. Free quote. Email: julianburgess@myway.com

VISA SERVICES

UAE and Singapore for 3 days. Tel: 080-697 1860. Email: sky75@list.ru



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

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

CALL NOW:
081-868 7676 (English).

**MASSAGE THERAPY
AT YOUR PLACE**

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

**WORLDWIDE
AIR TICKETS**

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

40FT SEA CONTAINER

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

**STRESSED OVER
PARTIES?**

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

Club
Memberships
Available**GOLF
MEMBERSHIP**

Phuket Country Club membership. 560,000 baht. Includes transfer fee. Family membership. Contact Mark. Tel: 085-809 8755 (English). Email: homeinspector@csloxinfo.com

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**ADOPT A DOG
from Doggie Heaven**

Visit **DOGGIE HEAVEN** & meet our gorgeous rescued dogs. All our dogs are socialized in a home environment & ready for loving families.

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www.doggieheaven.net
sherin.peace@gmail.com



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From 1 - 16 Years Old
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076 521 550
www.oakmeadowphuket.com

Miscellaneous For Sale

SOLD SECOND HAND

- Musical instrument. Jazz guitar. Price: 35,000 baht.
- Orange amplifier. Price: 40,000 baht.
- Vintage French-style bookcase. Price: 170,000 baht.
- Showcase. Price: 180,000 baht.

Please contact 081-667 1637 (Thai), Khun JP 082-539 6433 (English)

Pool Tables

Personals

SNOOKER

Like new, marble top, 1.35 x 2.35m. 25,000 baht (new 66,000 baht). Tel: 080-528 1536. Email: christian10thailand@gmail.com

BACKGAMMON

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



Phuket today
Phuket Gazette

Hot deal!
Classified Ads on TV

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

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

Catch the show at these times

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

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

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

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

- Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket: 254 rooms
- Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort: 470 rooms
- Kata Beach Resort & Spa: 275 rooms
- Outrigger Laguna Phuket Resort & Villas: 77 rooms
- Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket: 262 rooms
- Millennium Resort: 418 rooms
- Holiday Inn Resort & Spa: 405 rooms
- Movenpick Resort & Spa Karon Beach: 364 rooms
- Karon Beach Resort & Spa: 80 rooms
- Andara Beach Resort & Spa: 62 rooms
- Amari Coral Beach: 197 rooms
- Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa: 664 rooms
- Destination Patong: 390 rooms
- Serenity Terraces Resort: 68 rooms
- Dewa Naiyang Phuket: 96 rooms
- Regent Phuket Cape Panwa: 210 rooms

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

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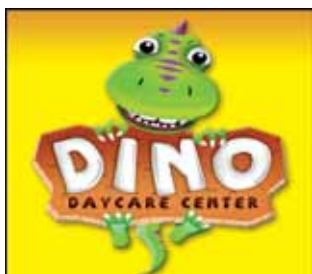
Coffee capsules machine on loan, good organic Italian coffee, fair prices, 6 blends available, direct import into Phuket. Tel: 076-374760, 088-768 1260. Email: fepigada@yahoo.it

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Visit DOGGIE HEAVEN & meet our gorgeous rescued dogs. All our dogs are socialized in a home environment & ready for loving families.

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



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Reduced



2008 Azimut 47 - EUR 499,000

Reduced



2011 Princess 42 - USD 650,000



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Sistership

Yachting Freedom begins with a call to our team:

Sergio Loiacono
+66 (0) 86 277 3360
sergio.l@simpsonmarine.com

Максим Волков
+66 (0) 84 745 9900
maksim.volkov@simpsonmarine.com

Adam Blackmore
+66 (0) 81 892 8919
adam.blackmore@simpsonmarine.com

Nicole van de Wall
+66 (0) 93 140 5088
nicole.vandewall@simpsonmarine.com

50FT BERTRAM SPORTFISHER

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

A STEAL FOR A QUICK SALE



2007. Italian demo yacht. Cranchi 47ft. Hard top. Fully loaded with tropical aircon, genset, electrical winches, garage, roof. Ray Marine premium navy, BBQ, ice maker, 3 fridges, Bose sound, neon light. Twin 570hp with reliable shaft drive, under 300hrs. Brand-new condition. Price: 335,000 euros. Tel: 089-971 0278. Email: eddyelan@yahoo.com

FAST FOLDING TRIMARAN

American designed 29ft fast, folding Trimaran for sale with trailer. Suitable for racing or cruising. Thai registered, ex-pat owned. Tel: 085-781 9756 (English). Email: awildgoose@awildgoose.co.uk For full details and price, please go to www.awildgoose.co.uk

BAYLINER 190

115hp Mercury 4-stroke. 15hp auxiliary 4-stroke, new 300W stereo, GPS, trailer, Thai registered, 2009, price: 590,000 baht. Tel: 084-584 6795 (English). Email: hanspaessler@me.com

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Just around the corner, now is the right time to get her listed, Boatshed phuket.com are always looking for new listings, big or small, power or sail, to meet the demand for qualityboats. Contact Alan Giles. Tel: 084-842 6146. Email: alangiles@boatshedphuket.com

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Sealine 42/5
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NEW LISTING

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\$225,000 USD



REDUCED

Symbol 57
\$460,000 USD



S&S 36
45,000 Euro



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Fusion 40
340,000 Euro



Beneteau First 45
195,000 Euro



S&S 48
\$97,000 USD



PRICE REDUCTION

Martin Holmes
Mobile: 081 891 7057
Email: martin@leemarine.com

Marcus Overman
Mobile: 081 968 1437
Email: marcus@leemarine.com

Jim Poulsen
Mobile: 081 891 3237
Email: jim@leemarine.com

Mark Heath
Mobile: 081 787 9408
Email: mark@leemarine.com

leemarine.com

FOR SALE: HOBIE BRAVO 12'

Fantastic little Hobie Catamaran. Great for kids and adults wanting a fun dinghy boat responsive in light wind. Length 12'. Sail area: 86sq/8sqm. Email: jezntat@gmail.com or call our Thai mobile: 086-685 9359, or to Singapore: 65-977 38457.

13-METER CRUISER

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 please see our website at www.krabi.konnect.com/#!/boat-for-sale/c10mg

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Capelli RIB, 8m. 250hp Yamaha 4-stroke outboard motor with 361 hours. Garmin GPS with Blue chart for Southeast Asia. 860,000 baht. Tel: 076-348134, 084-626 4969 (English). Fax: 076-348134. Email: neef@wanadoo.fr

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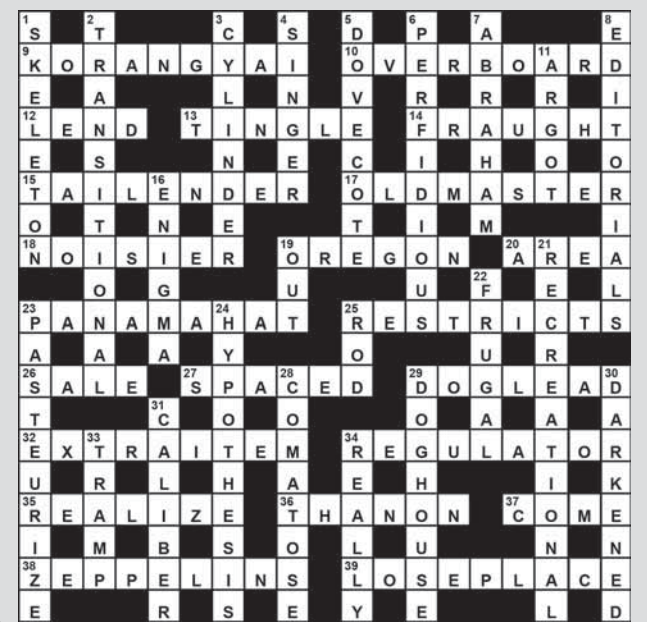
FOR SALE BAYLINER 190



New model with Mercury 150hp, 4-stroke outboard, running 29hr, lot of extras including plotter. Make an offer. Tel: 089-588 4550.

THE SOLUTION
TO THIS WEEK'S
Cryptic Crossword

COFFEE
break



Looking for a boat?
See more classified ads
at www.phuketgazette.net

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

The Beach Group Phuket



Wilaiporn Suriyapitakkul (right) and guest



Kaan Prachumphan (2nd right), Managing Director and his team

Grand opening Top Gear Service



Waree Ploypetmanee, Vice President and Christopher Adams, President

Everybody Dance

The First Children's International Culture Festival, organized by Phuket Properties, celebrates 'The Friendship of Nations'.



FOR SALE
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Exclusive villa, sea view on east coast of Phuket, land size 3200sqm. 3 bed plus maid room, 4 bath, 640m² living area, swimming pool, recreation area, 3 parking spaces, European style kitchen, nice landscape, tranquil area, well water supply, close to amenities, shopping, 20 minutes to the airport.



Contact the seller directly: Konilion@hotmail.com Tel: +(66) (0) 80-690-2564 +(66) (0) 87-272-2966

Stay safe for Songkran



What to expect

THE world-famous Thai New Year celebration involves water, and lots of it. Held during what is historically the driest month of the year in the Kingdom, the festivities are a symbolic gesture to welcome not only the New Year, but the return of the southwest monsoon at the welcomed end to the hot season.

Songkran is a major attraction for tourists and the tourism industry enjoys a little “high season” boost as travellers flock from around the globe to take part in one of the largest water fights on earth. Here in Phuket, one cannot expect to make it too far from the home during Songkran without being doused. Although the festivities are celebrated all over the country, Chiang Mai holds the reputation of hosting the most extensive Songkran revelry, sometimes persisting for six days or more.

Don't be surprised to find trucks full of people with large tubs of water drenching everyone as they crawl down the street. Even the little old lady who grinds up your *somtam* is likely to empty a bowl of water in your direction. Some people will have talcum powder, often with menthol mixed in, that they smear on your face as a blessing for the new year.

Nobody is exempt – if you are out in public, expect the police, fire trucks and elephants to all shower you with water. As an extra surprise some use freezing ice water.

There is, of course, a more traditional side to Songkran that many tourists will not witness as they concentrate on refilling their neon water canons. Many Buddhists will visit their local temple and offer food to monks to make merit. Gently pouring water mixed with Thai fragrances over Buddha statues, village elders, parents and dear friends is believed to deliver prosperity and good luck.

In line with the general philosophy of fun coming first in Thai culture, Songkran's tame traditions have grown to include the fun-filled, soggy celebrations that we see today.

So grab a bucket or water gun, leave the sensitive electronics at home and get ready to get wet.

Happy Songkran!
Suksan Wan
Songkran!

WHAT'S ON in Phuket

April 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.

April 18, 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

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

Large buffet including: Easter bread, pickled herring, smoked salmon, beet salad, liver paté, 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

Easter Buffet Dinner @ Two Chefs

**April 20
6-12pm**



for the fun! For 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 avssouth@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 res-

taurants and bars will certainly screen reruns of all the matches.

June 28 to July 27. Ramadan

Muslims worldwide, or roughly a quarter of the planet's population, observe Ramadan as the 9th month of their calendar, a time for fasting during the day hours and feasting at night.

July 11. Asarnha Bucha Day

This full-moon day of the 8th lunar month (traditional Thai calendar) commemorates the Buddha's first sermon to his first five disciples after attaining Enlightenment more than 2,500 years ago. Evening candlelit processions are staged at all Thai Buddhist temples.

July 12. 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 monks, informally observed as the start of the rainy season, when the southwesterly monsoon is in full force.

August 12. Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday

HM Queen Sirikit Kitiyakara's 82nd Birthday, celebrated as Mother's Day in Thailand. Her Majesty's birthday is a public holiday.

November 6. Loy Krathong

One of the most beautiful festivals in Thailand. It is traditionally performed on the full moon night of the 12th 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 Goddess and at the same time to float away any bad luck. Loy Krathong is not a public holiday.

November 19-22. Phuket International Sportfishing Tournament

Registration is on the evening of November 19 from 6pm onwards, at the Tamarind Bar & Grill in Chalong. The weigh station will be at the Tamarind on all three fishing days, November 20-22. 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 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



Phuket today

Phuket Gazette



Phuket Today is a 30-minute lifestyle show about Phuket. The show features resorts, villas, restaurants, yachts, private aircraft, nightlife, sports, leisure activities and events.

Produced by PGTV, the television arm of the Phuket Gazette, the show is designed to promote Phuket to tourists and the international community resident in Thailand.

Catch the show at these times

<p>TrueVisions HD Channel 85 8 shows a week - MCOT World</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Monday:</td><td>05:10am</td></tr> <tr><td>Tuesday:</td><td>11:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Wednesday:</td><td>10:10am</td></tr> <tr><td>Thursday:</td><td>01:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Friday:</td><td>04:10am & 07:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Saturday:</td><td>01:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Sunday:</td><td>06:10pm</td></tr> </table>	Monday:	05:10am	Tuesday:	11:10pm	Wednesday:	10:10am	Thursday:	01:10pm	Friday:	04:10am & 07:10pm	Saturday:	01:10pm	Sunday:	06:10pm	<p>True Freeview Channel 59 8 shows a week - MCOT World</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Monday:</td><td>05:10am</td></tr> <tr><td>Tuesday:</td><td>11:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Wednesday:</td><td>10:10am</td></tr> <tr><td>Thursday:</td><td>01:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Friday:</td><td>04:10am & 07:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Saturday:</td><td>01:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Sunday:</td><td>06:10pm</td></tr> </table>	Monday:	05:10am	Tuesday:	11:10pm	Wednesday:	10:10am	Thursday:	01:10pm	Friday:	04:10am & 07:10pm	Saturday:	01:10pm	Sunday:	06:10pm	<p>Rawai Cable Covers Rawai, Chalong, Kata, Karon.</p> <p>Channel 1 - 28 shows a week Monday - Sunday: 10:00am, 1:00pm, 7:00pm, 10:00pm.</p> <p>Channel 43 - 8 shows a week</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Monday:</td><td>05:10am</td></tr> <tr><td>Tuesday:</td><td>11:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Wednesday:</td><td>10:10am</td></tr> <tr><td>Thursday:</td><td>01:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Friday:</td><td>04:10am & 07:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Saturday:</td><td>01:10pm</td></tr> <tr><td>Sunday:</td><td>06:10pm</td></tr> </table>	Monday:	05:10am	Tuesday:	11:10pm	Wednesday:	10:10am	Thursday:	01:10pm	Friday:	04:10am & 07:10pm	Saturday:	01:10pm	Sunday:	06:10pm
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And in 4,600 hotel rooms around the island, international hospitals and Phuket Immigration Office.



Photo: Mathias Krumbholz

Bangkok we never lost

By Paul Dorsey

WITH anger further fouling the city air and the streets a din of roars and whistles, this might not be the best time to be exploring the unknown alleys of Bangkok. But two terrific books that have just come out will have you dodging the slings and arrows of our unfortunate era to track down the history already written – as opposed to the kind that's being written as you read this.

Kenneth Barrett's *22 Walks in Bangkok* ranks as one of the most thorough guides yet to the city's historically important areas – and the newly refurbished *Very Thai* can be its ideal companion in your travelling pack. The updated and extended second edition of Philip Cornwel-Smith's popular and influential 2004 original is just as much a must-have resource, thanks to his encyclopaedic knowledge and charming explanations about all the sights and experiences you encounter in Thailand. Again, it's replete with hundreds of great photos by John Goss, Mr Cornwel-Smith and others.

Of course the current political demonstrations – anti-government and pro – have never come close to blanketing the metropolis. Mr Barrett touches the fringes of a couple of hot spots, and both books allude in passing to Thaksin Shinawatra and his legacy, but there are still plenty of places free of discontent where you can poke around for evidence of Teochew civilization (see Barrett) and perhaps a plastic bag of refreshing flavored sugar-water with shaved ice (see Cornwel-Smith).

In fact, the first few of the 22 walks ramble through Thonburi, remote and relatively peaceful on the other side of the big water. Mr Barrett's journey begins when Thonburi was anything but peaceful. Following the downfall of Ayutthaya's King Narai in 1688, Siamese cannonballs hurled across the river to demolish the French fort he had allowed to be built in the swamp that grew up to be Bangkok. A century later, Thonburi was Siam's capital.

Three centuries further on, you can still spot homes there that have four wooden pillars in the doorway – which can only be removed from the inside. That's how the original Chinese immi-



Pro and anti-government protesters take to the streets, but Bangkok is still worth a visit. Photo: Reuters

grants "locked the door", explains Barrett, a veteran journalist.

And completely hidden behind the Klong San District Office is a remnant of Pong Patchamit Fort, one of five that King Rama IV built to shield his capital from invaders. Still standing is a mast on which flags were once hoisted to indicate which trading vessels were present – and later to report the weather.

Not far away, down Soi Lat Ya 17, Mr Barrett found a seven-meter-long stone sculpture of a Chinese boat called a *yannawa* perched among old, timbered houses. With a bodhi tree as a mast, this is an ancient shrine recalling the arrival in Thailand of Buddhist monks from Japan and China.

One of the most intriguing of Bangkok's many intriguing areas is Bang Krachao, the vast "pig's stomach" of land around which the Chao Phraya River swirls,

which continues to be a great green lung (to mix anatomical metaphors) despite covetous commercial intentions.

Mr Barrett sets out from the Presbyterian Samray Church, a 1910 replacement for the 1862 original, chronicling the missionaries' story as he goes, and then has a look for what's left of venerable Chinese rice mills.

Just as interesting is the Mon community that since the fall of Ayutthaya has dominated this district, further down the Phra Pradaeng Peninsula. The Mon, fierce fighters in combat, came to man the forts that King Rama I built there.

To any Bangkok resident who's never been there, it's impossible to imagine, somewhere in among all this concrete, "a huge area of green countryside in which quiet villages snooze down peaceful lanes". Mr Barrett explores "orchards, jungle, mangrove swamps and hidden

temples" – and with amusement, comes across the more recently inaugurated Bang Nam Pheung Floating Market, a nod to tourists, but mainly Thai tourists.

"There is no police station. You will look hard to find an ATM... The modern city is only a ferryboat ride away, but there is no hurry to travel back across the water."

In urban Thailand and in rural Thailand, you couldn't have a better "dictionary" than *Very Thai*, and it's easy to imagine Mr Cornwel-Smith strolling alongside Mr Barrett, quizzing the locals about what they're up to. "I try to be the open-minded 'flaneur' – the wandering seeker of raw experience," writes the chronically curious former editor of *Bangkok Metro* magazine.

Very Thai explains a great deal about amulets and magic tattoos, taxi altars, *luk thung*, beauty pageants, *katoey* life, ubiquitous

uniforms, edible insects and the lore of the motorcycle-taxi stand. For foreigners, it's magical in its own way, said Pracha Suveeranont, "an expert on visual culture".

But clearly it was badly in need of updating, Mr Cornwel-Smith writes. Since 2004, Thai pop has "gone inter" and Apichatpong Weerasethakul triumphed at Cannes. Asean is about to blossom. We've got those plastic kitschy but undeniably purposeful hand-clappers and foot-clappers now (the whistles will have to wait for the next edition).

And virtually everyone in Thailand has "gone virtual", not least the fashion-plate hero of Facebook, *Mae Baan Mee Nuad* (Housewife with a Moustache), who's also featured here. The social media are rampant in Thailand. In 2012 there were more snapshots posted on Instagram from Suvarnabhumi Airport and Siam Paragon than from New York's Times Square.

Then, digging deeper, he adds, "The difference this new medium makes is that we can now see through the former taboos." Mr Cornwel-Smith displays a keen if subtle passion for the country's politics, at least in the way it affects popular culture. In addressing the difficulties of nailing down the nature of Thainess, he says, "The recent politicization of Thais at all social levels has made discussion more open, direct and heated. As censorship grows futile, we all now know so much more how this country works. The official version has lost its monopoly."

In another informative chapter, on the rise of "Thai Thai" – which he calls "vernacular Thainess [with] a hint of both essence and exaggeration" – Mr Cornwel-Smith tackles the vexing issue of Thai exceptionalism with his exquisite sense of balance. He cites the frequently heard insistence that foreigners can never fully understand Thai ways, and then demonstrates how "the accusation fires both ways".

These two books serve to reassure readers, both Thai and foreign, that there is nothing to fear, scorn or being ashamed about, in either stoic tradition – or in Bangkok's immediate future.

– *The Nation*

A forecasted foretaste of 2014



FUTURE historians will eulogize 2014 as the "Year Everything Turned Upside Down", also known as "Topsy-Turvy Year". This is the prediction of famed Singapore astrologer Ai See Yoo.

Ai prophesizes that in 2014, our universe will be swallowed up by a parallel universe in which everything will be exactly the opposite of the way things are here and now. He calls it the Anti-Universe, and claims that it contains all the dark matter and dark energy quantum physicists have been looking for all these years.

Some highlights:

Shopping mega-malls will all downsize into old-fashioned wet markets selling only meat, fruit and vegetables.

Smartphones, iPads, high-tech apps, the internet and all techno-toys invented after 1920 will vanish from the face of the earth. The only way people will be able to communicate from a distance will be through telegrams, letters (remember them?) and old-fashioned black, stand-up telephones in which you get to communicate

orally with an actual human being (called the operator) to connect.

Facebook will lose face by disappearing, and the sweet sound of twittering will be heard only from birds. Stress levels among technophiles will decrease dramatically, because they will no longer have any techno-toys to stress them out.

Thai women will turn to skin darkeners in keeping with the latest trend. "Black Is Beautiful" and "Brown Is Bitchin'" will become the mottoes of the new dermatological elite. Acne, pimples, blotches and facial scars will become highly esteemed as beauty marks. In fashion, gray full-body coveralls (with flip-flops) will become the garment of choice.

Thai promotional campaigns will turn from "Buy One Get One Free" to "Buy One Pay For Two."

Suthep Thaugsuban and Thaksin Shinawatra will be spotted schmoozing in Dubai over multiple plates of *som tum* and bottles of *Lao Khao*. Pundits speculate that they'll form a new political party, Shinsuban Rak Thai, with the two former foes linked in serendipitous harmony as Co-CEOs.

Caretaker Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra will escape the burdens of her office by



High-tech gadgets will vanish, people will have to communicate with old-fashioned phones. Photo: Jmak

ceding power to the Committee for Total Reform (see below). She will be spotted shopping at the Paragon Wet Market, formerly known as the Siam Paragon mega-mall. Wearing her trademark Burberry boots, she will be overheard confessing, "I never wanted to be prime minister in the first place. That was my brother's idea. I'd much rather go shopping. But I didn't have a

wet market in mind. If my beautiful Burberrys get wet, I'm going to sue somebody."

Thai TV stations will cancel all game shows, soap operas and slapstick comedy. Serious content will monopolize the airwaves: news, political and social analysis, environmental reports and deeply philosophical documentaries focusing on the thinking of Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein and Immanuel Kant.

The Committee for Total Reform will design an entirely new social system for Thailand that will win plaudits from around the world. But we're out of space, so I can't tell you any more about that. Sorry.

Ye Olde Curmudgeon can be flamed c/o s.t.sow@outlook.com, except when he's busy designing the perfect social system for Thailand.



APRIL EVENTS at THE KEE

Patong Beach

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WEEKLY ROOFTOP COOKOUT

7th, 16th, 23rd, 28th
Seafood BBQ Buffet



Friday 4th

OODLES OF NOODLES

All you can eat



Sunday 13th

SAWASDEE SONGKRAN

Thai BBQ Buffet



Sunday 20th EXOTIC EASTER FEAST

International BBQ Buffet



Friday 25th

FIESTA MAXICAN

All you can eat



From India with love



Gardening

By Patrick Campbell

YOU probably hadn't noticed that I was plowing my way through the botanical alphabet before getting distracted by more alluring prospects, or by the pressing horticultural needs of a four-month-long drought.

Well, anyway, most of the tropical plants listed under the letter "I" are in the index by virtue of an Indian designation: Indian banyan, Indian cork tree, Indian rubber vine, Indian shot, Indian rhododendron, Indian laburnum.

Indeed, the botanical name "Indica" means that the plant hails originally from India, though the epithet is used colloquially by aficionados to indicate – oh dear, more puns – a variety of cannabis. Still, I suppose we can at least talk about "ganja" or "weed" these days since it has now been legalized in Canada and certain American states. Dreaming again...

Of the aforementioned plants, the one that first springs to mind is the golden shower tree (*cassia fistula*), which is putting on a marvelous show around Phuket at present. The dry spell has meant fewer leaves (which normally appear as the flowers arrive), but has induced a spectacle of cascading

yellow racemes. The hardiness of this small, compact tree, rarely growing more than 20 feet tall, and its propensity for tolerating dry conditions make it ideal as a yard tree or as a specimen ornamental on a lawn. Grow it from seed or from cuttings.

At the other end of the scale, as far as ease of cultivation is concerned, is the Indian rhododendron. The name too is a mouthful – *melastoma malabatricum* – and is certainly no easier in Thai, where it transliterates into something approximating to *khlong kheng knii-nok*. A fairly recent arrival in Phuket's nurseries, it is an evergreen, spreading shrub with large, purple, five-petalled flowers. It grows wild in parts of India, Assam for example, but struggles here – at least in my experience. I have seen the similar but even more spectacular *tibouchina* ablaze in Southern California, but *melastoma* seems to find the Thai climate, or at least my garden, a bit oppressive.

The variety you will most likely encounter is *melabathricum*, which has attractive veined leaves, but it will need plenty of TLC – humus-rich, fertile, moist soil, but not waterlogged conditions. I would be keen to hear from fellow enthusiasts who have successfully cultivated this shrub: in the case of my potted specimen, the leaves turned brown and the plant slowly expired. The variety *M.*



M. candidum grows vigorously and has white as well as pink flowers. Photo: Habib M'henni

candidum is hardier, grows more vigorously and has white as well as pink flowers. But I have yet to see it in garden centers.

I just took a peek at my Indian rubber vine. In contradistinction to *melastoma*, this shrub loves Phuket's climate and soil, even though my normally profligate specimen today sports a solitary bloom. It really does miss the rains, but the wonderfully glossy, olive green foliage is as lush as ever. Like the Rangoon creeper, the *allamanda*, and the chalice vine, it normally produces masses of flowers – in this case musky scented, creamy pink trumpets – and like these other vines, it will need some support. *Strophanthus* (*yaem pii nang* in Thai) is likewise a vigorous grower, too big for a container, but ideal against a wall or a trellis. A must-have shrub.

The last plant in my Indian super league is *millingtonia*. Also known as the Indian cork tree, it is a bit too big for the average garden, but if you *can* accommodate it, it will repay your hospitality, allowing smaller plants to flourish



Millingtonia is also known as the Indian cork tree and looks great as a yard or a wayside tree. Photo: Ton Rulkens

in its dappled shade. Anyway, *millingtonia* looks great as a yard or wayside tree. It has distinctive, deeply furrowed, corky bark and a drooping habit, but its pride and joy is its clusters of delicate, star-shaped flowers which cascade

down from long white stems, creating the illusion, almost, of falling snow. A world away...

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



The *tibouchina* can find the Thai climate a bit oppressive. Photo: Stan Shebs

Tip of the week

Phototropism

MOST plants survive by using the green *chlorophyll* in their leaves to convert light energy into chemical energy that can be stored and used to promote growth. The process is called *photosynthesis*.

It follows then that plants normally seek light by turning towards a light source. This process is called *phototropism*. Sun-loving plants that follow the sun's movement are called *heliotropic* – for example, sunflowers and *heliotropes*. Rare shade lovers such as the moonflower vine exhibit *negative phototropism*. The gardener should recognize this need. In the case of outdoor pot plants, turn them occasionally so that the shaded part gets a chance to enjoy the sun.

Otherwise you may get uneven growth.

And house plants, mostly understorey dwellers in the wild, chosen because they require lower levels of light, will still need to be taken outside periodically to a place where they can enjoy filtered sunlight and thus increase the process of *photosynthesis*.



Photo: Dmott9

Dog of the week

Fluffy

FLUFFY is about five years old and was rescued from a local dog holding facility, where she might have ended up dying if she was left in there any longer. Thank goodness the folks at Doggie Heaven rescue center, who saw the torment she was going through and removed her from that horrid place.

Since then, Fluffy has been recovering at Doggie Heaven and getting the proper royal treatment, but she doesn't really like some of the other dogs, and she'd much prefer a permanent home where she can live on her own and can get all the one-on-one attention she needs.

Please adopt Fluffy, she will love long walks on the beach with you and give you plenty of affection for the rest of her life.

Doggie Heaven helps place homeless dogs with loving families and is located in the Laguna area. If you'd like to adopt a cute and loving pet please make contact with: sherin.peace@gmail.com or visit doggieheaven.net



Fluffy would love to be your new pooch.

Everything a family needs

By Mark Knowles

QSI International School Phuket will be holding its first ever "Kid Expo" this month, on April 27 from 1-5pm. The event will bring together dozens of local businesses that offer services and activities for children, aiming to provide "everything a family needs" in one place, so parents can see what is available for their children to do here on the island.

The expo will see companies offering a huge range of activities aimed at young children and teens including horse riding schools, sports schools, language schools, baby sitting services, museums, art schools, scuba diving courses, sailing lessons and many more.

"At QSI we have a strong community spirit and we want to put that back into the community, so this is why we have organized the expo," said QSI Teacher Sarah Foster-Gross.

"A lot of us [at the school] have families

and we are always thinking, what can we do on the weekend? What can we organize for our children to do after school? What can we do over the school holidays?

"It is very hard to get all that information at one point, so it's about giving back to the community and helping parents by bringing everyone together in the one place," she added.

Over 35 businesses have already booked their booths and organizers are encouraging any business on the island to get involved and take advantage of this excellent opportunity to showcase their

goods and services to a target market of children and parents.

"It's quite a wide breadth of businesses. We will have a lot of sporting activities, but also art activities, birthday party organizers, language schools and we are also looking for associations where teenagers can volunteer their time. So any business that wants a chance to talk directly to par-

The event will bring together dozens of local businesses that offer services and activities for children, aiming to provide 'everything a family needs' in one place. /



Photo: Catherine Scott

Kid Expo will bring together kid-oriented businesses from across the island into one place.

ents and children about their services should book a booth.

"Many exhibitors will be organizing special discounts to offer parents on the day," added Ms Foster-Gross.

As part of the expo there will also be a "Kid's Bazaar", where for 100 baht a space (BYO mat), children can bring their old toys, books and sporting equipment to sell and trade with other children. This will be the perfect opportunity to dig out those old unused toys and and get some new ones, and will also be a great learning experience for the children.

The bazaar is also aimed at freeing up parents to browse the many booths at their

leisure to discuss and book activities and buy products for their children.

"We will also have companies doing demonstrations of their products, as well as food stalls, Muay Thai displays, music and activities for children. Unfortunately, we will not be able to provide day-care services, so parents will be responsible for supervising their children," said Ms Foster-Gross.

For more information or if you are interested in booking a booth for the QSI International School Phuket "Kid Expo", which will be held on Sunday, April 7 2014, please contact Anneliese Storm at 076-304312 or email: anneliese-storm@pkt.qsi.org



The QSI teaching staff were the driving force behind the creation of Kid Expo. Photo: Supplied



Photo: Gazette file

Children will be able to sell their old toys to each other at the Kids Bazaar during the expo.

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Bicycling for barflies



Blazing Saddles

By Baz Daniel

BICYCLING Baz is only too aware that his is not the only opinion when it comes to cycling in Phuket. With this in mind, he asked his erstwhile drinking associate, Hugo Barfly, to write an alternative viewpoint from the perspective of a well-padded bar stool in Rawai. Here's Hugo's take on cycling in Phuket.

So, I was sitting there as usual, on the corner stool in my favorite ramshackle bar on Rawai's beachfront, nursing a beer and a hang-over, when the most amazing thing happened. This bright-eyed, healthy-looking guy bounds into the bar having just parked his mountain bike against the empty beer crates out front and loudly orders a lime juice and soda... whatever that might be. The bar girls thought this was as hilarious as I did, and went into a loud chorus of laughter before trying to work out how you actually prepare such an alien beverage.

The nutter is clad in bright day-glo cycling attire, which stuck to his slim sweating body like cling-film and he seemed to be wearing some sort of gay fetishistic cod-piece which accentuated his private parts, but on further scrutiny this turned out to be nothing more deviant than cycling shorts.

Without a 'by your leave' he bounds over to me and says, "It's all a battle once you hit fifty of course, keeping the body and mind fit and virile and the rampaging dogs of aging at bay."

I thought I may have been hallucinating and silently vowed to slow down on the alcoholic intake a bit if this was the sort of bizarre mental illusions it conjured up. But then he continued,

"How old are you old boy, if I may ask? You've seen the better side of the big six-O, I'll warrant."

Hell's teeth... the temerity of the ingrate!

"Well, if you must know, I would qualify for my bus pass this August in fact... that is if they still offered such quaint fillips to the aging back in the old dart," I replied, as a means of trying to dissuade him from pressing his soggy cod-piece against my thigh.

"Oh, a limey," he says, "That's even worse... you guys have had your pensions royally shafted by your government and you're going to have to look after yourselves from now on... and that means keeping fit and healthy and out of the clutches of the hospital system."

He did have a point about pensions. What with cut-backs and the effects of inflation, things were not exactly a bed of Roses chocolate creams for me these days.

"Look, let me give you a word to the wise. It's all about balance

as you get older.

There's nothing wrong with enjoying the occasional beer or two, but you have to balance that out with exercise, good diet, good social relationships and a meaningful purpose in your life. They

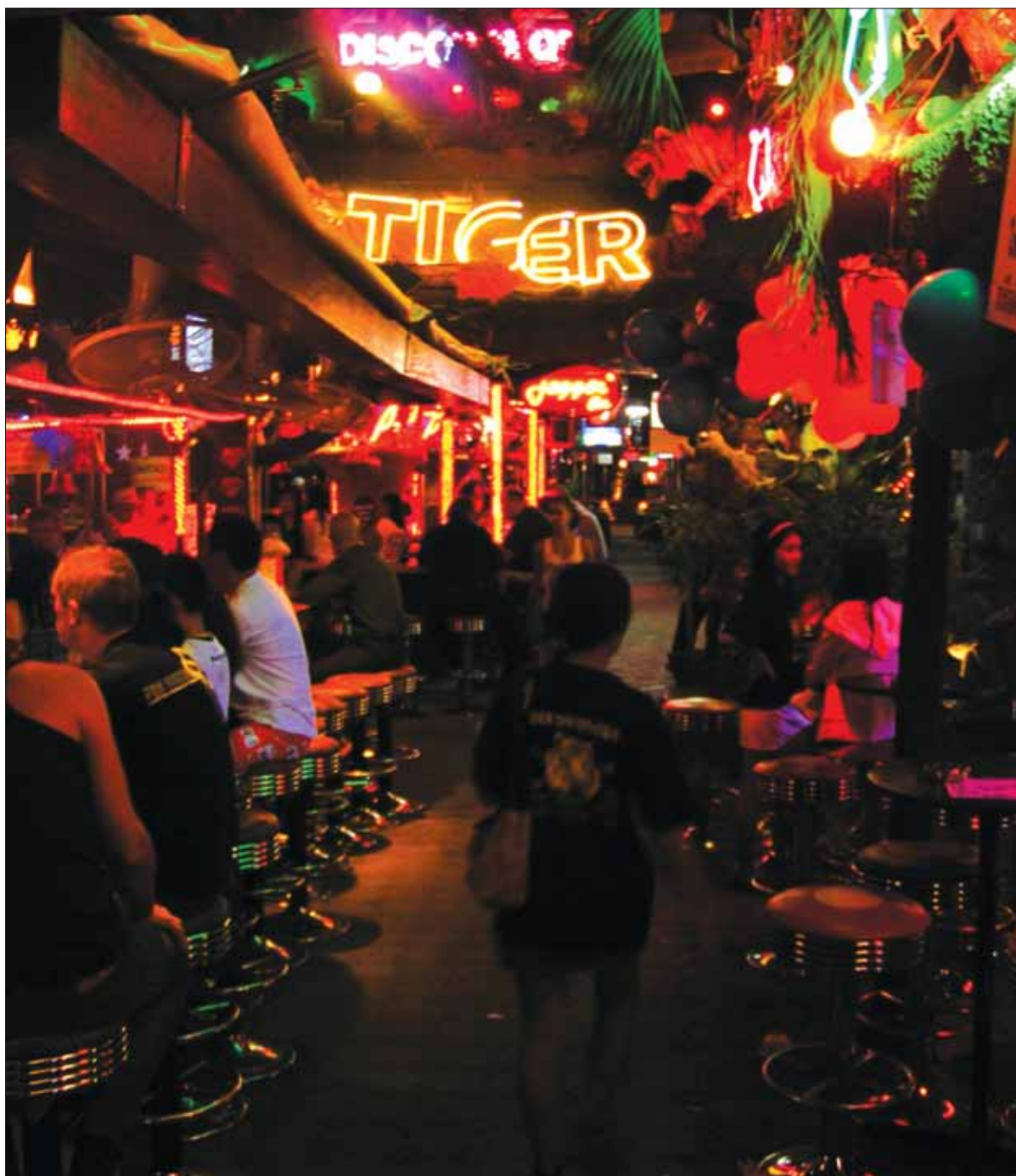
Before I had time to hit him, the idiot bounded onto his saddle and rode off over Rawai Hill in a cloud of sweat and testosterone /

are the four pillars of wisdom when it comes to aging gracefully and happily in Phuket, or anywhere else for that matter."

Before I had time to hit him, the idiot bounded onto his saddle and rode off over Rawai Hill in a cloud of sweat and testosterone.

As I sat there, I couldn't help but reflect upon his words.

Maybe he had a point. I had been hitting the turpentine a little hard recently and my meals, when I actually bothered to eat them, tended to feature the four P's... pizza, pies and potatoes, all washed asunder by pints.



Hugo barfly writes an alternative viewpoint from the perspective of a well-padded bar stool. Photo: Gazette File

I called upon Honey, my favorite bar stroodle, to bring me pen and paper and decided there and then to draw up "Hugo's Life Plan for Healthy Aging."

So here, fellow gentlemen of the bar, it is:

Rule Number One: Alcohol

During the day drink beer only, and no serious drinks until at least 6pm. Be home and in bed by 2am on weekday nights and only go to the Icon or Laguna Bars at the weekend if you're definitely onto a sure thing.

Rule Number Two: Diet

Eat lots of fiber and roughage, i.e. chew on the lime that comes with your evening gin and tonic and eat lots of bar peanuts. Have at least one orange juice with your vodka every week.

Rule Number Three: Exercise

Chase Honey around the bar at least every other day before lying down so she can give you your usual two hour massage. Drink only from heavy pint glasses of beer to develop the arm muscles and play at least one game of "Snap" with the bar stroodle every day to hone the mental



Photo: Phuket File

Bicycling Baz is aware that his is not the only take on cycling in Phuket.

reflexes.

Rule Number Four: Relationships

See rule number three about chasing Honey around the bar and subsequent massages.

Rule Number Five:

Having a Purpose in Life

Are you kidding? My life couldn't be more purposeful, what with

looking after my scrofulous hound "Lucky" and writing this guest column for the *Gazette*... I'm busier and more purposeful than I've ever been.

So that's it. With an approach to aging like this, I'm bound to live to a hundred and eight... so I'd better have another beer to celebrate.

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You have the swing in you

By Maciek Klimowicz

GILLES Duboueix, a professional golf coach and mental trainer, claims that we all have the swing in us, we just need to discover it, and he's here to help. Having spent the past seven years working both with amateurs and professionals, he shares the secrets of his technique with the *Gazette*, proving that the most important part of a golfer's body is the mind.

What does it take to be the best in golf?

Gilles Duboueix: If your goal is to be absolutely the best player, the best in the world, you have to make a big change. Not only on the technical and physical side, this is something you simply have to have, but a big part is also mental conditioning – at the top level it's as important as the other parts.

To be a winner you have to be very organized and not many people lead a very rigorous, strict lifestyle. At a high level you need perfect precision and to get it you need to have a clear mind and play

with just your instinct. To get this moment of clarity you need to work a lot on yourself, you need to explore your feelings, discover what's bothering you and find solutions. The more relaxed and free you feel the more you can concentrate on your game and the better results you achieve.

My task is to help players let go, clear their heads, which will let them perform better under pressure.

A traditional golf coach would spend time with the player on the golf course. What does a session with you look like in practice?

It's mostly talking. They talk and I listen. We get to know each other, I evaluate their problems and gain their trust. I work to get to the bottom of their problems – with amateurs this is simple because most of the time the problem is technical and this is something I can quickly recognize on the driving range. With professionals I focus on analyzing the mind. It's a very personalized therapy similar to

when people end up on a therapist's sofa. The difference is that we work on the golf course.

And once you get to the bottom of the problem, how do you solve it?

We spend a lot of time together on the course, but also at lunch, at dinner, during travel, after which I can provide the golfer with a solution. For example, I have many times worked with players who played very well with friends, in a relaxed atmosphere, but during the tournament, they just couldn't make the cut. And in our conversations I discovered that they spent many hours a day on Facebook, or that their mother or girlfriend bothered them. When I hear this, it's easy to make a connection because for golf, you need to be very focused on your goal. Going pro is taking a certain decision and you need to be serious about it. At this level, golf is a business and you're the boss, you're the seller, the marketing manager, you're everything and you're alone. It's just you and the small white ball.

When did you decide to take up the mental side of golf coaching?

It has been seven years but I have been playing golf for 35 years, since I was about six years old. And of course I also conduct traditional, technical training, I simply have to. But the mental training is gaining popularity, there are new big names coming up, new gurus, more books are getting published, and more players understand that they need a mental coach just as much as they need a physical coach.

So what is your success rate so far?

I have a good example here in Phuket. I worked with a Canadian player three years ago who was on the ADT (Asian Development Tour) and was missing a lot of cuts even though he was doing well at the driving range. We worked a lot together and now, almost two and a half years later, he finished in the top three of the Order of Merit of the ADT 2013 and he got into the Asian Tour, where he is playing this year. This proved to me that I'm not so bad at what I do. Three years ago he was ranked 1,500th in the world. Today he is 500th. To advance by 1,000 places in two and a half years during which we worked on the technical side but also on the mental side, is a big thing. Normally it takes maybe five to six



Duboueix started playing golf at the age of six. Photo: Maciek Klimowicz

years to achieve the same results. To do that we changed his life completely, we stopped his Facebook addiction, got rid of some false friends sucking money from him, fixed his mind and gave him space to focus on golf. I'm very proud of him and of myself.

Who is your target group, your potential customer?

I work with professionals but also with amateurs and with golf courses – recently I worked with a member of the Blue Canyon and got good results. My teaching technique is a bit special, it's not something you find every day on the driving range. I do not give my customers a quick fix and leave them not knowing if they are ever going to see me again. When I teach amateurs, I try to have a connection with them, to find passion for golf, the fire for the game. I want to work with

people who really want to improve and not just show off in front of friends. I respect that because golf is a fun game, but if somebody is not interested in progress, then they don't interest me.

Do people enjoy working with you?

I think so because my approach is different, I make golfers feel free, not focus on all the parameters that come with golf. I try to make them understand their own bodies first because we all have the swing in us, it's there but we don't use it. We just need to find this automatic instinct. It's like driving a car, you do it naturally and when you do it, you feel safe and confident. My goal is to do the same thing with golf.

To get in touch with coach Duboueix call 080-719 6373 or send an email to gillesduboueix@gmail.com.



Gilles Duboueix: 'I want to work with people who really want to improve and not just show off in front of friends.' Photo: Maciek Klimowicz

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Boathouse goes interactive

By Maciek Klimowicz

THERE are two kinds of restaurant owner. One just throws a few fancy sounding ingredients and dishes on the menu and adds some overpriced wines from better known regions, all with the hope of attracting more guests to his or her establishment. The other tries harder.

The recent interactive “Wine evolution or wine revolution” event at Boathouse Wine & Grill restaurant proved that its owners are of the latter kind. Not that there was a lack of sophisticated food on the menu, with dishes such as anchovy, tomato essence and crackers with scallop tartar or veal cheek braised in Asian spices created by Boathouse’s Executive Chef Bryan Burger being just two of many examples. Then there was wine, selected by Georges Ciret, Boathouse’s Wine Director, a sommelier with more than 30 years of experience, and if names such as Barolo or Brunello don’t make your heart skip a beat, then maybe you should stick with beer. Top this with a champagne plus oysters aperitif and you end up with a solid foundation for a great food event. But foundation is just the beginning, something you build upon, and to build a great food event, you need more – you need an idea.

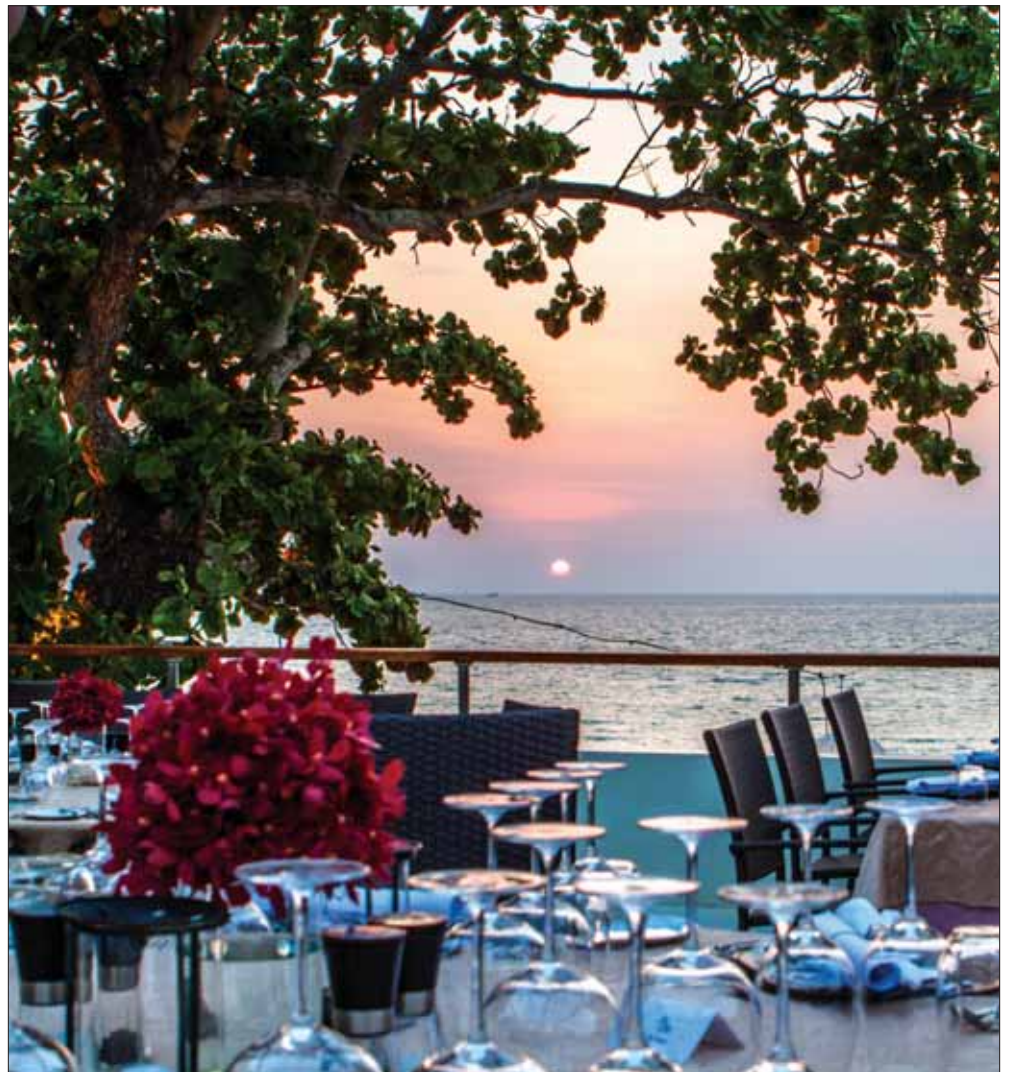
“Boathouse Wine & Grill was always very traditional and a certain style of service is expected of us,” explained Santiago Lopez, Food and Beverage director at Boathouse by Montara. “But as we were pioneers here

a couple of years ago, we want to keep this alive and remain the trendsetters. Hence, this interactive event,” he added.

The way to achieve this was simple – through fun. The idea behind Boathouse’s latest event was playing, not with food but with wine. Each dish served that evening was paired with two different wines representing two different styles of wine-making: one more traditional, focused on expressing a given wine-making region’s main characteristic; the other modern, forward-looking and less conservative.

Each guest, geared with a pen and appropriate form, had a chance to taste both wines and decide which one he liked better. “It’s not a competition, we don’t judge. There are no scores, we just circle the preference. It’s all about what you like,” ensured Mr Lopez. Even though the organizers of the event kept repeating that there are no right or wrong answers, the discussion at each table was fierce. Arguments for and against each choice were passionately exchanged, votes counted and emotions heated. It seems that the best way to keep things at the table entertaining is to give guests something to argue about.

Luckily, Boathouse has everything to keep the mood of the guests mellow and relaxed. The setting of the dinner – on an airy terrace overlooking Kata Beach – only enhanced the experience, as did the soft voice of the vocalist who perfectly matched the wine and the food in a live performance ensuring that each guest went home that evening with not only the stomach, but the heart and head full as well.



Perfect setting for a romantic dinner... or an interactive wine event. Photo: Supplied

An experience for all senses

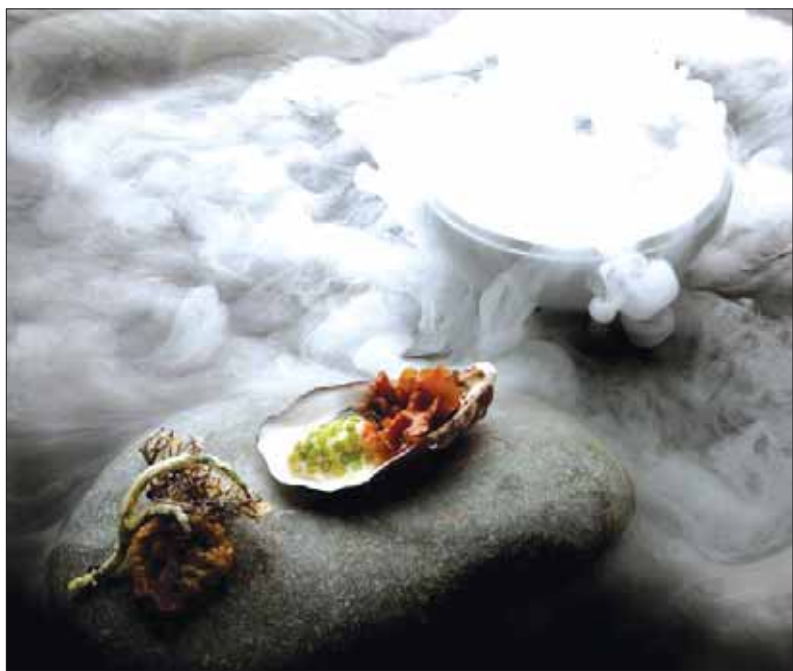


Photo: Bruce Stanley

Spanish chef Eneko Axta operates Aziamendi restaurant at the Iniala Beach House in Phang Nga.

AZIAMENDI, operated by Spanish chef Eneko Axta, who has three Michelin stars on his CV, looks set to become the top restaurant in southern Thailand.

It’s part of the Iniala Beach House, a new hotel on Phang Nga’s Na Tai Beach, 20 minutes’ drive from Phuket International Airport.

Overlooking the beautiful golden sands and the turquoise waters of the Andaman Sea, the

restaurant is designed with inspiration from the nature that surrounds it. Undulating timber “waves” ripple across the ceiling. The tables have tree-like forms and the green velvet lining the chairs recalls the lush foliage outside.

The food is equally inspired. Mr Axta supervised the creation of a menu that incorporates the Basque cooking technique of northern Spain, fused with Thai ingredients.

Mr Axta’s restaurant Azurmendi in his native Basque Country was a stalwart in international haute cuisine. Within five years it had earned three Michelin stars, the first in the region around the Bay of Biscay to achieve that high mark of excellence.

Speed, precision and charm are the secrets behind Mr Axta’s culinary magic. His passion stems from the admiration he maintains for the home-cooked meals of his childhood, which paved his way to refined haute cuisine.

When Aziamendi launched its

grand opening, it was a long evening of gastronomic delights. Guests were encouraged to use all five senses to fully enjoy the 10-course dinner, titled “Tribute”, which indeed paid tribute to the most successful dishes of the chef’s career.

The highlights included truffled egg, in which egg yolk and black-truffle essence were subtly combined in a rich, aromatic explosion in the mouth, jet-black Basque baby squid served with salty broth and a succulent pigeon with hazelnut and chestnut.

The Tribute meal is available every night for 6,000 baht. Mr Axta and sommelier Fabien Etienne have also created menus paired with wines, at prices ranging from 2,000 to 50,000 baht.

Aziamendi is at the Iniala Beach House in Phang Nga’s Kok Kloi district.

It’s open daily, except Monday, from 6pm to midnight.

– *The Nation*

Reservations are recommended at 093-779 2312. Find out more at Aziamendi.com

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6th Annual Arnco Phuket Oilfield Classic

THE 6th annual Arnco Phuket Oilfield Classic was held from April 3-6. The organizers, Asian Golf Events, were pleased to host 130 oil and gas executives from around the world who gathered in Phuket for four days of golf, entertainment and fund-raising activities for Phuket's Baan San Fan Orphanage. The final tally of funds raised was still taking place as the *Gazette* went to print, but organizers said they expected to break the 500,000-baht mark. These funds will go towards new equipment and supplies for the orphanage.

Play took place over two days at Phuket's renowned Loch Palm and Red Mountain Golf Clubs and included a fun-filled Texas Scramble (where the best ball, as determined by the captain, is selected for the second shot – each member of the team hits his or her next shot from that spot) as well as an individual Stableford event.

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.

Results

Team Scramble: **Eric & Edward Quek, Robert Ang and Khun Akarawat**

Mens Individual Stableford: **James Stevenson**

Runner Up: **Michael Dejong**

Nearest Pin Loch Palm: **Terry Park**

Longest Drive Loch Palm: **Adam Ward**

Nearest Line Loch Palm: **Megan Bishop**

Ladies Individual Stableford winner: **Emma Cooper**

Nearest Pin Red Mountain: **Khun Sasithorn**

Longest Drive Red Mountain: **Khun Jarun**

Nearest Line Red Mountain: **Khun Surapon**



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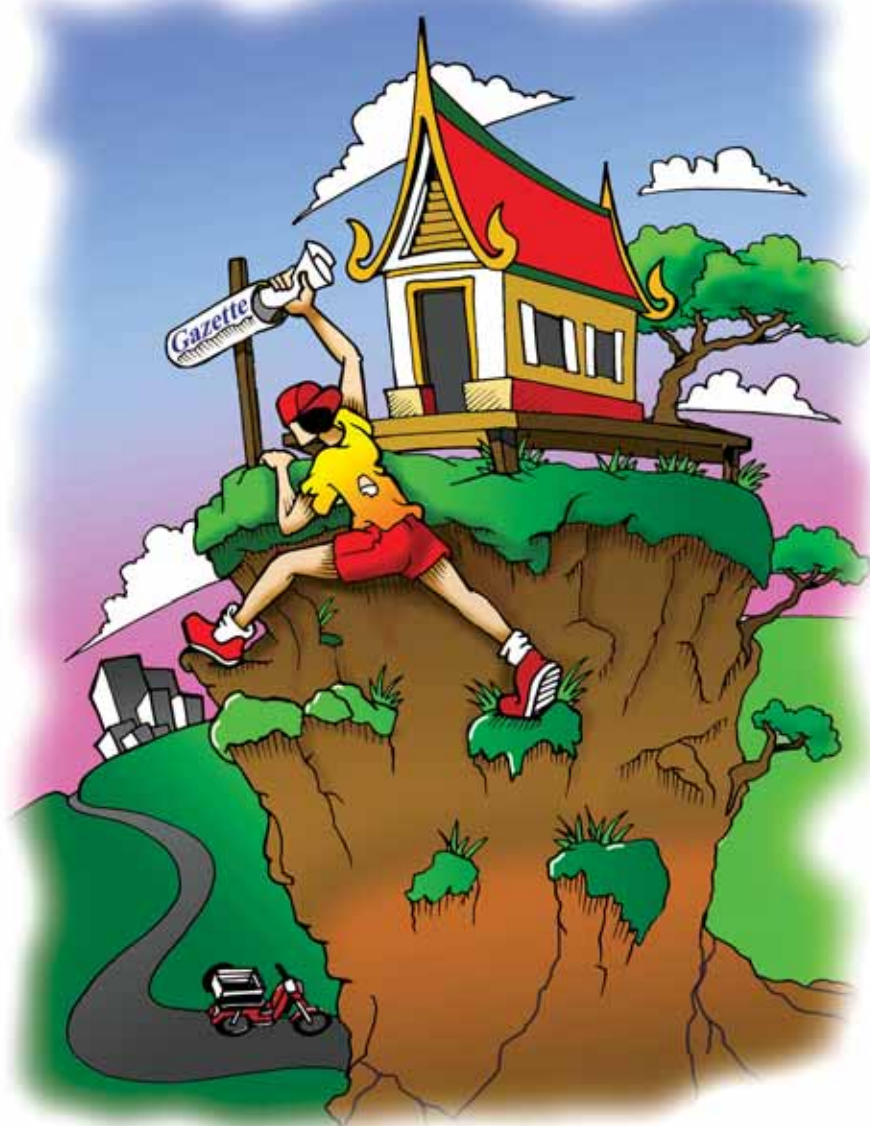
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Your weekly pith

"We crave for new sensations but soon become indifferent to them.
The wonders of yesterday are today common occurrences."
— Nikola Tesla

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs
to those who prepare for it today." — Malcolm X

Medium

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Hard

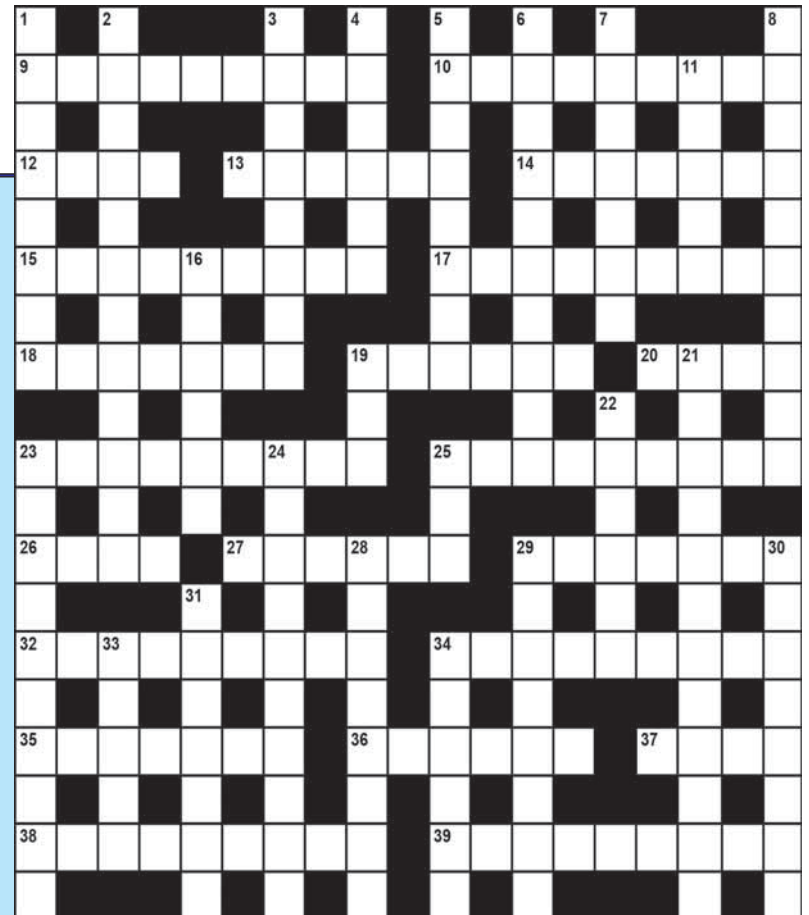
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SUDOKU: Each row, column and 3x3 sub-grid must contain the number 1-9 once only. Kevin Stone (brainbashers.com)

COFFEE
break

Across

9. Knock-out! Nary a GI in place off Phuket's East coast (9)
10. Finished, get on the ship, over the side (9)
12. Left tip in advance (4)
13. Prickling sensation in tin leg, perhaps (6)
14. Father anything worried (7)
15. Maybe retail about end of last man (4,5)
17. Possibly retold about M.A.'s great art of former times (3,6)
18. More rowdy, I rise on being disturbed (7)
19. U.S.A. state spilled no gore (6)
20. Article about a region (4)
23. A Pathan Ma moving in shady head-covering (6,3)
25. Limits in respect of severe son (9)
26. In South Africa, the French make a transaction (4)
27. Set at intervals son stepped (6)
29. In glade, do change leash (3,4)
32. Additional thing in exam trite perhaps (5,4)
34. Regal tour arranged by controller (9)
35. Re. zeal, I possibly apprehend! (7)
36. Maybe nah! Not in the street in Thailand (6)
37. Arrive in company with me (4)
38. Seize pen, move around page to show airships (9)
39. Pose, call out, note get the sack (9)



Down

1. All bones, not sleek perhaps (8)
2. In time, rational sin could be in a state of change (12)
3. Cyril and Den together in a solid round (8)
4. Vocalist moved to resign (6)
5. Vote code modification for pigeon house (8)
6. Pious, if red, could be treacherous (10)
7. Bar a strange bad actor as biblical character (7)
8. Opinion pieces could be from tail or side (10)
11. To rag wildly in slang (5)
16. Puzzle arranged in game (6)
19. Not in round Utah (3)
21. Concerning formation, a

- learner is sporting (12)
22. Sparing the fur, maybe, gal! (6)
23. Sterilize a prize suet carefully (10)
24. So they ship out, in theory (10)
25. Bar circle in road (3)
28. Insensate in a cot, some collapsed (8)
29. So dough, possibly note, produces a place for a pet (3,5)
30. Clouded over, Ken dared to be outside (8)
31. Liberal, possibly care about quality (7)
33. Down-and-out Art upset Member of Parliament (5)
34. Rally out East, genuinely (6)

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20):



Red tape can block progress around the middle of the month, but the stars show this to be a temporary hindrance. Arians are advised to take professional advice if the situation involves money as you could be asked to pay more than is reasonable. Those with a birthday during the days ahead are forecast to find more job satisfaction in the coming year. Your lucky number this week is nine.

TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21):



A busy week lies ahead for those born under the sign of Taurus. Multi-tasking can be accomplished during the second half of April, but the stars advise that certain projects will need to be put on hold for a while. Where work is concerned, the stars advise that not everyone has honest motives; an air sign is keen to benefit from your ideas and contacts. The number six can bring good fortune.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):



It would be wise to keep a wide berth from unnecessary drama around the middle of April. The stars suggest that a highly strung fire sign friend will try to involve you in their personal problems

and a water sign colleague's tendency to forget can cause problems at work. Where affairs of the heart are concerned, reacting to a partner's mood swings will not help the atmosphere. Number three stands out for Gemini.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):



The stars indicate that Cancerians could be holding onto something that belongs in the past. If this relates to the way you work, there are hints that others with more up to date ideas will overtake you. In the realm of romance, hoping for reconciliation with another water sign is a waste of energy. A new relationship with an air sign has a good chance to grow. Your lucky number this week is eight.

LEO (July 24-Aug 22):



The cosmic climate is unsettled until Monday and this can affect communication and technology. This is not an auspicious time to purchase expensive gadgets; the stars advise waiting until later in April. Where personal relationships are concerned, an earth sign wants to share sensitive information, but this can put you in a tricky situation. Romance with an air sign picks up pace this weekend. The number five is forecast to come alive.

YOUR
horoscope
By Isla Star

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept 23):



This is an auspicious time for lost items to come to light. Setting some time aside this weekend to put your personal administration in order is advisable; some Virgoans will be relieved to locate information relevant to an ongoing financial dilemma. In the realm of romance, a water sign partner's news is reason for celebration this weekend. Money matters are favorable on Monday. The number nine looks special.

LIBRA (Sept 24-Oct 23):



The stars advise that those born under the sign of Libra will be on top of their game during the second half of April. Taking a leap of faith in the world of work should land you in exactly the right spot, with fresh challenges highlighted to spark more motivation. Taking your romantic partner on a surprise romantic date this weekend will work wonders. Librans' lucky number this week is one.

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22):



Scorpios' talents for spotting hidden opportunities should pave the path to success ahead during the second half of April. However, the stars advise toning down your enthusiasm as others can be turned off by too much energy. An air sign whose skills you need will respond best to a quiet approach. Hot days for romance are Wednesday and Thursday. The number two can attract good fortune this week.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21):



Spare time is in short supply this week and Sagittarians with a backlog of work will need to plan carefully. Last minute changes and cancellations are highlighted to cause frustration. In the realm of romance, trying too hard to impress a water sign can backfire. The stars advise that simply showing who you really are will be enough to attract this person. Number six is linked with luck this week.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20):



The stars are on your side this week. Your spirits are lifted when friends show that they have your best interests at heart. A fire sign is forecast to come through with useful advice concerning a money related problem and an

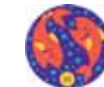
air sign can point you in a useful direction regarding work opportunities. Capricorns looking for love can realize it is closer to home than they imagined. The number four is fortunate.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19):



Those born under the sign of Aquarius are able to channel their energy constructively during the second half of April. The stars support your efforts to take care of difficult business or work issues, with focus on healing relationships that have been affected by misunderstandings. In the realm of romance, those who are single spot the right moment to make the first move towards another air sign. Number three seems important this week.

PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20):



This is not an auspicious time to take detours from your usual routine as the stars suggest that distractions could cause Pisceans to forget responsibilities. In the realm of romance, things are not quite what they seem this weekend. There can be a hidden agenda behind an air sign's flirtation, and an earth sign is not telling you the full story. Your lucky number this week is one.

SPORT

Phuket rises above Bangkok

The Ronins reach third position in the Yamaha League one following their 3-1 win over the Iron Bulls

By Jeremie Schatz

THE Phuket FC Ronins sharpened their blades in preparation for their battle against the Bangkok FC Iron Bulls last weekend, and nearly 5,000 fired-up fans braved the roads to Surakul Stadium under unsettled skies to see their team take to the field.

Fans were on their feet from the beginning, cheering on their hometown team and jeering at the Iron Bulls.

They had two reasons for their exuberance: the team from the little island taking on the big city boys and the fact that Phuket was in number five on the table, with Bangkok just one slot ahead in number four.

But my, how the tables have turned. Intense action from both sides kept everyone's gaze moving back and forth down the pitch, with Phuket fans booing calls against them, and the 20 or so Bangkok fans (Bulligans) returning the favor.

Both teams were holding strong until just about midway through the first half, when an attempted drive towards the outside edge of the penalty box by

Ney Fabiano was revoked. He made a desperate pass to Henrique "Eber" Ferrerira de Bessa just in front of the goal, who managed to keep the ball away from Bangkok's goalkeeper and swarm of defenders, long enough for forward Anusak Laosaengthai to drive it home.

If there wasn't electricity in the air before, there certainly was after that goal. Before the crowd could even think about finding their seats, Phuket kept the momentum going, and in less than a minute, saw Anusak driving another ball home in fine form. The Iron Bulls were seeing red, but turned up the heat to no avail, with the board reading 2-0 at halftime.

Into the second half, defender Pyne Soe made a strong shot on goal, just outside of the far post, to the crowd's dismay. However, their roaring cheers and songs did not fall on deaf ears as Christian Alex da Silva Santos made his team proud pounding one into the back of the net to counter the one and only Bangkok goal the Ronins' goalkeeper let slip by.

Phuket FC coach Stefano "Teco" Cugurra was proud to have his team take down the respected club from the north.

"The first half was an easy game, a controlled game all the time, but in the second half, because they had the emotions come in... [Bangkok] had a lot of hard tackles. They are very tough, they are a good team."

Phuket's 3-1 triumph over Bangkok, and fourth win of the season, sees them advance to the number three position on the Yamaha League One table, just under Ang Thong FC, while Bangkok descends to number six.

In their next league match, Phuket FC will face Chiang Mai FC on their hometown turf on April 20.



Phuket's Anusak Laosaengthai is not afraid to get off the ground. Photos: Jeremie Schatz



Phuket FC coach Stefano "Teco" Cugurra reacts to a referee's call during Saturday's game.



Anusak Laosaengthai celebrating his second goal of the game.



Phuket goalkeeper Prapat Yoskrai thanks the fans for their support.

**FIXTURE**

**CHANGMAI**

**PHUKET FC**

APR 20

700th Anniversary Stadium Chiang Mai

YAMAHA LEAGUE ONE TABLE				
PL	TEAM	P	PTS	
1	Nakhon Rachasima	7	17	
2	Angthong FC	7	16	
3	Phuket FC	7	14	
4	Royal Navy	7	14	
5	Saraburi FC	7	12	
6	Bangkok FC	7	11	
7	BBCU	7	11	
8	TTM Customs	7	11	
9	Ayuthaya FC	7	10	
10	Phitsanulok FC	7	10	
11	Chiangmai FC	7	9	
12	Pattaya Utd	7	9	
13	Nakhon Pathom	7	8	
14	Trat FC	7	6	
15	Krabi FC	7	5	
16	Khon Kaen FC	7	5	
17	Roi Et Utd	7	4	
18	Sri Racha FC	7	0	

*Last Update: 08/04/2014

Freediving without hubris



Photo: Jay Hem

By Isaac Stone Simonelli

THE first two white cards handed out for “points” in the Phuket We Free Dive Suunto Series have highlighted the unique format of the competition, which ranks the control, safety and beauty of the dive above time and distance.

“I value any clean dive far above a longer or deeper one that ends with a barely conscious diver,” explained Association Internationale pour le Développement de l’Apnea (AIDA) judge Richard Wonka.

“Freediving is a beautiful sport, it’s only the ego – which all of us carry around with us – that spoils its reputation.”

Two white cards and two red cards were handed out to contestants by Mr Wonka and AIDA

judge Sarah Whitcer at the dynamic without fins event on March 30 in Chalong. These cards count toward the grand prize of a Suunto D6i dive computer.

“The winner will be the one with the most white cards and cleanest record, because clean and safe dives are exemplary of the sport,” Mr Wonka said.

“To my knowledge, no other competition has ever applied this principle, so we are excited to do something new.”

Red cards are issued for failure to follow surface protocol, air way obstructions and other rule violations.

In a competition, all divers competing for points in the AIDA international rankings have to perform a simple surface protocol:

remove any facial equipment, show one “okay” sign to the judges and then say either “I am okay” or “I’m okay”.

“If divers are unable to perform this simple task after their dive, then we can safely say that they are not fully in control of their actions, which results in a red card,” Mr Wonka explained.

“Beginners sometimes muddle this up, simply because they are new to this, but that’s what being a beginner is all about. You make a mistake, you learn.”

We Free Dive Suunto Series is sponsored by Suunto, Special Fins and Dive Supply, and will continue on April 19.

Those wanting to participate in the event can register at wefreedive.org



Melanie Long awaits her judgment after having set a personal best during the dynamic no fins competition. Photos: Isaac Stone Simonelli

Thai teen tennis champ gets leg up on Kuwait in LTAT Nationals

HOSTS Thailand gained the upper hand against Kuwait by winning the doubles to take a 2-1 lead in their Davis Cup second round tie at the LTAT National Tennis Center on April 5.

After splitting the opening singles 1-1, Thailand took a decisive lead when Pruchya Itsarow and Nuttanon Kadchapanan beat Mohammad Ghareeb and Hassan al-Mousa 7-6 (7-2) 7-5 6-3 in two hours and 53 minutes.

That means Thailand needed only a point from the reverse singles, which saw Pruchya take on Ghareeb and Thai No 2 Wishaya Trongcharoenchaikul face Abdulhameed al-Shatti. Truesport5 will beam live coverage from 10am onwards.

Thailand’s non-playing captain Graipetch Worasombat – a relieved man after seeing



Thailand gets the upper hand against Kuwait.

the Thai par live up to his expectations – is confident that Thailand will clinch the tie in the fifth rubber.

“After we took the first set, everything went our way as our service games were quite smooth. I think Pruchya has an advantage over Ghareeb. He is quite fit and

never seems to lose steam,” the team skipper said. Pruchya said he is still in good shape even though he has played matches two days in a row. The teenager will have to keep calm in today’s highly anticipated match if the hosts are to win the tie. “I’m not exhausted at all as I have been training for this day for three months. Ghareeb hits high spin and serves big. I have to make him run as much as possible,” the Thai No 1 said. Nuttanon, who also teamed with Pruchya in the doubles win against Hong Kong in Phuket two months ago, was happy to accomplish the task given to him.

“I felt a bit stiff at the beginning, but I raised the level of my game as the match wore on. I have to thank my partner to keep pushing me all the time,” the 20-year-old from Yala said.

Pruchya and Nuttanon quickly trailed 1-3 but fought back to break the next game for three games all in the opening set. Play proceeded on serve until the tiebreak, when the Thai duo proved more successful and took the first set pretty easily after over an hour of play.

In the second set, both teams served solidly and neither came close to getting a break during the first 11 games. Thailand earned the first break-point at 30-40 in the 12th and capitalized on the opportunity when al-Mousa buried a volley into the net.

Pruchya blasted a forehand winner to break Kuwait for a 3-1 lead and had two match points at 5-2 on the Kuwait serve in the third. The Thai No 1 served out for the match in the next game, which was over when al-Mousa’s return hit the net. – *The Nation*

The new generation of F1

By Jeremie Schatz

FAR from the boiling heart of Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur, wrapped in the steamy green of endless palm oil plantations, lies another heart. It doesn't beat all the time like the city, but when it does, it pounds hard and loud and forces adrenaline to course through the veins.

Sepang International Circuit, found 13 kilometers from Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), is the heart that pumps fuel through the arteries of the potential 80,000 racing fanatics and speed junkies that the venue can hold. Inaugurated in 1999, the track hosts a number of big-ticket racing events, including the Moto GP Malaysian Grand Prix, A1 Grand Prix, Formula One Malaysian Grand Prix and a number of other major races.

The 5.5km-long track is known for its unusual design and environmental challenges that the cars and drivers are confronted with. High temperatures, high humidity and frequent precipitation pose unique problems for racing teams to solve.

This year's F1 Malaysian Grand Prix saw racing teams with a whole new host of challenges to contend with, as many F1 fans are certainly aware of. Coming off the heels of a seven-year stint utilizing 2.4 liter fuel injected V8 engine configurations, the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile

(FIA) has changed many of its stipulated rules, including the engine designation. Now, teams representing Mercedes, Ferrari, Lotus and more, have had to go back to the drawing board to see what they can squeeze out of a 1.6 liter turbo-charged direct injection V6.

To further complicate the vehicles, which are considered the crowning glory of open-wheeled racing cars, the FIA has also deemed it necessary to double the output of the energy recovery system (ERS). Implemented in 2009, the ERS has a similar function to regenerative braking systems found in consumer hybrid vehicles. Previously, the system provided about 80 horsepower for 6.67 seconds per lap – now those numbers are up to 160 horsepower for 33 seconds per lap, leaving it up to teams to carefully develop strategies for finding the appropriate time to take advantage of this extra power.

The regulations have undergone more changes, both mechanically and physically, such as a minimal weight that is 49 kilograms heavier, variations in body structure, different exhaust specs and, notably, a maximum fuel usage per race and flow per hour. This last change is quite the contrast compared to the unlimited fuel consumption allowed before, to the 100kg per race cap that is now enforced.

In case you haven't gleaned the



Formula One racing regulations have undergone drastic changes in the 2014 season. Photos: Jeremie Schatz

message from all of the latest regulatory changes, the new generation of F1 racing is about doing more with less. Efficient. Fast. Smart. This is the new mantra. Are people accepting the changes with open arms? Not so much. A big complaint, somewhat surprisingly, is the different sound of the engines. A smaller turbo-charged engine sounds much more like a screaming jet than the roaring gurgles of the previous V8s. This may be a judgment being passed by those who are only watching the races on TV, but I can assure you, they are plenty loud in person and certainly continue to exude a sound of raw power, but perhaps more refined.

Contrary to prior concerns, the cars continue to be ridiculously fast, reaching speeds upwards of 300km/h. Although lap times are slightly slower, drivers are still settling in to the new cars and honing the strategies which will enable them to utilize the cars to their full potential. After all, the Petronas Grand Prix at Sepang was only the second race of the season.

So what makes racing at Sepang challenging? To start with, the track is located in equatorial jungle which is blistering hot most of the time. The huge turbos, which can push 50psi, which is three to four times that of a consumer turbo-charged car, have to work harder to build compression as air density is inversely proportional to temperature. Of course, the entire engine will run hotter, reaching upwards of 900-degrees Celsius, making many aspects of efficiency, reliability and power production difficult to control and maximize.

The tropical humidity found at Sepang is palpable, to say the least, and poses another hurdle for teams to contend with. The day before the Grand Prix saw drivers

racing in the qualifiers in 33-degree heat accompanied by an oppressive 94 per cent humidity. Even when it is not raining, which it often does to the dismay of all involved, the track is slick and subjects drivers to a learning curve in order to adapt their braking, acceleration and cornering to the reduced traction.

The racing world is buzzing, or maybe shrieking, about all of the new changes and regulations. Some are concerned that Formula One is being reduced from an adrenaline-drenched, head-to-head, elite racing showdown to an over-conservative procession of sissy-sounding Prius' burdened by stifling regulations.

However, there are a variety of perspectives to view these changes from. Yes, the engines are smaller and quieter, but the end result is a greater weight to power ratio than before. Drivers have access to a considerable amount of extra power that they must use sparingly and strategically. And maybe the cars aren't as loud, but it is a sound with purpose... and they are still painfully loud in person. F1 racing is far beyond raw, furious power. It is full of strat-

egy and sophistication, and the new sound is the refined auditory representation of the product from the world's leading automotive engineers.

The new bodies are not only works of art, but safer. The fuel restrictions show two things: that the FIA isn't afraid to change and continue to develop the sport despite the naysayers, and that instead of force-feeding fuel to big engines, they aim to prove that engineers have the ingenuity to create machines that can do the same thing, if not more, while consuming considerably less. The fact that teams were previously allowed eight engines per season, which has now been reduced to five, further reinforces this point.

There you have it. Things have changed, and maybe F1 is now less like arm wrestling and more like chess. Some will hate it, but some will interpret the next generation as a step towards the future. They will lose some followers along the way, but those who can appreciate the sport's desire to push the limitations of the latest technology to the limit will witness the evolution of intelligent automotive racing unfold.



CONTROL: Pirelli had to take into account the different torque curve of this year's engines when creating new tyre compounds.



CELEBRATION: Mercedes' Nico Rosberg douses teammate Lewis Hamilton following their second and first place finishes at Sepang on March 30.

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SPORTathlon

Brazil hesitant over World Cup

By Caroline Stauffer

LESS than half of Brazilians favor the nation hosting the World Cup in June, with a majority in the football-crazed nation believing that the tournament will do more harm than good, a poll showed on Tuesday.

Just 48 per cent of Brazilians support hosting the event, down from 52 per cent in February and dropping below 50 per cent for the first time, a survey by Datafolha found, though the company said the difference was within its margin of error.

The approval rate has dropped from a high of 79 per cent in November 2008 – a year after Brazil was selected – amid cost overruns, deadly construction accidents and concern that delays in building stadiums and airports in 12 cities could embarrass the country on the international stage.

Indeed, the number of Brazilians opposed to hosting the 32-nation event is also rising, with 41 per cent against it, up from 38 per cent in February and 10 per cent in 2008, the survey by the local pollster showed.

The result is surprising for the football-loving nation that has won five World Cup titles, more than any other country. Brazil last hosted the tournament in 1950.

The event poses an increasing risk to President Dilma Rousseff, who is widely expected to be re-elected in the general elections in October, as she may see support slump if the World Cup is not a success. She routinely assures Brazilians the tournament will be “the cup of cups.”

Datafolha said 55 per cent of those surveyed believe the games will bring more harm than benefit to the country, compared to 36 per cent who believe the event will bring more benefit.

In a similar survey in June, amid massive street protests calling for better transportation and less corruption, 44 per cent said the games would bring more harm than benefit.

Pessimism over the World Cup has increased even as Brazilians have largely abandoned street protests.

The Confederations Cup last year was held at the tail end of the largest social unrest in a decade and the



Photo: Paulo Whitaker/Reuters

An aerial view of the Arena Pernambuco soccer stadium is seen in Recife, northeastern Brazil.

government and police have promised to crack down on demonstrators during this year's games.

The survey of 2,637 people was conducted between April 2 and 3 in 162 municipalities and has a

margin of error of 2 percentage points in either direction.

Another poll, conducted by Brazil's MDA in February, found that most Brazilians opposed hosting the World Cup and believed

the billions of dollars spent on the event should be directed elsewhere, such as towards healthcare and education.

– Reuters

Ronaldo out nursing a mild knee injury

REAL Madrid top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo's participation against Borussia Dortmund in Tuesday's Champions League quarter-final second leg is still in doubt with the player nursing a knee problem, coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Monday.

Italian Ancelotti rested the Champions League top scorer for Saturday's 4-0 La Liga win at Real Sociedad but said he was ruled fit to play as the Spaniards arrived in Germany with a 3-0 advantage from the first leg last week.

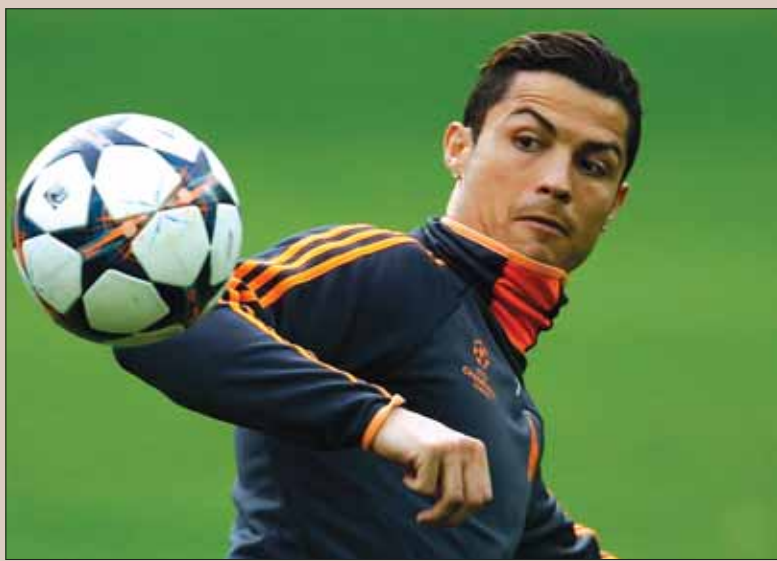
“Cristiano always wants to play and I want him to play. But he is a professional and he knows when he cannot,” Ancelotti told reporters.

“He is having treatment and yesterday he trained at a reduced intensity. If he is 100 per cent he will play and, if not, he won't. We have never taken risks with him or any other player.”

Ronaldo took part in the final training session in Dortmund but broke off before the end.

The Portugal captain, who has a record-equaling 14 goals this season in Europe's elite club competition, has complained of discomfort in his left knee.

Ronaldo made his 100th Champions League appearance in the first leg at the Bernabeu and his goal matched Lionel Messi's single-season record set



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo eyes a ball during a training session. Photo: Ina Fassbender/Reuters

in 2011/ 12.

Real ideally would need the Portuguese's attacking skills to counter Dortmund, who will go out looking for an early goal that could boost their chances of turning things around.

The Germans will have their top scorer Robert Lewandowski back in the team following a suspension in the first leg.

“With Lewandowski returning, this is a different game,” Ancelotti said. “His presence lifts his fellow players.”

“We will have to keep the balance between attacking and

defending but we are best at attacking and we should show that.”

Lewandowski scored four goals against Real in the semi-final last season as Dortmund advanced to the final, only to lose to Bayern Munich.

“Dortmund will want to go out and score a goal in the first 15 or 20 minutes,” defender Daniel Carvajal told reporters.

“They will put a lot of pressure on us and we have to be ready for it. Why should we not try to score in that phase?” said the fullback.

– Reuters

Rio's Olympic Park workers get violent with security

WORKERS building Rio's 2016 Olympic Park fought with security guards on Monday but, although shots were fired, no one was injured in the melee, eyewitnesses said.

Scuffles broke out between guards and construction workers on strike for more pay and better union representation. The workers closed several busy avenues around the site on Monday and trouble ensued.

Officials said they were examining CCTV footage to identify who fired the shots.

“The confusion took place at the work site and there were protests both there and nearby,” said a witness, who requested anonymity. “Fortunately, no one was hurt.”

The Olympic Park is one of the focal points of Rio's Olympic Games and will host judo, basketball, tennis, handball and cycling events at a host of purpose-built facilities.

The international broadcast center and the main media base will also be located in the park, which is being built on the site of Rio's former Formula One track.

The consortium responsible for the park, slated for delivery in the first half of next year, vowed the strike would not affect the delivery date.

But there is already concern over the slow pace of work. Construction workers fixing the Joao Havelange stadium that is due to

host the track and field events have also downed tools in protest over working conditions and low wages.

That stadium was built for the 2007 Pan American Games but was closed in March last year when engineers said the roof could fall down in high winds. Officials ordered the stadium closed and said work to shore up the structure and repair other problems would not be finished until December 2014.

The budget is also a hot topic of concern. Rio has still to decide who will pay for what and International Olympic Committee officials who visited the city on March 21 said it was crucial that federal, state and municipal authorities put their heads together and make decisions.

However, although officials said that the meeting would take place in March, it is yet to happen.

Brazilian organizers have so far budgeted for 24 of the 52 projects that will be built for the Games.

Rio won the right to host the summer Olympics in 2009 and will become the first South American city to host the world's biggest multi-sport event.

But even though the World Cup kicks off in 66 days, three stadiums are still not ready and promised public transportation and airports are also way behind schedule or have been abandoned.

– Reuters

Harris new assistant coach

AUSTRALIA paceman Ryan Harris, who has played a major role in his country's test resurgence over the last year, is to turn his hand to bringing through the next generation after being appointed an assistant coach with the 'A' squad.

The popular 34-year-old will help head coach Michael Di Venuto prepare Australia A for a series of first-class and limited overs matches against India A and South Africa A in July and August, Cricket Australia said on Tuesday.

Harris underwent knee surgery last month and faces a long rehabilitation but hopes to be fit for Australia's two-test series against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates in October.

"While Harris is expected to use the series as a chance to rehabilitate from his various ailments, it will also provide him an opportunity to hone his coaching skills with an eye to life after cricket," Cricket Australia said.

Harris will work with the likes of young test pacemen Mitchell

Starc and Pat Cummins in the 21-man squad, which also features a number of batsmen with international experience, including opener Phillip Hughes and Alex Doolan.

With fitness worries forever dogging Shane Watson, selectors are keen to have a replacement for the injury-prone all-rounder.

"[We are] especially keen for the potential future international all-rounders, James Faulkner, Moises Henriques and Mitchell Marsh to have this opportunity to develop further and enhance their claims," head selector John Inverarity said.

Though Nathan Lyon has cemented his place as Australia's premier spinner, two slow bowlers have been named in the squad – 29-year-old left-armer Steven O'Keefe and Queensland legspinner Cameron Boyce.

"Steven topped the Sheffield Shield bowling aggregate and averages with 41 wickets at less than 21 per wicket," Inverarity added.

"Cameron took 26 wickets with his steadily improving leg-breaks."

— Reuters



Australia's Ryan Harris celebrates taking the wicket of South Africa's JP Duminy (center) during the third day of the third test cricket match at Newlands Stadium in Cape Town. Photo: Shaun Roy

Mercedes tech up to the challenge

FORMULA One should be pushing for even greater fuel economy next season rather than talking about 'completely unrealistic' ways of changing the rules, according to Mercedes technical head Paddy Lowe.

The start of the season has been dominated by talk of tweaking the new rules to make cars louder and possibly relaxing the strict limit of 100 kilograms of fuel per car per race or making races shorter.

International Automobile Federation (FIA) president Jean Todt told reporters at Sunday's Bahrain Grand Prix that the governing body would seek to boost the noise of the new V6 turbos but made clear little else would change.

"It seems that Mercedes is stronger. I don't have the power to say 'let's slow them down'," said the Frenchman. "If they are quicker than the others I think it is a challenge for the other teams to catch them."

Lowe liked the sound of that: "I think Jean has taken a very sensible line," said the Briton, whose team have the dominant car and best performing V6 turbo power unit.

"There's been things talked about here and in the last weeks and days that are just completely unrealistic," added Lowe as he celebrated his team's third win in three races and second successive one-two.

"The first suggestion was that we need 110kg (of fuel). And then,

has anyone realized that you couldn't fit 110kg into these cars? Ah, oh dear.

"Oh, well. We'll make the races shorter. Can you imagine selling that concept to the public? It would be like saying we've decided that people aren't fit enough these days and marathons are only going to be 25 miles, not 26.

"The messaging around that cannot be contemplated. So I hope all of that could be put behind us."

Lowe said talk of drivers having to ease off and save fuel to make sure they could finish the race was ridiculous.

He pointed out that Lewis Hamilton, Sunday's race winner, and team mate Nico Rosberg had been racing flat-out all evening from start lights to checkered flag and had more than enough in Malaysia.

Some teams, such as Mercedes-powered Williams, reportedly even started in Malaysia with less than the 100kg of fuel allowed to save weight and boost performance.

Lowe said it made no sense for a sport that prides itself on cutting-edge technology, and becoming more road relevant to mass car makers, to water down the challenge.

"Formula One is about developing technology, setting stretched targets. I would say the 100kg [of fuel] for the race and per hour [flow rate] are actually perfectly judged numbers."

— Reuters



Mercedes Formula One Executive Director (Technical) Paddy Lowe sits at the pit wall during the qualifying session of the Bahrain F1 Grand Prix at the Bahrain International Circuit April 5, 2014. Photo: Patrick Baz/Pool/Reuters

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3.4
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